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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AUNT KITTY'S TALES ***

AUNT KITTY'S

TALES.

BY

MARIA J. MCINTOSH,

AUTHOR OF "TWO LIVES, OR TO SEEM AND TO BE," "CONQUEST AND SELF-
CONQUEST," "PRAISE AND PRINCIPLE," ETC., ETC.

A NEW REVISED EDITION.

NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON & COMPANY, 200 BROADWAY.

PHILADELPHIA:

GEO. S. APPLETON, 148 CHESNUT STREET.

M DCCC XLVII.

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INTRODUCTION.

It has been several years since Aunt Kitty last presented herself to her young friends, yet she hopes that she has not been forgotten by them, and that her reappearance will give them pleasure. She introduces to them in the present volume no new acquaintance, but she offers to them, in one group, all who formerly interested them. Blind Alice and her young benefactress—Jessie Graham and her ardent, generous, but inconsiderate friend, Florence Arnott—Grace and Clara—and Ellen Leslie, will here be found together. They have been carefully prepared for this second presentation to the public by Aunt Kitty's own hand. It is hoped that her efforts for their improvement have not been wholly unsuccessful, and that they will be found not altogether unworthy teachers of those lessons of benevolence and truth, generosity, justice and self-government, which she designed to convey through them.

New York, Feb. 15th, 1847.

BLIND ALICE.

Good morning, my young friend! A merry Christmas, or happy New Year, or at least a pleasant holiday to you;—for holiday I hope it is, as it is on such festivals, when there is no danger of lessons being forgotten, that I best love to see around me a group of happy children, all the happier for having Aunt Kitty to direct their plays—to show them the pleasantest walks, or, when they are tired both of playing and walking, to sit with them by the fireside and tell them some entertaining story. I am never however entirely without such young companions. I have always with me an orphan niece—Harriet Armand—who is about ten years old. Her father and mother died when she was quite an infant, and she has ever since been to me as my own child. Then I have another niece—Mary Mackay—just six years old, the merriest little girl on whom the sun ever shone, who, as her father lives quite near me, spends part—her mother says the largest part—of every day with me. Besides these, there are Susan May and Lucy Ellis, who, living in a neat, pretty village near us, seldom let a fine day pass without seeing Harriet and me.

I am the very intimate and confidential friend of all these little girls. To me they intrust all their secrets. I know all the pleasant surprises they intend for each other; am consulted on birth-day presents, and have helped them out of many troubles, which, though they might seem little to larger people, were to them very serious affairs. I encourage them to tell me, not only what they say and do, but what they think and feel. Sometimes when they are a little fretful and discontented because their friends have not done just as they wished, we talk the matter over together, and find that they have themselves been unreasonable, and then the fretfulness is dismissed, and they try by a very pleasant manner to make amends for their hard thoughts and unjust feelings. If any one has really injured them, or been unkind to them, and I find them too angry easily to forgive it, I bid them put on their bonnets, and we go out together to look for their good-humor. Then, as we see the gay flowers, and inhale the sweet perfumes, and listen to the merry birds that hop around us, twittering and chirping, my little friends forget to be angry; and while I talk to them of the good Father in heaven, who made all these beautiful and pleasant things for his children on earth, they feel such love and thankfulness to him, that it seems easy for his sake even to forgive those who have done them wrong. These are Aunt Kitty's lessons,—they are lessons for the heart, and such as I hope all my readers will be pleased to learn.

The walk which these little girls and I best love is to a small house, about half a mile from mine. Small as it is, it looks so pleasantly with its white walls, (it is freshly whitewashed every spring,) and green shutters, its neat paling and pretty flower-garden, peeping from the midst of green trees, that any one might be contented to live there. In this house lives a widow, with one only child, a daughter, a year older than my niece Harriet. I will tell you their story, which I think will make you feel almost as much interested in them as we do, and you will then understand why we like them so well, and visit them so often.

About three years ago, my little friends, Susan May and Lucy Ellis, began to talk a great deal of a child who had lately come to the school in the village, which they attended. They said her name was Alice Scott; that her teachers thought a great deal of her because she learned her lessons so well, and that her schoolmates loved her because she was so good-humored and merry. She had told them that she used to live a great way off, and that her father and mother had left her other home because it was sickly, and had come here because they had heard it was a healthy place. The girls said Alice looked very well herself, but that Mrs. Scott was pale, and that Alice said she was often sick. "A stranger and sick," thought I, "then I must go to see her"—and so I did, very soon.

I found her a pleasing, as well as a good woman, though she seemed sad, except when Alice was with her, and then she was happy and cheerful enough. She told me that her husband was a carpenter, and as he was an industrious and honest man, he had as much work given to him as he could do, and would have made money enough for them to live on very comfortably, had he not been so often ill himself, and obliged to pay so much to the doctors who attended his family when they were ill. This made them very poor, but it was not being poor, she said, that made her look and feel sorrowful,—it was the thought of three sweet little babies, all younger than Alice, who had died and been buried side by side in the green churchyard of the place from which they had

moved. Then she would check herself, and say how very wrong it was for her to grieve so much, when God had still left her dear Alice with her, and she knew her babies were all happy in heaven.

Mrs. Scott was a very neat and careful woman, and poor as they were, she made her home quite comfortable—a great deal more comfortable than that of many people who have more money in their purses, and better furniture in their houses. Their little court-yard too was filled with pretty flowers, for Alice loved gardening, and was never so happy as when cutting her finest carnations and roses to dress her mother's parlor, and make nosegays for her young friends. And yet Alice was always happy, and so you felt she was the moment you looked at her. She was now a healthy, fine-looking child of nine years old. Her very eyes seemed to sparkle with pleasure; she never walked when she was alone, but bounded along like a young fawn. Her voice was very sweet, and was often heard, when she was with her young companions, ringing out in a gay laugh, or when she was by herself, singing some of the little hymns which her mother had taught her. Yet, gay as Alice was, her laughter was hushed, her bounding step became cautious and noiseless, and her bright eyes were full of tears in a moment, if she saw either her father or her mother suffering from any cause. When they first came to the village, Mrs. Scott was subject to very distressing attacks of pain in the head, and it was touching to see the playful Alice changed into a quiet, watchful nurse.

A year had passed away, and Mrs. Scott was healthier and happier and dear little Alice livelier than ever, when many people in our village and in the country around, and especially many children, became ill with a very dangerous disease, called scarlet fever. My little niece Harriet was one of the first who had it, and she was so ill with it that we feared she would die. As soon as she was well enough to travel, I took her to her grandfather's, about twenty miles off, for a change of air. When we left home, Mr. and Mrs. Scott and Alice were still well. Alice, who loved Harriet very much, wished greatly to see her before she went away, if only to bid her good-by, but I would not consent for fear she should take the disease. Her mother however gave her permission to walk out on the road by which we were to pass, and take one look at Harriet, as we drove by. So when we were about half a mile from home, there stood Alice by the road-side, with a bunch of flowers in her hand. As we passed she threw the flowers into the carriage and called out "Good-by, good-by; dear Harriet, I hope you will come back soon, and well."

I raised Harriet from the pillow on which she was leaning in a corner of the carriage, to the window, that she might see Alice; and as I looked at Alice's red cheeks and smiling face and lively motion, while she ran along by the side of the carriage for a few minutes, I felt sadder than ever to see Harriet so pale and weak.

Now, my little readers, if any of you have a grandfather and grandmother, and have ever gone to visit them after having been ill, you will know how very glad Harriet's grandfather and grandmother were to see her, and how anxious they were to gratify and amuse her. Harriet got well very slowly, and was obliged for some weeks to be much confined to the house, and often to suffer pain. She was a good child, and bore all this so patiently, that when at the end of six weeks we were about returning home, her grandfather gave her a gold piece, worth two dollars and a half, bidding her spend it as she liked. This, you know, was a great deal of money for a little girl, and as Harriet had never had half so much at one time, she was quite wild with delight, thinking at first that it would buy every thing for which she had ever wished. On calculation, however, she found it would take it all to buy one such large wax doll as a little girl who had lately visited her had brought with her. The wax doll she was determined to have, for she thought it by far the most beautiful thing she had ever seen, and so her money was at once disposed of in her own mind.

During the first part of her ride home, Harriet talked of nothing but her doll, which I was to get from the city for her as soon as I could. She had not quite decided what would be the prettiest name for it, or the most becoming color for its dress, when we stopped at a friend's house, about eight miles from our home, where we were to rest for two or three hours. Here there was a very clever girl, a little older than Harriet, who brought out all her books and toys to amuse her. Among the books were several of those entertaining little volumes, called the Boys' and Girls' Library, which Harriet had never read. The little girl offered to lend them to her, and I allowed her to take one of them, as she promised to be very careful of it. As soon as we were in the carriage, Harriet begged me to read for her from this little book; and she was not only much amused with it, but I was able to point out to her some very useful lessons it contained.

We did not arrive at home till after sunset, and as Harriet was much fatigued, she was soon put to bed. Her room opened into mine, and I went in early in the morning to see how she was. She was already awake, and gave me no time to speak to her, for as soon as she saw me, she cried out, "Now, Aunt Kitty, I know what to do with my money."

"Why, my love," said I, "I thought you were going to buy a doll with it, like Eliza Lewis's, and you know I told you that such a doll would take it all."

"Oh yes, I know all that, Aunt Kitty, but I've something a great deal better to do with it now,—I am going to buy books with it. It will buy five volumes of the Boys' and Girls' Library; for see here, Aunt Kitty," showing me the price which was marked on a leaf of the book she had brought home the day before, "see here, this only cost fifty cents, and I've counted, and there are five times fifty cents in my two dollars and a half."

"And are you very sure," said I, "that you will always like the books better than the doll, and that

when you have finished reading them you will not feel sorry for having changed your mind?"

"Oh no! I am very sure I shall not, for you know I could only play with my doll now and then, and if I kept it all to myself I should soon grow tired of it, and if I let the other girls play with it, it would soon get spoiled or broken, and I should have nothing left for my money; but it will take me a long time to read through so many new books, and when they get spoiled or torn up, if I remember what was in them, I shall still have something for my gold piece. And then you know, Aunt Kitty, you cannot play with my doll, but you can read my books."

I was always gratified that my little girl should wish me to share in her pleasures, and so I told her, adding that I thought her choice of the books rather than the doll was very wise. At the end of the book which Harriet had just read, were the names of all the volumes of the Boys' and Girls' Library that had yet been published. Harriet turned to this leaf, and began to show me which of them she intended to buy. I told her, however, that she had better not think any more of them just now, but that after breakfast she might write down their names and give them to me, and I would send for them to a bookseller in the city. In the mean time I reminded her that she had not yet thanked her Heavenly Father for his kind care of her while she was away, or asked him to bless her through this day.

I then left her, as she was dressed, and went to the breakfast parlor, intending to put some questions to the servant who was there about my neighbors, which I had no time to ask the evening before. I now heard very sad news indeed. The servant told me that a great many children, and even some grown persons, had died with scarlet fever. Among the last was Mr. Scott; and Alice had been near death,—indeed was still very ill. This news made me very sad, and when Harriet heard it she forgot both her gold coin and the books it was to buy, while she begged to go with me to see the sick child. As I was no longer afraid of her taking the disease, since persons usually have the scarlet fever but once, I consented, and we set out as soon as we had breakfasted.

As we came in sight of the house, we found it looking very gloomy. Though the morning was pleasant and the weather warm, the windows were all closely shut. The little court-yard looked neglected; it was full of weeds. Alice's flowers seemed to have withered on their stalks, and wanted trimming and training sadly. We did not see a creature, or hear a sound, and every thing was so still and seemed so lifeless, that it made me feel melancholy, and Harriet appeared a little afraid, for she drew close to my side and took hold of my hand. When we came quite near, I found the door was ajar, and we went in at once without knocking. The parlor door stood open, and I looked in, hoping to find some one there who would tell Mrs. Scott of my coming, as I was afraid we might disturb Alice by going straight to her room. There was no one in the parlor, and bidding Harriet wait there for me, I stepped very softly on, to the room door. I intended to knock at this door so lightly, that though Mrs. Scott might hear me, it would not wake Alice if she were asleep. When I came near the room, however, I heard a sound like some one speaking very low, yet not whispering. The door was not latched, and every thing was so quiet that I stood still and listened. I not only knew that it was Alice's voice, but I could even hear what she said. Her tone was very feeble, as if from her own great weakness, yet sharp, like that in which persons speak who are frightened or distressed. She appeared, poor child, to be both frightened and distressed. It seemed to me that she was complaining to her mother of the darkness and silence around her, while her mother did not answer her at all, but every now and then moaned as if in great pain.

"Mother, dear mother," said Alice, "speak to me; and open the window, mother—pray open the window and give me some light. I am afraid, mother—I am afraid, it is so dark and still—so like the grave."

For a moment the child was silent, as if waiting for her mother's answer; but as no one spoke to her, she cried out again, in still sharper tones, "Oh, mother, mother, where are you? Wake up, mother, dear mother, and open the window and let me look once, only once, on the blessed light, and see your face; and then mother, I will be quiet and go to sleep, and you may shut it all up again."

I began now to be quite anxious about Mrs. Scott, who I thought must be ill herself, or she would certainly answer Alice. Besides, I could not stand the poor child's distress any longer, and thinking it would be a relief to her to hear anybody speak, I pushed the door open and went in. The window was shut, as poor Alice supposed, but still there was light enough for me to see her very plainly. Her face was as white as the pillow on which it was lying, and her long and thick dark hair fell around it in great confusion. This, and the terror she felt, made her look very wild. Mrs. Scott was kneeling at the foot of the bed, her hands were clasped over her head, and her face was buried in the bedclothes. Alice's eyes were opened very widely, and their look, together with what I had heard, told me the painful truth at once. Alice was blind—perfectly blind,—an affliction that sometimes follows scarlet fever. Till this morning she had been either out of her senses, or so low and stupid from the disease, that she did not notice any thing. But now she was better and stronger, and having heard the doctor bid her mother good morning, when he came in to see her, she was first surprised by the long-continued darkness, and then frightened by her mother's silence and distress. And poor Mrs. Scott! she had long feared for her child's eyes, as Alice would complain of the darkness when the broad daylight was around her, and grieve that she could not see her mother's face when she was weeping over her pillow, or pressing her cold hand on her hot and aching head. But the fever gave Alice many strange fancies, and Mrs. Scott had hoped that this was one of them, till this morning, when the doctor told her that her precious child was blind, quite blind, and must, he feared, be so always.

I have told you that Mrs. Scott had had many sorrows; that she had been sick and poor, had lost three sweet children, and last and worst of all, her husband; yet she had never complained; she had always said, "My Father in heaven loves me, and he sees this sorrow will do me good, or he would not let it happen to me." But she was now weak and worn with grief and fatigue, and when she first heard that her gay, laughing Alice must now be always in darkness—that she could never again see the green earth, or the beautiful flowers, or the bright skies she had so loved to look upon—that, instead of running, jumping, and dancing along, she must now be led by another, or feel her way very slowly and carefully, she was so distressed, so very, very sad, that she had no power to answer Alice, except by low moans.

Much of what I have now told you I heard afterwards; but I saw enough at once to show me what I had best do. Now I want my little readers to mark what I say, and remember whenever any thing happens to another which terrifies or distresses them, they are not to run away from it, but to try to do something to remove it. It no doubt makes you feel very badly to see another suffering, but then you know they feel a great deal worse than you do, and if you will only think more of them than of yourself, you will generally find something you can do to help them.

As soon as I saw how things were with Mrs. Scott and poor Alice, I said to Mrs. Scott in as cheerful and quiet a manner as possible, "How d'ye do, Mrs. Scott? I have called to see how Alice and you are to-day, and I am very glad to find she is better." Then going up to Alice, and taking her hand, I said, "I rejoice, my dear little girl, that you are getting well again; but you have been very ill, and your mother has watched by you so long that she seems quite overcome with sleep. Will you let me take care of you for a little while, that she may rest?"

I spoke very gently, and the child seemed pleased to hear any voice besides her own.

"Thank you, ma'am," said she, "I will be glad to have you sit by me while my mother rests, if you will only open the window and give me some light."

Her mother groaned.

"I will open the window, my dear, and let you feel the breeze, and know that the light is around you, but your eyes are weak yet—so weak that it would hurt them very much—perhaps blind them entirely, if the light fell on them, so you must let me tie a handkerchief lightly over them before I open the window, and promise me you will not take it off while it is open."

In this I only told Alice the truth; for I knew if there was any hope of her recovering her sight it must be by keeping her from using her eyes for some time. She readily promised what I asked, and I then took my pocket-handkerchief, which was fine and thin, and passing it lightly over her eyes, tied it so as to cover them without pressing upon them. I then opened the window, and as she heard me open it and felt the breeze upon her, Alice said, "Oh, thank you, ma'am, it is so pleasant to know that the light is here, and I can almost see it; but indeed you need not be afraid of its hurting me, for I will keep my eyes shut all the time."

The poor mother had by this time risen up from the foot of the bed, and was trying to be calm; but when she heard her little girl speak in such cheerful tones, and especially when she heard her say that she could almost see, knowing as she did that this was only a fancy which would soon pass away, she was quite overcome, and bursting into tears she hurried out of the room. I thought it was best to let her go by herself, for I believed she would ask God to give her strength to bear this great sorrow, and I knew that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," and that he could send into her heart such thoughts of his love and tender care for her and her dear child, as would comfort her more than any thing I could say to her.

I called Harriet in to see Alice. They were very glad to meet, and chatted cheerfully together, while I moved about the room, putting things in as neat order as I could. Harriet told Alice of every thing she had seen since she had been away, which she thought could amuse her, not forgetting the beautiful wax doll, nor was the gold piece left out, nor what she intended to do with it. Alice quite approved of Harriet's intention to buy books instead of a doll, and Harriet promised that she would lend them to her as soon as her eyes were strong enough to read; for Harriet never supposed that Alice was blind, but thought the handkerchief was bound over her eyes because the light pained them, as she remembered it had done hers when she was ill.

After a while, Mrs. Scott came in, and going straight up to Alice, pressed her lips tenderly over the places in the handkerchief which covered those dear eyes, and asked her gently how she was now. Alice answered cheerfully, "I feel a great deal better, and so glad to hear your voice again. You quite frightened me this morning, dear mother, when you would not speak to me. Have you slept?"

"Not slept, my love, but rested, and I too feel a great deal better."

"I am very glad;" then raising her hand she passed it softly over her mother's face, saying, "I will be satisfied while I can hear you and feel that it is you, though they will not let me look at you."

Mrs. Scott's lip trembled, and the tears came into her eyes again, but they did not run over. She kissed Alice, and then turning to me, thanked me for coming over, and asked how long I had been at home.

"Only since yesterday evening," I replied, "and I have so much yet to attend to before I shall feel quite at home, that now, as you are able to come back to Alice, I must, I think, leave her till to-morrow; but you are too much fatigued to be left alone with her. I know a very good girl, who will

not only help you to do your work, but who is so kind that she will take care of Alice, and so cheerful and pleasant, that she will amuse her when you cannot be with her. I will stop at her house on my way home, and send her to you."

The poor woman did not speak directly, but after a little while she said, "I think, ma'am, I ought not to let the girl you speak of come, for I am not so well able to pay for help as I once was."

"I will settle all that with her," said I, "and I will find some way to make your little girl here pay me for it, when she gets well. And now, Alice, you will I know remember your promise to me, and not even ask your mother to take the handkerchief off your eyes till she darkens the room this evening. Perhaps, my dear child, you may have to be in the dark for many days, but we will do every thing we can to help you to bear it patiently. Harriet will spend part of every day with you, and she can read for you till you are able to read for yourself again."

"Oh, thank you, ma'am, I do not think I shall mind the darkness at all, now, if my mother stays with me, and you will let Harriet come very often to see me."

"Well, my child, we will both come to-morrow, and now we will bid you good-by, and I think you had better be still and try to sleep, for while you are so weak, it is not right for you to talk long without resting."

Harriet and I then left the room, followed by Mrs. Scott, who told Alice she was going to the door with us, and would soon be back. She opened the door for us, and when we had gone out, she stepped out too, and taking my hand, thanked me again and again for the comfort I had given her poor blind girl, as she called Alice, when she was too much stunned, she said, to know what to do. I told her I thought it was very important that Alice should not know her misfortune till she was stronger, for fear she should grieve so much as to make her ill again; and that now, till the doctor should think it right to tell her of it, I hoped Alice would suppose that the bandage, or the darkness of the room, kept her from seeing. "But," I asked Mrs. Scott, "does not the doctor think something may be done to restore her sight?"

"Nothing that I can do, ma'am," said the poor woman, beginning to weep, "and that's the worst part, and the hardest to bear;—though I try to remember that my Father in heaven sends that too. The doctor says that in the city there are eye-doctors,—he calls them oculists,—who know a great deal which he does not, and that they might do her some good. But, ah, ma'am! how am I to go to the city with her, even if they would attend her for nothing after we got there, when I owe more money than I fear I can pay for a long while, without working very hard, and living myself, and what's worse, making my poor child live, on bread and water!"

I tried to say something that might comfort this poor woman, but I felt it was a very sad case, and could not say much. She answered to what I did say, "True, ma'am, true, God will strengthen me to bear what only His own hand could bring upon me. May he forgive my complaining heart. He has given me back my child from the very gate of the grave, and now He has sent you to me to be a kind friend in my time of great trouble, and I ought to feel, and I will try to feel, very thankful. But, good-by, ma'am, I hope to see you again to-morrow. I must not stay longer now, for fear my poor child should want me." So saying, she shook hands with Harriet and me, and went into the house.

As soon as she was gone, Harriet, who had stood while we were talking, staring with a half-frightened look, first at Mrs. Scott, and then at me, said in a low tone, "Aunt Kitty, what is the matter with Alice? What does Mrs. Scott mean by calling her a blind girl? Surely, Alice will see again soon—will she not, Aunt Kitty?"

"I fear not, my love, I fear not—certainly not, unless Mrs. Scott can take her where she can have more done for her than anybody here can do, and I know not how she will get money enough to do that."

"Money enough—why, Aunt Kitty, is Mrs. Scott so very poor?"

"You heard her say that she owed money which she could only hope to pay by working very hard, and living very poorly. She has no husband to work for her now, Harriet, and Mr. Scott's and Alice's illness must have made her spend a great deal."

"Oh, Aunt Kitty! I am very sorry for Alice, and if I thought it would help her, I would—"

What Harriet would have said was here interrupted by the coming up of the very girl whom I had wished to get to help Mrs. Scott take care of Alice. I told her of Alice's blindness, how anxious we were that she should not hear of it just now, and that we wished to keep her amused, as well as to have her made comfortable. I added, that I would pay her for what she did, and then asked how soon she could go.

"Right away, right away, ma'am. Poor things, and such kind and clever people as them are too. I only wish, ma'am, I could go to 'em without pay; I am sure if it wasn't for them as depends on me, I'd do it with all my heart."

I told her this was not necessary, though it was very kind, and again bidding her take good care of Alice, I sent her to them while I went home.

Harriet was very silent during the rest of our walk. I did not ask any questions about what she had been going to tell me she would do for Alice, if she thought it would help her; because,

whatever she did, I wished should be done from her own free will. When we were again at home, she did not go to play or to read, as usual, but sat down in one place, as if she were tired, and seemed very thoughtful; yet she never named Alice, which surprised me a little, as she was accustomed to talk to me of whatever distressed her. In the afternoon she tried to amuse herself, bringing out first a book and then a toy from her room into the parlor where I sat, until she had gathered together all she had; but there seemed still to be something wanting, for in a short time the books were laid aside, the toys pushed away, and Harriet, apparently forgetting them, again sat as she had done in the morning, quiet and thoughtful. After it began to grow dark, she carried her books and toys back to her room, and came and seated herself at my feet. As the weather was warm, we had no lights in the parlor, and the hall light just let us see where objects stood, but was not bright enough to show us very plainly what they were.

"Aunt Kitty," said Harriet, "can Alice see no more plainly than we do now, when there is no light in the room?"

"Not so plainly, my love, for we can see a little. She can see no more than you can of a dark night, when you wake up at midnight, with your windows shut and your curtains down."

She was silent a few minutes, and then said, "It must be a dreadful thing, Aunt Kitty, to be blind."

"Yes, my dear Harriet," said I, "it must be a dreadful thing—and I fear neither you nor I have been thankful enough to God for saving you from such an affliction, when you got well of the same disease which has made Alice blind. When you pray for your little friend to-night, my love, do not forget how much reason you have to be thankful that you can see."

Harriet did not say any thing more, but she laid her head on my lap, and I heard her sob once or twice.

It was now getting late, and kissing her, I told her it was time for her to go to bed, and that I would only sit up long enough after her to write a letter to a bookseller to whom I intended sending for the books. Harriet was now standing by me in the hall, where I had gone to light her candle, and when I mentioned the books, she looked as if she was about to speak, but stopped herself. After I had ended, she said, "Aunt Kitty,"—then stopped again.

"What, my love?" said I.

"Nothing, ma'am—good-night," and taking her candle she went to her room.

I wrote my letter and then went to mine, into which, you must remember, I have told you hers opened. I turned my latch very softly, for fear of waking Harriet if she was asleep; but as soon as I entered, she called out, "I'm not asleep, Aunt Kitty; please come here, and let me speak to you."

I went to her directly, asking what was the matter.

"I have been waiting and listening a long time for you, Aunt Kitty, for there is something I wanted to say to you, and I could not go to sleep till I had said it. I hope you did not write the letter about the books, for I do not want them now, Aunt Kitty. I want you, if you please, to give the money to poor Mrs. Scott, that it may help her to go to the city and get something done for Alice's eyes."

"My dear Harriet, this money is yours, and you have a right to do what you will with it, but I hope you have thought well of what you are going to do now. It will not do afterwards to be sorry you did not buy the books you want, which you will not be likely to get in any other way."

"Oh no, Aunt Kitty! I do not want them now; at least, I do not want them half so much as I want Alice to see again, and I have thought very much about it,—indeed I have.

"When I first heard Mrs. Scott and you talking this morning, and you said Alice was blind, and Mrs. Scott was too poor to take her to the good doctors, who might do something for her, I remembered my gold piece, and thought I would give it to her to help her, and I was just going to tell you so when Betty Maclaurin came up, and you stopped to speak to her about going to Mrs. Scott's, and then I could not, you know."

"Well, but you could have told me after she had gone, if you still wished it."

"Yes, I know I could, but while you were talking to her, I remembered my books, and I called all their names over, and thought how Alice would like to hear me read them, till I wanted them more than ever; and then I thought it would be a great deal kinder to get them and read some of them every day to Alice, than to give Mrs. Scott my money, which, though I think it so much, would hardly help her at all. Besides, Aunt Kitty, I knew you and my uncle and my grandpapa would give Mrs. Scott a great deal more money than my two dollars and a half, if it would help Alice."

"And what made my little girl change her mind—what made her think this would not be best?"

"I do not know, Aunt Kitty; I only know I could not think of any thing but Alice all day, though I tried every way to forget her, and every thing I looked at made me feel bad, because Alice could not see it too."

"Did my little Harriet never think, during all this time, of that verse she learned from her Bible the other day, which I told her would always teach her what she ought to do for others, 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise?'"

"Oh yes! Aunt Kitty, I thought of that this evening, when you were telling me what a dreadful thing it is to be blind, and that I might have been blind, as well as Alice, and I said to myself, if I had been blind, I would have thought it very unkind in Alice not to do all she could to help me to see again, and then I felt as if I was so cruel that I could not help crying; and when you said you were going to write for the books, I wanted to beg you not to do it, but somehow I could not—so I only bid you good-night, and came to bed."

"And what happened then to make you feel differently? Tell me all you felt and thought, dear child, and then I shall know whether you are doing right now."

"Why you see, Aunt Kitty, after I was undressed I knelt down to say my prayers, and after I had thanked God as you told me to do, for my own eyesight, I tried to pray that He would give Alice back hers; but, though I said the words over and over again, I could not feel as if I was praying them, for I kept thinking, Aunt Kitty, how deceitful God would think me, to pretend to care so much for Alice's eyes, when I really cared so much more about my books; and then I remembered the little prayer you taught me once, 'Oh God! I pray thee show me what is right to do, and make me love to do it.' As soon as I said 'what is right to do,' it came into my head that it was right for me to do all I could for Alice, if everybody else did ever so much for her; and now, Aunt Kitty, I wish I had a great deal more money, that I might give it all to her—and though I am just as sorry for Alice, I do not feel half so bad about her; for if we are willing to do all we can for her, God, who loves her a great deal more than any of us, will certainly give her back her eyesight. Don't you think he will, Aunt Kitty?"

"God does love her a great deal more than we do, my dear; but He is a great deal wiser than we are, and He may see that it is best for Alice that she should continue blind, though it seems so terrible to us. You must remember, therefore, that Alice may go to the city and come back no better. Should you not feel sorry then that you had given up your books without doing her any good?"

Harriet thought for a moment, and then said, "No, Aunt Kitty, for I should have done what was right, and I could never feel sorry for that, you know."

I kissed the sweet child, and said, "Dear Harriet, always remember what you now say. Do right, my child, and you will be happy, let what will happen,—far happier than if by doing wrong you could get every thing in the world you wished for. And now I may tell you that you could have made no use of your money which I would have thought half so good, or which would have given me half so much pleasure."

"I am very glad, Aunt Kitty; I was afraid at first that you did not like me to give it away."

"Why, Harriet? What made you feel afraid of this?"

"Because you did not talk at first as you do when you are very much pleased."

"I had a reason, my dear, for not seeming very much pleased until I had heard *why* you wished to give your money to Alice,—a very good reason, I think, which it would take me too long to explain to you to-night, for it is very late already for such a little girl to be sitting up. Go to bed now, and to-morrow morning I will tell you all about it." Harriet went to bed, and soon forgot her good intentions and my good reasons in a sound sleep.

I dare say my little readers thought just as Harriet did, that I did not seem at first as much pleased as I ought to have been with her kind and generous feelings to her friend; but if they will read the conversation I had with her the next morning, I think they will understand why this was.

I did not wake Harriet as early as usual the next morning, because she had been up so late at night. As soon, however, as she was well awake, she remembered our conversation, and said, "Now, Aunt Kitty, you will tell me what you promised?"

"Not now, my love, for it is late, and breakfast will soon be ready; but after breakfast we will go to Mrs. Scott's, and on our way there, I will answer all your questions."

As soon as we had set out for Mrs. Scott's, Harriet again reminded me of my promise.

"Well, my love," said I, "you wish to know why I did not tell you at once how much pleased I was with your intention to help Alice. It was because I wanted first to hear your reasons for doing it, and so to know whether you were acting from an impulse or a principle."

Now my little readers are doubtless very much puzzled by this "acting from an impulse or a principle," and so was Harriet, too. She looked up in my face with a very thoughtful air for a minute, then shook her head, and said, "Aunt Kitty, I do not understand you at all, I do not even know what *impulse* means, or *principle* either."

"I did not expect you would, my love; but I hope to be able to explain them to you, if you will listen very carefully to what I am going to say. Persons are said to act from impulse, when they are led to do a thing from feeling, without pausing to ask whether the feeling be right or wrong. Thus, if you were eating a piece of cake, and a very poor child should come up to you, and saying she was hungry, ask you for it, and you should give it to her without a moment's thought, from a feeling of pity for her, this would be acting from impulse."

"And would it not be right, Aunt Kitty, to give the poor little child my cake?"

"Very right, my love, and if you had asked yourself what it was right to do, you would have given it, perhaps, just as quickly, for you know your Bible tells you, 'Be pitiful'—'Feed the hungry.' Your feeling of pity, then, was a right feeling, and your readiness to give your cake was what we call a good impulse; but you know there are some very wrong feelings, such as anger, which sometimes makes little girls give hard words, and even hard blows, to their brothers and sisters, or playmates, who will not do as they wish. This again is acting from impulse, though it is a bad impulse. So you see, my dear Harriet, as the best-natured people in the world sometimes have very wrong feelings, if they are accustomed to do just what their feelings tell them to do, that is, to act from impulse, you can never be sure whether their actions will be good or bad."

"But, Aunt Kitty, when I find out my feeling is a right feeling, I may do just what it tells me to do?"

"No, my love; even when a feeling is a right feeling, it will not be well to do always just what it tells you, for a right feeling may lead to a very wrong action. You think this strange, but I will tell you a story which will show you that it sometimes is so. A little girl was once sent by a lady who was making a visit to her mother, to a thread and needle store, to buy a spool of cotton for her. The lady had given her a shilling, which she held carefully between her finger and thumb, for fear of losing it. Another girl who was passing saw the shilling, and wanted it very much. Being a very wicked child, she began to cry, or at least, to seem to cry, saying that she had just lost the only shilling her mother had, as she was going to the baker's to buy a loaf of bread with it; that they had nothing to eat at home, and she was afraid her mother would beat her when she went back and told her what she had done. The little girl who had the shilling felt very sorry for her, and offered to help her look for the money. They did look for it a long time, the wicked child crying piteously all the while, and saying that her mother would kill her, till the other little girl felt so grieved, that she gave her the shilling which she had in her hand. Now, as she believed the wicked child's story, the sorrow she felt for her was very right, and yet you see it led her to do a very wrong action—to give away what did not belong to her. Nor did the wrong-doing stop here; when she went home, her mamma, to whom she intended to tell all about it, was gone out, and the lady asking for her cotton, she was afraid to tell her what she had done with the money, and so she committed a greater fault by saying what was not true,—she told her she had lost the shilling. The lady thought her very careless, and thus she got blame which she did not deserve, and as she was really a good little girl in general, she was quite miserable for several days about the story she had told, until she summoned courage to let her mamma know the whole truth. Here you see, Harriet, a very kind feeling made this little girl act very badly; but if she had been accustomed, when a feeling inclined her to do any thing, to ask herself if it would be right, before she did it, that is, to act from principle instead of impulse, she would have said to the wicked child, 'I am very sorry for you, and if this shilling was mine, I would give it to you, but it is not. You must wait till I have bought the spool of cotton I was sent for, and then, if you will go home with me, I will ask my mamma for another shilling for you.'"

"Now, Aunt Kitty, I think I understand you; if I had given my money to Alice yesterday morning, when I first heard she was blind, and before I had thought what was right for me to do, I would have acted from impulse, would I not?"

"Yes, my love, and though it would have been a good impulse, and you would even then have had more pleasure than in spending it in any thing that was only for yourself, yet I am afraid your pleasure would not have lasted long. You would soon have begun to think of your books, and if other people offered to help Alice, you would have thought you had been very foolish to give them up."

"But I shall not think so now, Aunt Kitty—I shall always think it was right to give them up to do Alice good."

"That is true, Harriet, and the happiness you feel in doing what is right, you will always feel; for that which makes you happy will not change; what is right to-day, will be right to-morrow, and the next day, and the next."

We walked on a little way in silence, and then Harriet said, looking up at me with a smiling, pleasant face, "Then, Aunt Kitty, after all, it was not very wrong for me not to give my money to Alice at once?"

"It was not wrong at all, my dear, for you not to give it till you had asked yourself whether it was right to do so; but you might have asked this question as soon as you felt sorry for Alice, and then you would have done in the morning what you waited till night to do, and have felt just as happy on account of doing it. I would be very sorry to have my little girl suppose that when she sees anybody in distress, she must wait a great while to think the matter over, before she does any thing for them. There is only one question you need ask, before you try to help them, and that is—What is it right for me to do? This, you can ask immediately, and you need not wait long for an answer—conscience will tell you very honestly and very quickly what is right."

Now perhaps some of my little readers may not know as well as Harriet did, what I mean by conscience, so I will tell them. I mean something within you, which makes you know whether you have been good or bad children, before anybody else says any thing about it.

"But, Aunt Kitty," said Harriet, "how is my conscience always to know what is right or wrong?"

"There are many ways, Harriet, in which conscience may learn something about it; but the easiest and simplest way of all is by reading your Bible, and trying to understand and remember

what that tells you to do or not to do. When conscience is thus taught, if it tells you that what a feeling would lead you to do, is right, you must do it at once, without thinking any farther about it; and if conscience tells you a feeling is wrong, you must try to get rid of it at once."

"Get rid of it, Aunt Kitty!" said Harriet, with a wondering look, "how can I get rid of a feeling?"

"The best way, my dear Harriet, is by refusing to do any thing it would have you. Thus, if you are angry with any one, and the feeling of anger would have you say some of those hard words to them which I spoke of just now, refuse to say them, or if possible even to think them over in your own mind, and you will very soon get rid of your anger."

Harriet did not say any thing for some minutes. When she next spoke, it was in a very low and somewhat sad tone.

"Aunt Kitty, I am afraid I cannot do all you tell me, for I have tried sometimes, when I have been angry, not to say any thing, and I could not help talking."

"I know, my dear, that it is often very difficult, but the harder it is, the happier will you feel if you can do it. But, my dear Harriet, you planted some seeds in your garden this morning, and watered them, yet you know they could not grow any more than a pebble could, if God did not put life into them, and make them take in the water and the warmth which will nourish them and cause them to swell out and put forth; and so, after all the instructions which I can give you, or even which you can get from your Bible, it is only God who can put into your heart such a strong desire to do right, that you will receive these instructions, as the little seeds receive the water and warmth, and put forth right feelings and right actions, as they put forth their green leaves. This you must ask Him to do. But here we are in sight of Mrs. Scott's, slowly as we have walked, and you will not be sorry, I suppose, to have such a very grave talk stopped."

"I am not glad to have you stop talking, Aunt Kitty, but I will be very glad to see Alice, for I have brought a book to read for her, that I know she wants to hear very much."

I was pleased to see, as I approached, that the house looked more cheerful. The parlor windows were open, and as we went up the steps and passed through the little porch, I saw that they had been nicely swept. The door was latched, and on my knocking at it Mrs. Scott herself opened it for us. She seemed very glad to see us, and said Alice felt stronger and better, and that she had been looking, or rather listening for us all the morning. We went directly to her room. There too every thing seemed in order, and looked pleasantly. The sash was raised, and the soft warm breeze brought to us the sweet smell of the clover, a field of which was in bloom quite near the house. Alice was sitting in bed, propped up with pillows, and though still very pale, looked much more like herself than she had done the day before. The handkerchief was over her eyes, as I had placed it, and I told her I was much pleased to see she had not forgotten her promise. She smiled and answered me cheerfully, "Indeed, ma'am, I have been very careful to keep it. I would not ask to take off the handkerchief till my mother shut the window last night, and told me it was quite dark, and I tied it on myself as soon as I woke this morning, though that was long before daylight. But now," she added, speaking very fast, as if she was afraid that something would call off my attention before I had heard all she wished to say, "may not I have it off just for one single minute? I do want to see the clover, for I know it is in bloom by the smell."

"And I hope, my dear little girl, you will be satisfied to know it only by the smell to-day, for it would be very imprudent to expose your eyes to the light so soon. Harriet has come to spend the morning with you, and you must see with her eyes. She will read for you, and when you grow weary of listening, she will tell you how any thing looks which you want very much to see."

"Oh! I shall like that, for then, Harriet, I can see all that you saw when you were away, your grandfather's house, and all the places that you passed on the road, for you know you can tell me how they looked, and then I shall see them through your eyes. Will not that be pleasant!"

Having thus satisfied Alice, I proposed to Mrs. Scott that we should leave the children, as I thought Harriet would read better, and Alice and she would talk more freely, if we were not there to listen to them. I had another reason too, as my little readers will presently see. I wanted to speak to Mrs. Scott about Alice, to learn whether the doctor had seen her after I went away the day before, and whether he still thought that something might be done in the city for her eyes. Mrs. Scott told me he had been there the evening before, when poor Alice thought the room quite dark, and wondered her mother did not bring in a light for the doctor, though a lamp was burning brightly on the table near her. The doctor passed this lamp before her eyes, holding it quite close to them, but she never winked. Poor Mrs. Scott told me this with her eyes full of tears, which streamed down her cheeks as she added, that the doctor did not speak a word, but that the mournful shake of his head as he set down the lamp said as plainly as any words could do, that he thought her child's a very bad case. The doctor's house was quite near to Mrs. Scott's, and while she was speaking, we saw him coming home from a visit he had been making. He was on horseback, and seeing me at the open window, he stopped his horse at the gate of the court-yard to say that he was glad to see me at home again, and to ask how his little friend Harriet was, for Harriet having been, as I told you before, a very good child in her sickness, she and her doctor were very close friends.

Leaving Mrs. Scott in the parlor, I went to the gate of the court-yard, and told the doctor I wanted to put some questions to him about Alice, which I would rather Mrs. Scott should not hear. He very kindly got off his horse and came quite near me. I then told him that I wished to know from him whether there was the least hope that any thing could be done in the city to

restore Alice's sight. Looking very grave, he answered, that he was afraid not, but as physicians who knew more about the eyes than he did might think differently, if Mrs. Scott were a little richer, or if he were rich enough to help her, he would still advise her to go. I told the doctor that I had some friends who I thought would give Mrs. Scott as much money as would take her to B. and pay her board as long as it would be necessary for Alice to stay there, but that I was afraid the attendance of these oculists would cost a great deal more perhaps than they could give.

"Not if she go to B.," said the doctor quickly. "That, you know, is the place from which I came, and I know many physicians there. To some of these I would give Mrs. Scott letters, and through them, the pious and excellent Dr. W., the best oculist there, might be made acquainted with the case of our little Alice. He would, I am sure, do all he could for her without any charge."

I asked the doctor if he knew any thing of the Institution for the blind in B.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied. "It is a most noble institution, and its manager, Dr. H., the most benevolent of men. To him I can give Mrs. Scott a letter, and this poor child will, I doubt not, have all the aid which he can give her."

Perhaps my little readers never heard of these institutions for the blind, and I will therefore tell them, that there, those who are perfectly blind are taught to read, write, sew, and do many fancy works, which it would seem to us quite impossible to do without sight. Now you will see at once, if Alice should continue blind, what a great advantage it would be to her to be taught such things. To sit always in the dark, and be able to do nothing, might make even a merry little girl sad, while even blindness may be borne cheerfully, when the blind can be employed. Besides, Alice, if able to do some of the works I have named, might earn money by them, perhaps enough to support herself and her mother too; and I need not tell you what a comfort that would be to a good, affectionate child.

Before the doctor left me, I asked him how soon it would be prudent for Alice to travel; and he said, if she continued to get better, she might set out on the following Monday, as she would go almost all the way in a steamboat, which would not fatigue her so much as travelling by land. He added, if by Saturday evening I were able to get as much money for Mrs. Scott as would be necessary, he would have the letters he had promised to write ready for her, and we would then meet at her house on Sunday, and tell the poor little girl of her blindness, as kindly and gently as we could, if she should not discover it before that time.

When I went back to the house, finding Mrs. Scott still in the parlor, I told her of what the doctor and I had been speaking, and asked her whether, if she should go to B. and find that nothing could be done by the physicians there for her child's eyes, she would be willing to have her placed for a year or two at the Institution for the Blind.

"Willing, my dear ma'am!" said the good woman, "I shall be thankful indeed to the kind people who give their money to support such a good school, and still more to God, who put it in their hearts to do so. I know it will be very hard to part from my poor little girl, even for an hour, now she's so helpless, but I need not come far away from her, for I dare say I can get some kind of work in B. by which I can make enough to live upon, and if she can't come home to me at night, they will, maybe, let me go to see her every day; don't you think they will, ma'am?"

"I do not doubt it," I replied; "but now I will see Alice, and bid her good-by, for I must hasten home to write a letter that I wish to send away this afternoon."

I entered Alice's room as I spoke, and found her still listening to the book which Harriet had not more than half finished reading, as she had stopped to talk over with Alice whatever seemed to her most pleasant in it. Alice seemed so unwilling to part with Harriet, that I gave her permission to stay till evening, when I promised to send for her, adding that I would call again myself the next morning.

"And then, ma'am," said Alice, "do you not think—" she stopped, and seemed confused.

"Do I not think what, Alice—speak, my dear child,—what would you ask?"

"I am afraid you will think me very teasing, ma'am; but I am so tired of the dark. Do you not think I can take off the handkerchief by that time?"

It made me very sad to hear her speak of being tired of the dark—so sad that I could not answer her directly. Thinking from my silence that I was displeased with her, she burst into tears and said, "I was afraid you would be angry with me."

"Indeed, my dear child," said I, kissing her and wiping the tears from her face, "I am not angry, nor am I at all surprised that you should be tired of this unpleasant bandage, but you will not now have to bear it long. This is Thursday—on Sunday the doctor says he will take it off altogether. You will try, I hope, for the next two days to bear it as cheerfully, and think of it as little as possible."

"Oh yes, ma'am! indeed I will,—I will not say another word about it."

"And now, my dear little girl, I would have you remember in all your troubles, little and great, that He who sends them is God, your kind and tender heavenly Father. Do you think, Alice, that your mother would willingly make you suffer pain?"

"No, ma'am, I am sure she would not."

"And yet she has given you, since you were sick, very bad-tasted and sickening medicine, and even put a blister on you, which must have given you great pain. Why was this?"

"To save me from being more ill, and having greater pain, and to make me well," said Alice, in a very low voice.

"True, my dear child; and God, who tells us in the Bible that he loves us better than even mothers love their children, never, we may be sure, suffers any pain or trouble to come upon us which is not to save us from greater pain, to make us better. Remember this, and it will help you to bear a great many things easily, which would otherwise seem very hard and fret you very much. Harriet, can you not repeat for Alice those lines you learned the other day, called a conversation between a mother and her sick child?"

As Alice looked very grave, I pressed her little hand in mine, and without speaking went out of the room, as Harriet began to recite the lines which I will set down here, as I think my little readers would like to see them.

Conversation between a Mother and her sick Child.

CHILD.

Mother, we read to-day, you know,
Where holy Scriptures tell
That Jesus, when he lived below,
Loved little children well.

And then you told me how his word,
From the bad spirit's power,
Freed him, who never spoke, nor heard,
Until that blessed hour.

Beside the ruler's lifeless child,
In pitying tone he spoke,
"The maiden sleeps"—though scorners smiled,
She heard his voice, and woke.

And now, you say, above the sky
Unchanged, he loves us still;
Then why did he let baby die,
And why am I so ill?—

MOTHER.

When Mary walk'd with mother last,
She saw a little flower,
Drooping its head and fading fast
Within her garden bower.

To a more sunny spot removed,
That flower blooms fair and bright;
Our drooping baby Jesus loved,
And bore from earthly blight.

And though, my child, I cannot tell
Why yet he leaves you ill,
As I am sure he loves you well,
I doubt not that he will,
At the best time, heal every pain,
And make my Mary well again.

The letter which I had told Mrs. Scott I wished to send off that afternoon was to Harriet's grandfather, to whom I intended writing about Alice; for he was a very kind, good man, and was always glad to be told of those who wanted, when he had any thing to give. He had promised to make us a visit soon, but I did not know that it would be so soon as this week. However, about an hour after I had gone home, when I had written, and just as I was folding my letter, a carriage drove to the door, and he alighted from it. As I knew he would stay with us two or three days I was in no hurry to speak of Alice, preferring to wait till Harriet came home in the evening, and see whether she would think of interesting her grandfather in her little friend. He had been with me about two hours when I sent for her, and he told the servant who went that she need not mention his coming, for he thought it would be very pleasant to see Harriet's first joy at meeting him, when she so little expected to see him.

As Harriet came back with the servant, we could now and then catch a glimpse of her white dress through an opening of the wood, and while she was still too far off to distinguish the faces of persons sitting in the parlor, her grandfather moved away from the window, so that she might not see him till she was quite in the parlor. She came up the steps and through the porch and to the parlor door very quietly and rather slowly, as if she was almost sorry to come in; but the moment she saw her grandfather, she threw down the flowers she had been picking, and springing

towards him, was in his lap before he could even rise from his chair to meet her, crying out, "Oh grandpapa! I am so glad to see you—so very, very glad—more glad than I ever was in my life before."

"Why, how is that?" said he, smiling and kissing her, "I thought my little pet was always as glad to see old grandpapa as she could possibly be."

"So I thought, too, but now I am more glad than ever, for I want some more money very, very much; and I know you will give me some."

Mr. Armand, for that was his name, looked all at once very grave, and said, "So—it is to get money you are glad—not to see me!"

I saw he was not quite well pleased, for he turned aside his face as Harriet would have kissed him, and seemed about to put her out of his lap. But Harriet was too eager to notice all this; she kept her seat, and putting her arm around his neck, spoke very fast, "Oh yes, grandpapa! you know I am always glad to see you; but now I do want some money for poor Alice."

"For poor Alice," said Mr. Armand, "that alters the case," and drawing her close to him again, and looking much better satisfied with her, he added, "And who is Alice?—and what makes her *poor*?"

"Alice! Why don't you remember Alice Scott, that I talked so much about when I was at your house? Don't you remember I told you I loved to play with her better than with any of the girls, because she was so good-natured, and never was tired?"

"Ah! now I think I do remember something of her. And is it because she is so pleasant a playfellow, that you wish me to give you some money for her?"

"Oh no, grandpapa—that would be funny," said Harriet, laughing; but in a minute she was looking very serious again, and went on speaking more slowly—"Poor Alice's father is dead—he died while we were away—and her mother is very poor, and Alice has been ill, and oh, grandpapa! she's blind, quite blind, and Dr. Franks says he cannot do her any good, but that there are some doctors, eye-doctors, oculists—is it not, Aunt Kitty?—in B., who might do something for her, and poor Mrs. Scott has not any money to carry her there. Now, grandpapa, will you not give me some for her?"

"Have you given her some yourself, Harriet?"

"Yes, grandpapa, I have given her all I had, but though it was a great deal for me it is not near enough for her, you know."

Mr. Armand was silent a minute, and then said, "I am very sorry, my dear child, to disappoint you, and still more sorry not to help your little friend, in whom I feel much interest; but what can I do? I have just spent a great deal of money on a present for you, and I really have now none to give."

"Spent a great deal of money on a present for me!" repeated Harriet, with a wondering face.

"Yes, my dear. I think eighty dollars a great deal of money to spend for a little girl, and I have just given all that for a present for you. Do you remember the little pony you saw at Mr. Lewis's house, and do you remember thinking Eliza Lewis must be a very happy little girl, because she had such a large wax doll to play with in the house, and such a little pony to ride when she went out?"

"Oh, grandpapa! I know that was very foolish in me, but I remember it all—the beautiful pony and all."

"Well, my dear, that beautiful pony is now yours, and will be here this evening with a new saddle and bridle, for all of which I gave, as I have just told you, eighty dollars."

"Oh, Aunt Kitty!" cried Harriet, her eyes bright with joy, "only hear, that beautiful little pony!—and he is so gentle I may ride him all by myself—may I not, grandpapa?"

"Yes, I bought him on that account, for your aunt told me that she would like to have you ride, but feared to put you on one of her horses. This pony," he said, turning to me, "is as gentle as a lamb, and so well broken and obedient, that you scarcely need a bridle for him. I made them bring him very slowly, and rest him some hours on the road, that he might not be at all tired when he got here, for I thought Harriet would want a ride to-morrow morning."

"Yes, yes, dear grandpapa, that will be so pleasant, and I can ride him to Mrs. Scott's, and let Alice see—oh grandpapa!" suddenly stopping herself and looking very sad, "she cannot see him. I had forgotten all about it—and now you have not any money for her, what will she do? Poor Alice!"

"I am very sorry for her," said Mr. Armand, "for it must be a sad thing to be blind. Had I heard about her this morning, I do not know that you would have got your pony, for a gentleman, at whose house I stopped, wanted him so much that he offered to buy him from me at any price. However, he is now yours, and I have no right to him or to the money he would bring. I hope you will enjoy riding him very much, and think of dear grandpapa whenever you ride."

He kissed her again and put her down from his lap. Harriet stood beside him, and smiled a little at first, but not so joyfully as she had done when she first heard of pony. After a while her

countenance grew more and more serious. Several minutes had passed, and her grandfather and I were talking of something else, when Harriet said to him, "Grandpapa, would that gentleman who wanted pony, give you the whole eighty dollars back again?"

"Yes, my love."

"And would you give it all to Alice, grandpapa?"

"I should have no right to give any of it, Harriet. The pony is now yours, and should you choose me to sell him, the money would be yours, and I should honestly pay every cent of it to you, and you could give it to Alice if you liked."

Harriet was again silent for a minute or two, and seemed very thoughtful; then, raising her head and putting her hand into her grandfather's, she said, "Grandpapa, please take pony back and send me the money."

Her grandfather laid his hand affectionately on her head, and said, "Certainly, my child, if you wish it, when I am going,—that will give you two nights and a day to think of it. You have not seen pony's new saddle and bridle yet, and you may change your mind."

"Oh, no, grandpapa, I shall not change my mind, for I am sure it is right to do without pony myself, and let Alice have the money."

She looked at me as she said this, and I replied, "I am pleased that you have not forgotten what we talked of this morning."

Pony came, and beautiful he was, and very pretty was the new saddle and bridle; and Harriet rode him to Mrs. Scott's, in the morning, and home again, and very much did she enjoy her ride; yet she did not change her mind, for when her grandfather asked, on the morning he left us, "Well, Harriet, does pony go with me, or stay with you?" she answered directly, "Go with you, grandpapa." And when he was brought to the door, all saddled and bridled for his journey, she went up to him, and stroking his sleek sides, said, smilingly, "Good-by, my pretty pony—good-by; I could love you very much, but not so much as I love Alice."

So pony went on Saturday morning; and on Saturday evening (for the gentleman who bought him only lived about ten miles from us) came the eighty dollars, enclosed in a very affectionate note to Harriet, from her grandfather. She seemed never tired of reading the note, or of admiring the pretty new bills that were in it. When she gave me these bills for Mrs. Scott, she begged me not to say any thing about her in giving them. As I always liked to know my little girl's reasons for what she did, I asked, "And why, my dear?"

She looked confused, hesitated a good deal, and said, "Aunt Kitty, do you remember when that little baby's mother died last summer, and I begged you to let me make its clothes, and—and—oh, you remember, Aunt Kitty."

"Yes, Harriet, I remember that you sewed very industriously at first, and afterwards, getting tired of your work, the poor little baby wanted clothes sadly."

"But, Aunt Kitty, that is not all. Do you not remember what you told me was the reason I felt tired so soon?"

"I think I do; was it not that you had done it from a desire for praise, and that as soon as people were tired of praising you, you were tired of working? But I do not see why you speak of that now; when you have given the money to Alice, you cannot take it back, so you need not be afraid of changing."

"No, Aunt Kitty, not of changing—at least I could not take it back—but—but you know—" she stopped, and hung her head.

"If you did it for praise, you think you might get sorry for having done it, and wish you could take it back, when people were done praising you."

"Yes, Aunt Kitty, that is it—and if people knew it, I could not be quite sure that I was not doing it to be praised, you know. I am very happy, now that dear Alice will have it, and I do not think I can ever want to take it back, or ever be sorry for giving it to her; but you told me the other day, that doing right was the only thing I could be *certain* of always being glad of; so I would rather, if you please, you would not say any thing about me, and then I shall know that I have done it only because it is right, and that it will always make me just as happy as I am now."

I was too much pleased with Harriet's reasons, to refuse her request; so no one but her grandfather, her grandmother, and myself, ever knew what she had done for Alice, till now that I have told it to you, which I would not have done, did I not feel sure that after what I have said of her wishes, you would not, if you should ever meet her, speak to her on the subject.

I was able to add twenty dollars to Harriet's gift, and so there were one hundred dollars for Mrs. Scott to begin her journey with. It would cost her but little to go to B., and this would enable her to stay there quite long enough to learn what could be done for Alice. Harriet thought she would rather give her gold piece to her friend herself, to spend as she liked.

On Sunday afternoon the doctor and I met, as we had agreed to do, at Mrs. Scott's. We saw her first in the parlor. I gave her the money, and the doctor had his letters ready for her, and explained very carefully to her what he wished her to do. He had already sent by the mail a letter

to his sister, who lived in B., telling her of Mrs. Scott's coming, and requesting her to look out for some quiet place, where she might be cheaply boarded, as near as possible to the Institution for the Blind, for there he thought Alice would have to go. He now gave Mrs. Scott, on a card, his sister's name, and the name of the place where she lived, telling her to go there when she arrived in B., and if his sister had not found a place for her, he was sure she would keep her at her own house till she did. Having arranged all these things with Mrs. Scott, we went into Alice's room.

Alice was sitting up, and was so anxious for our coming, and so happy at the thought of seeing once more, that she had quite a rosy color in her cheeks. The doctor looked at her very sadly, and said "How d'ye do" to her, with a very soft and kind voice. She seemed hardly to hear him—but said very quickly, with a pleasant smile, "Now, doctor, must I take off the handkerchief?" and raised her hand to take out the pin which fastened it.

"Not yet, my dear," said the doctor, taking hold of her hand, "I wish to say something to you first. I fear, Alice, that you are going to be very much disappointed. You have no idea how very bad your eyes are. They give you no pain, and therefore you think there cannot be much the matter with them; but, my dear child, those are not the worst diseases of the eye which give the most pain. You think that only this handkerchief keeps you from seeing, but I am afraid that when I take it off you will still see very dimly—very dimly indeed—nay, Alice, I may as well tell you all,—I fear, that at present, at least, and perhaps for many days to come, you will not see at all."

As Dr. Franks spoke, the smile had gone from Alice's lip, and the color from her cheek, so that when he was done, instead of the bright, happy face she had when we came in, she was looking very pale and very sad. She seemed to have forgotten the handkerchief, her hands hung down in her lap, and she did not speak a word. Both the doctor and I were much grieved for her, and Mrs. Scott's tears fell upon her head as she stood leaning over the back of her chair. Alice did not weep—indeed, she seemed quite stunned.

After a while, the doctor said, "Alice, this handkerchief is of no use to you, and it must be very warm and unpleasant—shall I take it off?"

Her lips moved, and she tried to say, "Yes, sir," but we could scarcely hear her.

It was taken off. Alice kept her eyes shut for a little time, and then opened them suddenly, and turning them first towards the window, looked slowly around the room, then shut them again, without saying a word. She soon opened them, and looking towards the doctor, said, in a low, faltering voice, "Doctor, is it night?"

"No, my child, it is not more than four o'clock in the afternoon."

She was silent a minute, then said, "Is it cloudy?"

"No, Alice, the sun is shining brightly."

She was again still for a little while—the tears began to come into her eyes, and her lip quivered very much, as speaking again, she said, "Are the windows shut?"

The doctor again answered her, "No, they are open, and the sashes raised."

Poor Alice covered her eyes with her hands for a second, then stretching out her arms, and turning her head around as if looking for some one, she cried mournfully, "Mother, mother, where are you?"

"Here, my own precious child," said Mrs. Scott, as coming round to the side of the chair, she put her arms around her, and drew her head down upon her bosom. Alice did not cry aloud, but her tears came fast, and her sobs were so deep, that it seemed as though her heart would break with this great sorrow. The doctor said, softly, to Mrs. Scott, "Persuade her to go to bed, as soon as you can," and then both he and I went out, for we knew her mother would be her best comforter.

Mrs. Scott was to leave her home at ten o'clock the next morning, and at nine Harriet went over to say some parting words to Alice, and I to receive some last directions from Mrs. Scott about taking care of the house and furniture for her. I could see that Harriet was almost afraid to meet Alice, thinking she must be very miserable now that her blindness was known to her. But though she looked sadly, and turned away with tears in her eyes when we first spoke to her, she soon began to talk with Harriet about her journey. She seemed to hope to receive great good from the physicians in B., and I was glad to find that her mother had not tried to discourage this hope; for, I said to myself, if nothing can be done for her, she will find it out soon enough, and every day that passes will help to prepare her better for it. She seemed much gratified by Harriet's present of the gold piece, and when she bade me good-by, said, "I thank you, ma'am, very much, for all your goodness to me."

Mrs. Scott, too, begged me to tell the friends who had helped her how very grateful she was to them, and how earnestly she would pray to God to reward them for all their goodness to her and her fatherless girl. I knew by the color that came into Harriet's face, and the tears that sprang into her eyes, as the good woman spoke, that she had heard her; and I was glad of it, for I thought that she deserved to be made as happy as I felt certain such thankfulness would make her, for her desire to do right, and her readiness to give up her own pleasures for her friend's good.

After our friends were gone, I spent some time in giving directions to Betty about the cleaning

and putting away things, so that she might leave the house in order; and Harriet kept herself from being very sad by working in Alice's garden, weeding the beds and tying up the flowers, which, as I said before, had been left during her illness to trail upon the ground.

Mrs. Scott had promised to write to me as soon as the physicians had decided whether they could or could not be of any service to Alice; and you may be sure we looked very anxiously for her letter. It came about two weeks after she had left us, and I will copy it for you here, as I am sure you will like to see it.

B—, July 2, 18—.

MY DEAR MADAM,—

You were so kind as to ask me to let you know what the doctors here might think of my little girl's case, and I have only been waiting for them to make up their minds about it, before I wrote to you. Yesterday they told me, what I felt long ago, that they could not help her. This is a great trial, ma'am, but, blessed be God, with great trials He sends great mercies. I don't know, ma'am, how to tell you the thankfulness that is in my heart, first to Him, and then to you and Dr. Franks, and all the other kind friends that have helped me through this affliction. It is a comfort to me to feel that every thing has been done for my poor child that could be done; indeed, I fear it would have broken my heart to think that something might be done to make her see again, and to feel that I could never get money enough to pay for that something, if I worked till I was dead. Oh! I thank God that I have not got that to bear.

But I am forgetting all this time to tell you how kind everybody here has been to me. Miss Franks is the doctor's own sister, I am sure, for she is just such another kind and generous person. The steamboat did not get here till it began to grow quite dark, and I was very much troubled, thinking how I should find my way up through the crowd, and fearing lest my little trunk should get lost, which had all our clothes in it, or that if I went to see about that, Alice would get hurt, when a man came on board and asked for me. He said Miss Franks had sent him with a carriage to bring us to her house. It was a hired carriage, as I found afterwards, for I thought at first it was her own; but she would not let me pay any thing for it. Was not this kind? She had us to stay at her house the first night, and the next morning took us again in a carriage to the place where she had got board for us. This was in a very neat house, and with a clever, good woman. She is an elderly, single woman, who seems to be pious, and is very kind to us. Miss Franks sent round her brother's letters, after she had written on them the name of the street and number of the house we were staying at, that the doctors might know where to find Alice.

The next day three doctors came and brought with them a Dr. W—, who, they said, knew more about the eyes than any of them. At first my little girl seemed shy of having so many strangers see her; but they were so kind to her, that she does not feel at all afraid now. Indeed, ma'am, everybody is kind to her, and they speak so softly and pitifully to her, that it often makes the tears come into my eyes, and my heart feel so full, that I have to go away to my room and thank God for all His goodness and theirs to her; for you know, ma'am, goodness to her child, and that a poor blind child too, is more to a mother than any thing people could do for her.

Two or three days ago, Dr. H., who they say is at the head of that Institution for the blind you talked to me about, came to see us, and he talked so gentle and pleasant like, that Alice loved him right away. He had some talk with the doctors when they came, and then he asked Alice if she would not like to know how blind children, who never had seen at all, read and wrote and sewed, and told her, if she would come to his house, he would teach her as they were taught, and that she would find many of them learning there. Alice seemed very glad to hear that she might learn to do these things now, and need not wait doing nothing till her eyes got well, for you know, ma'am, she was always an industrious child, and it grieves her sadly to sit all day idle. She asked though if I could come with her, and the kind gentleman said I could come with her in the morning, and bring her away in the afternoon. This made my heart jump for joy, for I was afraid he was going to say she must stay there all the time. She will begin to go next Monday.

And now, ma'am, I must tell you some more of Miss Franks' goodness. She has got me some plain sewing, and so many of her friends promise to employ me in that way, that I hope I shall be able to live by my needle; and then, ma'am, I think, maybe I ought to send back what money I have left, to them that were so good as to give it to me. Will you please, ma'am, to tell me if this would be right? Alice begs me to send her love to her dear friend, Miss Harriet, and her dutiful respects to you. She bid me tell Miss Harriet that she has not spent her gold piece yet. Please, ma'am, to tell the doctor how kind his sister has been to us, and thank him for all he has done for us. I am afraid, ma'am, I have tired you with this long letter; but indeed when I began to write, I could not help telling you of all the goodness which has been showed to me. God bless you, ma'am, prays

Yours, very thankfully,

Mrs. Scott was told that those who had given her the money would not have any of it returned, and she then, I afterwards found, paid every one in our village to whom she owed any thing, saying, that though they had told her to make herself easy, she could not be easy while she was in debt to those who, she knew, needed the money.

In a few months after she went to the Institution for the Blind, Alice wrote a letter to Harriet, and from that time they wrote to each other as often at least as once in a month. It has been now about three months since Dr. Franks, who had been making a visit in B—, brought Harriet a letter from Alice, which gave her great delight. You shall read it for yourself, and see how much reason she had to be pleased with it.

B—, April 14, 18—.

DEAR HARRIET,—

I am so happy that I can hardly write, or do any thing but tell everybody near me how happy I am; or when there is nobody near me, sit down and think of you and your good aunt, and Dr. Franks, and Susan and Lucy, and everybody that lives at home. Oh, Harriet, we are coming there—coming home next week—dear home. It is the middle of April now, and so many flowers will be opening, and the peach-trees and the apple-trees will be in bloom soon, and they will look so beautiful. I cannot see them, but I can smell them, and feel them, and think how they look. Oh, Harriet, how much better off I am than the poor children who never did see, and who cannot remember how such things looked! But I cannot write any more now, except good-by, from your affectionate

ALICE.

P. S.—I have spent the gold piece; I will show you how, when I come.

Mrs. Scott sent a message to me by the doctor, to ask, with many apologies for troubling me, that I would get Betty Maclaurin to go to her house early in the next week, and put every thing in order for her by Wednesday evening, as she hoped to be at home some time in that night. Betty liked Mrs. Scott and Alice, and was quite ready to do them a kindness; so, early on Monday morning, she was at work, and she worked so industriously in the house, and Harriet so industriously in Alice's garden, that, before Wednesday evening, both house and garden were in perfect order.

Harriet's grandfather had taken so much interest in Alice, that he had said, when she came home he intended to come to see her; so Harriet found time, in the midst of all her preparations for her friend's arrival, to write him what day she was expected; and on Wednesday, not only he, but her grandmother also, who seldom left home, came to spend a week with us. I was not in the house when they arrived, and when I came in, Harriet met me at the door before I had seen them, and cried out, "Oh, Aunt Kitty! grandpapa's come, and grandmamma too; and only think what they have brought me—dear, pretty pony—as pretty as ever, with another beautiful new saddle and bridle. Is it not good in them, and am I not a happy girl?"

Now my little readers must not suppose that Mr. Armand had only made Harriet believe that pony was sold, while he really kept him for her. Oh no! Mr. Armand always told just the truth, and pony was sold—really and truly sold—to the gentleman he had spoken of, who had bought him for his son. This boy was gone to a school at a distance from his home, and besides, he was now so good a rider that his father thought he might have a larger horse when he came back, so he was not unwilling to let Mr. Armand have pony again, when he expressed a wish for him.

Harriet was indeed a happy girl this Wednesday evening, and still more happy was she when she set out, after an early breakfast the next morning, to ride on pony to Mrs. Scott's. As I started at the same time to walk there, and she would not leave me, she rode very slowly. If any of you can remember some morning in Spring, when the air, though cool, had not the least frosty feeling in it, when the grass was fresh and green, when the trees had put out their first tender leaves, and the peach and the pear and the apple blossoms looked as if just ready to open, to have risen early and walked or ridden out, while the leaves and the blossoms were still glittering with the night-dew, you will know how delightful Harriet and I found it. We went on, at a brisk pace for me, and a slow one for pony, till we were in sight of Mrs. Scott's house, when Harriet looked so eager, that I bade her hasten on. As I spoke, I chattered to pony, and he went off in a smart trot, which soon brought Harriet to the gate. I had then just entered the clear space before the house, and could see and hear all that passed. Alice was standing at the open window, looking healthy and happy. As pony stopped, she called out to her mother, who seemed to be in some other room, for she spoke loudly, "Mother, mother, here is somebody on horseback—it must be the doctor."

"No, Alice, it is Harriet," cried my little niece, as she sprang from her pony, without much of the caution which she had promised her grandfather always to use in getting down.

"Oh! it is Harriet," exclaimed Alice, clapping her hands joyfully together, and then putting them out to feel her way to the door. Mrs. Scott came from the next room, and taking her hand, led her to meet us. The little girls were in each other's arms in a moment, and any one who had looked at Alice's happy face, and her eyes bright with tender and glad feelings, would never have believed they saw a blind girl. Harriet told of the beautiful pony her grandpapa had brought her the evening before, and Alice passed her hands over him to feel how small he was and how sleek and

glossy his sides were, and promised that she would sometimes mount him and walk him over to my house with Harriet at her side. Then they went into the flower-garden, and Alice exclaimed, "Oh, Harriet! how nicely you have weeded my beds and trimmed my flowers."

"Betty told you that," said Harriet.

"Betty told me who did it, but I knew it was done without her telling me, for I felt them. I did not have to feel my hyacinths and jonquils to know they were in bloom, for I smelt them, and I know exactly how they look. My rose-bushes too," said she, putting her hand on one, "are in bud; they will soon be beautiful. You see, Harriet, I love my garden, and can take pleasure in it, if I am blind;—but come into the house, and let me show you the books they have taken pains to make for poor blind people, and the different kinds of work I have learned to do."

Alice took Harriet's hand, and walked with a quick and lively step into the house. When they had entered the door, she left Harriet, and putting her hands out to feel that there was nothing in her way, passed into the next room, and soon came out again with her arms full. There were only a few books—I was sorry to see so few—but they were so large that she could not well have carried any more. Having laid them on the table, she opened one, and we saw that the letters were large, and so raised from the paper that the blind could feel their form, and thus distinguish them as readily as we can distinguish the letters in ordinary printing by seeing them. Alice soon showed us how this was done, for passing her finger over the lines of a sentence on the page to which she had opened, she read it as correctly as anybody could have done. Then turning with quickness to a box which stood near, she said, "Now see my work."—There were baskets she had woven, purses and bags she had knitted, pincushions and needle-books she had sewed as neatly as possible. Full of animation and happy as Alice seemed in showing these things, I am certain she was not half so happy in showing, as Harriet was in seeing them. Having looked at them myself, I went into the garden to show Mrs. Scott where some seeds were planted. From the garden I could still hear and see through an open window what was passing in the parlor, and I was too much interested in the feelings of these little girls not to attend to them. I soon saw, however, that they did not think themselves observed; for Harriet—who had hitherto spoken little, expressing her pleasure in looks more than in words—as soon as they were left alone, took Alice's hand, and said, "How glad I am you can do so much!"

"I knew you would be glad, and that made me show you; and I wish I could show them to all the kind people who gave mother money to take me to B., for, you know, if it was not for that, I could not have learned to do these things,—and you don't know, Harriet, how hard those first dark weeks were to bear, and how often, when I thought it would be always so, I wished I was in the grave-yard with my little brother and sisters;—that was wicked, I know, Harriet, but I could not help it then."

Harriet stood with her face turned from me, yet I could see by her movements that she was weeping.

Alice put her arm around her, saying, "Don't cry, I am very happy now."

"And so am I," said Harriet, sobbing, "and I believe that's what makes me cry."

"That's funny too," said Alice laughing, and Harriet laughed with her, though the tears were still on her cheeks. Then Alice told that there was a kind shopkeeper in B., who had promised to buy all she made, and that her mother said, she got so much money from him, that she could afford to keep a woman—Alice hoped it would be Betty—to do the hard work, and as she would only take in a little plain sewing, she would then be able to sit with Alice, and could sometimes spare time to read to her. "And Harriet," she added, "I promised to show you what I had bought with the gold piece you gave me. I bought the straw for my first baskets, and the braids and ribands for my first purses and bags, and the pieces of silk and velvet for my first pincushions and needle-books; so you see how much it helped me," and she kissed Harriet, little knowing how much more she owed to her.

And now, if any of my little readers have thought that Harriet made a foolish choice, when she gave up her pony to help her friend, they will, I am sure, change their minds when they remember what a sad house this was at the time that Alice first became blind, and think that now, as Harriet looked at Mrs. Scott's contented and Alice's cheerful face, and saw how much her friend could do and could enjoy, and heard that by her pleasant employments she could not only support herself comfortably, but help her mother too, she could say to herself—"This is my work—it is I who have made them so happy." Who would not have given pony for such a feeling, even though they had never got him back again?

When we were going away, Alice very modestly gave me a beautiful work-basket, a very neat needle-book, and pincushion, all of her own make. For Harriet she had made a very pretty bag, and hearing that Mr. and Mrs. Armand were with us, she selected a very handsome purse and needle-book, and requested Harriet to present them to her grandfather and grandmother, as the offerings of a blind girl.

And now, my young friends, I have little more to tell you of Alice. If you could visit her, you would find her sometimes employed in making those tasteful and pretty things, by the sale of which she aids in supporting her mother and herself—sometimes in her garden, feeling for the weeds and pulling them away from her plants, or tying up her vines, or cutting flowers to dress their pleasant little parlor—sometimes walking, leaning on her mother's arm, or on that of some young companion,—and though you may see her look a little sad when her friends speak of a beautiful

flower, or admire a fine sunset, you will oftener hear her sweet voice in cheerful talk, or merry laugh, or singing some pleasant hymn, expressive of her gratitude to God for His goodness to her. And when you see and hear all this, you will, I hope, not envy Harriet, for that would be a wrong feeling, but watch every opportunity of going and doing like her.

As this has been a very long story, and I do not wish to tire you, I will now bid you good-by, hoping you will soon wish to hear from me again. Whenever you do, I shall know it, and shall be quite ready to have another talk with you.

THE END.

JESSIE GRAHAM:
OR,
FRIENDS DEAR, BUT TRUTH DEARER.

CHAPTER I.

SPRING—MRS. GRAHAM.

Spring is here. The sun is shining brightly, and the air is warm, and the breeze is scented with the blossoms of the apple and the pear. The trees whose branches have been bare all winter, except when the snow wrapped them in a white mantle, have now put on a dress of the lightest and liveliest green. The gardens, too, are beginning to look gayly. There is in my garden one bed which is especially bright. This is Harriet's. Here she digs and plants and manages all in her own way, and here, at this season, she and her little friends may be often seen with heads bent down to the ground, searching for the first appearance of a crocus or a hyacinth. If one is seen, a joyful clapping of hands and a general call for Aunt Kitty announces the discovery.

Doubtless all my little readers have noticed the changes which this season brings. How pleasant is the first walk which you can take without cloaks or shawls! And the first violet or buttercup which is found,—we never think any other half so pretty. And the brooks which have been frozen up all winter, now prattle away over the stones, as noisily as little girls who have just got out from a schoolroom where they have been obliged to be very still for two or three hours. And the little birds which have spent their winter in a southern climate, sing as merrily as if they were glad to get back again to their old homes, or as if, as Jessie Graham says her grandmother told her, they were thanking God for giving them such pleasant weather. I wish all little girls would remember this, and imitate the birds,—thanking their Heavenly Father for his goodness to them, not only in words when they kneel down to say their prayers, but in bright looks and cheerful tones through the whole day.

Jessie Graham is a very clever little girl, and very like a bird herself as she goes singing and jumping about when she is out of doors, though at home she is the most quiet, orderly, housewifely little thing you can imagine. Her grandmother, of whom I have just spoken, is a Scotchwoman. She is a widow, her husband having died soon after they came to this country, and when her only child, Jessie's father, was still a little boy. Mrs. Graham seemed to have nothing to live on but what she could make by her own spinning and knitting, her gardening and poultry yard. Yet she never asked alms, or even received them when offered, saying to those who would have given them, "I am thankful to God for showing me that when the time of need comes I shall have such kind friends, but still more thankful to Him that it has not come yet." Her garden was small, but in it were often the earliest and best vegetables that were to be seen for miles around. Some of these she would send by little Donald to the market of a neighboring town. Donald too had his bed of flowers, from which he was sometimes able to sell slips of roses or a few choice bulbous roots. Seeds and slips and roots to plant were given him by my brother's gardener, who had employed the lad, and had, as he said, "taken a liking" to him, because he had found him honest, industrious, and intelligent. With his instructions, Donald became a capital gardener, and when he afterwards removed to the city, was employed by my brother in his place. With the wages which he thus received, Donald was able to add to his garden, till with some work from himself and constant watchfulness from his mother, it became quite profitable. He enlarged their cottage, too, so that when he brought home a wife there was room enough for her without taking any thing from his mother's comfort. His wife was a good-tempered and kind-hearted young woman whom he had known from a boy. They have six children, of whom Jessie is the eldest. She is named after her grandmother; and as she is almost always at her side, has learned many useful things from her besides imitating the birds in keeping a thankful and a cheerful heart. She is constantly busy,—sometimes helping her grandmother in her housekeeping, or counting her eggs, or feeding her chickens for her,—sometimes sewing beside her mother, or taking care of her young brothers and sisters,—sometimes—and I think this is what Jessie likes best—running after her father, and by his direction weeding a bed or tying up a branch, picking the

strawberries or making up into bouquets the flowers which he is to take to market. She has the family taste for gardening, and has already learned from her father a great deal more about plants than their names. Harriet goes to her always for instruction about the management of her flowers, and if a friend sends me a rare plant, is never quite satisfied till Jessie has approved the soil in which it is placed. It is from Jessie that I learn, in the spring, where the most beautiful wild-flowers are to be found.

A stroll in the woods after these wild-flowers is one of the greatest treats I can offer to my young favorites; and when, about a year ago, I sent to several of them to come to my house on a fine, bright morning, prepared for one of these rambles, with thick shoes which would keep their feet dry if we went into low or damp places, and little baskets in which to put their flowers, I was very sure there was not one who would disappoint me. They all came, and Jessie the earliest and the gayest among them. She had brought her father's trowel to take up the roots, and away we all went,—the little ones talking as fast and laughing as loud as they could, and Aunt Kitty listening, as much pleased as any of them. Away we went,—not by the road, but through the woods,—now moving swiftly and pleasantly along under the high trees, with the sunlight falling only here and there in patches on our path,—then suddenly hedged up by the tangled brushwood, and obliged to climb or jump over, or to creep through, as some of the smallest of the party managed to do,—the children now filling their baskets with buttercups, then throwing them all away because they had found a piece of ground covered with violets. At last, when the baskets were filled with the roots of violets and wood-geraniums, and each one had gathered branches of the wild-rose and clusters of the rich and graceful columbine, Aunt Kitty remembering that they had yet to walk home, gave the signal to return, and half unwillingly it was obeyed. After leaving the wood, we followed a road which enabled me to leave my young companions at their different homes before I went on to mine. Mr. Graham's was the last house on our way, and there Harriet and Mary Mackay and I stopped with Jessie, as I saw her father was at home and wanted to speak to him about some seeds. Old Mrs. Graham was seated in the low, shaded porch, knitting, and there I left the children showing her their treasures, while I stepped into the garden where Mr. Graham was at work. Having finished my talk with him I went into the house again. The children were still in the porch; and as I entered the parlor that opened on it, I heard Mary Mackay's earnest tone wishing that she could walk in the woods and pick flowers every day.

"Why, Mary!" said Harriet, "what then would become of your books and Miss Bennett?"—this was the name of Mary's governess.

"I would not care what became of them," said Mary, hastily, then added: "Oh yes, I would care what became of Miss Bennett,—but as for the books—"

"Send them to me, Mary," said Jessie, "send them to me, if you are tired of them, and send Miss Bennett with them."

"Why, Jessie, do you want to study lessons?"

"I don't know about the studying, Mary, how I should like that,—but I would be willing to try, rather than be a poor ignorant girl without any schooling, as Nancy Orme called me the other day."

I saw old Mrs. Graham turn quickly round at this, and heard her ask Jessie, "And what did you say to Nancy Orme?"

"Nothing, grandmother,—what could I say to her? It is the truth, you know."

"It is not the truth," said Mrs. Graham, "and you are a silly child to say so."

"Why, grandmother, what schooling have I ever had? You have taught me to read, and father has begun to teach me to write, and that is all I know or am like to know."

"You are a silly child, Jessie, as I said before. You have had the schooling which is better for little Jessie Graham, the gardener's daughter, than any that Miss Bennett and her books could give."

Mary, who really loved Miss Bennett, colored up, and Mrs. Graham said to her, "Do not be vexed, my little lady, for I mean no offence. Miss Mary Mackay, who is to be a young *lady*, and must talk to ladies and gentlemen, cannot do without books and Miss Bennett to explain them. And I do not mean to say that book-learning hurts anybody, but only that Jessie, and poor little folks like Jessie, can do without it, and yet that they must not call themselves without schooling; for what schooling they really want, God takes care that they may have."

The girls looked puzzled, and as I had become quite interested in what the old woman was saying, I was not sorry when my inquisitive little niece, Mary, exclaimed, "Pray, Mrs. Graham, tell me what you mean, for I cannot see what schooling little girls have who do not learn out of books."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Graham, putting down her knitting, taking off her spectacles, and looking very thoughtful, "I do not know whether I can tell you just what I mean, so that you can understand me, but I will try. I think God means that every father and mother shall be teachers to their own children, or if the father and mother are dead, there is almost always some friend who is bound to take their place, and then he spreads out books on every side of them, so that they are almost obliged to read, unless they wilfully shut their eyes;—for if they look up, there is the sun in the day and the moon and stars at night, and though they cannot tell, as I am told some great scholars can do, how far off they are, and what the stars are named, they can see how

much good they do to us, lighting and warming us, and dividing the year into seasons, which, everybody who knows any thing of gardening knows, is a great good, and making day and night. They can learn out of this book, too, a great deal of God's power and glory, for he must keep all these in their places, and make them all come back to us day after day, and night after night, and year after year, without ever failing once. Then, when they look down on the ground, there is another beautiful book. They may not be able to call every thing there by its right name, but they may learn what is good to eat, and what for medicine, and what is only pretty to the eye,—what soil each plant loves, and how God has provided for each just what is best for it. And so, if they look at the birds, or the poultry, or the different animals, they will find each kind has its own ways, and from each one they may learn as many useful things as from any book that was ever made. Now, my dear young ladies, this is the schooling which God provides for us all, and though, as I said before, learning from books is very good, yet those who cannot get it need not be altogether ignorant, and of the two, maybe God's schooling is best for poor people."

Though I was very much pleased with what Mrs. Graham said, I was afraid my little girls would begin to think very slightly of books, so I stepped out, and telling them that it was time to go home, they gathered up their flowers, and bidding Mrs. Graham and Jessie good-morning, we set out. I waited a while, hoping that, as they did not know I had overheard Mrs. Graham, they would speak to me of what she had said. And so they did; for I had not waited long, when Mary said, "Aunt Kitty, do you not think Mrs. Graham is a very sensible woman?"

"Yes, my dear," I replied, "I do think she is a *very* sensible woman."

"I wish you could have heard her, Aunt Kitty, talking about Jessie's schooling—I liked what she said so much."

"And what did she say, Mary?"

"Oh, Aunt Kitty, I cannot remember half—but she said little girls need not study books."

"Not all little girls, Mary," said Harriet, interrupting her.

"Well, Harriet, not all little girls,—but she said that little girls who could not study books, might still have schooling,—for God gave them teachers, and then they might look at the stars, and the flowers, and the birds, and all the animals, and learn, Aunt Kitty, just as well as we do out of books, and I am sure it must be a much pleasanter way of learning."

"But how many little girls are there, Mary, do you think, who, if they had never studied books or been directed by such sensible teachers as Mrs. Graham herself, would look at the stars, and the flowers, and the birds, and learn from them all which they can teach? Unless we see something more in these than their bright light, their pretty colors, or their gay plumage, they will teach us little, and it is generally from books or from some person who has had what Mrs. Graham calls book-learning, that we learn to look deeper."

"How did Mrs. Graham come to know so much about them then, Aunt Kitty, for I do not think she reads many books?"

"Mrs. Graham, my dear Mary, has been accustomed to associate with people much better educated than herself, and as she is a very observing and thoughtful person, she has lost no opportunity of learning. And now, Mary, you see that book-learning is of more use than you ever before thought it, for the person who has it, may help to open the eyes of many who have it not, to read what God has written for us all in the heavens and the earth."

CHAPTER II.

THE SCHOOL.

The next morning before Harriet and I had breakfasted, Mary came running in, her cheeks glowing and eyes sparkling with pleasure, crying out even before she had said good-morning, "Aunt Kitty, Jessie is to go to school with me and study lessons,—she is to begin to-day, and I am going to tell her to get ready at once, so I have not a minute to stay."

"Stop, stop, my dear," said I, seizing her hand as she was passing me, "just catch your breath and then tell us how all this was arranged."

"Oh, I told Miss Bennett how much Jessie wanted to go to school, and she said she might come if my father had not any objection, and I asked my father, and he said he had not any,—but I must go, Aunt Kitty, indeed I must," and breaking away from me, she bounded off.

She soon came back bringing the smiling Jessie with her, and from that day Jessie might be seen every morning about nine o'clock going to her school. She spent only two hours there each day, but as she really wished to learn, she improved very much, and Miss Bennett said, she repaid her for all trouble in teaching her, by her good example to our good-humored but wild little Mary. Jessie seemed to think she could never say or do enough to thank Mary for inducing Miss Bennett to give her lessons, and though Mary loved Jessie, and would never let any one find the least fault with her without a warm defence, I sometimes feared that Jessie's perfect submission to her will

in all things would do her harm—that she would become quite a little despot. But a circumstance which happened in their school a short time after Jessie's lessons with Miss Bennett began, taught us that there was one thing Jessie loved better even than she loved Mary. I will relate the circumstance, and you will find out what that one thing was.

Mary's father had a fine flock of sheep, and one morning as Mary stood by him while he counted them, watching the lambs frisking from side to side, Jessie came from the house to tell her that Miss Bennett had been waiting some time for her.

"Stay just one minute, Jessie, and then I will go back with you," said the little idler; "I want papa to be done counting, that I may beg him for a little lamb—I want a pet lamb. See there, Jessie—that one that is running along so fast, and then stops to wait for the others, is not it a beauty? Oh! do, papa, give it to me," said she, as her father counted the thirtieth sheep, for she knew that this was the full number.

"Give you what, my child?" asked her father, who had not been paying any attention to her.

"That pretty lamb, papa—make haste to say yes, for there is Miss Bennett's bell ringing for the third time. Stop, Jessie," said the little despot, catching hold of her as she would have run in, "you shall not go till I am ready."

"I am sorry my daughter should let any thing keep her from her lessons. Besides, you are treating Miss Bennett with great disrespect, and here she comes herself to see what has become of her truants."

As Mr. Mackay spoke, he took Mary's hand and walked with the children towards the piazza where Miss Bennett stood. He is a very good-natured man, and makes such a pet of his little daughter, that he was quite ready to excuse her; so, as Miss Bennett was about to speak to Mary, he said, "I believe, Miss Bennett, I must ask you to excuse her want of punctuality to-day, for the fault was partly mine. If I had not been as much engaged in counting my sheep as she was in watching the lambs at play, I should have heard your bell and sent her to you."

"I do not wish to punish the fault of to-day," said Miss Bennett, with a smile, "but to reform a habit persisted in for many days. Can you not aid me, sir, in devising some mode by which Mary may be reminded that her studies are of more importance than her play?"

"Yes, she has just been presenting a petition which I will not grant till she can bring me proof that she has been punctual and attentive to her studies for two months."

"Two whole months, papa?" said Mary, looking quite frightened at the length of time.

"Yes, my daughter, two whole months, and—stay, where is Jessie?" looking around for her.

"Stolen away, I suppose," said Miss Bennett, "for fear of hearing Mary scolded. We shall probably find her in the schoolroom."

"Well, I will go there with you," said Mr. Mackay, entering the house with the wondering Mary. On they went, Miss Bennett leading the way to the schoolroom, where, as she had conjectured, they found Jessie, looking very gravely.

"Do not be afraid, Jessie," said Mary, laughing, as she entered, "Miss Bennett has not beaten me. Papa is going to do something to us both, I think, but I do not know what."

"You shall soon hear," said Mr. Mackay. "If Miss Bennett will be so kind as to give to the one who recites the best lesson a card marked merit; and to the one who is not in her place by the time the bell has ceased ringing, a blank card, for two months to come, we will then count both kinds of tickets: for every blank card we will take away one from the others, and to the little girl who has most merit cards left, I will give—listen, Mary—the prettiest lamb in my flock."

"I will gladly agree to perform my part in the arrangement," said Miss Bennett, "but will add another stipulation. As I would have my little pupils careful, as well as studious and attentive, I will make no note of the tickets given for merit, and the girl who loses her tickets will therefore suffer the consequences."

"Do you understand?" said Mr. Mackay.

"Oh yes," said Mary, eagerly clapping her hands, "and I mean to have the lamb."

"Yes, sir," said the smiling Jessie—pleased to see her friend so happy.

"Well," said Mr. Mackay, as he left the schoolroom, "you will begin to-morrow."

For some time Miss Bennett had no blanks to give and few merit cards, for the girls were always in their places at the proper time, and both knew their lessons so perfectly that it could not with truth be said either was *best*. After some weeks, however, things fell into their old course. Mary got most blanks, and most merit cards too, for though Jessie was both quick and studious, she had less time for study; and what is of more consequence, she had no one at home to help her out of difficulties by explaining what she did not understand. Besides, as Mary had been much longer at school than her friend, the lessons which she was going over for the second, or perhaps third time, were quite new to Jessie, who felt her friend's advantages on this account to be so great that she never dreamed there was any probability of receiving the prize herself.

CHAPTER III.

MARY—MORE GENEROUS THAN JUST.

Harriet and I, walking over one pleasant afternoon to my brother's, met Jessie sauntering slowly home, and Mary with her. We stopped to chat a while with them, and then Mary, bidding Jessie good-by, turned back with us. While I walked steadily on, she and Harriet were sometimes by my side, sometimes running before me, and sometimes lingering far behind. As we approached the house, we saw the sheep driven to their pen for the night. The children were before me, but near enough for me to hear Mary exclaim, "Harriet, there is my lamb—that is the one I mean to choose—if it does not grow too large before the time."

"Maybe you will not have to choose at all," said Harriet, "for Jessie may get it."

"Indeed she will not," said Mary.

"How do you know that?" asked Harriet, "only one month is gone. I wish she may get it."

"I do not think that is very kind of you," said Mary, "to wish that Jessie should get it instead of me, when you know I want the lamb so much."

"Why, Mary," said Harriet, "though you may not get it just at this particular time, you know your father would give you one afterwards if you asked for it, and poor Jessie may never have another chance to get one. Besides, I think it will do her a great deal more good than you."

"I do not see how," said Mary, still in a dissatisfied tone.

"Why," said Harriet, "you know she knits her own stockings, and her father has to buy wool—now, she could have the wool from her own lamb without paying any thing for it."

"I never thought of that," said Mary, earnestly, while I could not but smile at Harriet's forethought. "But, Harriet, I should like to get the lamb," said Mary, after thinking a while, "and then I could give it to Jessie, you know."

"But are you sure Jessie would take it from you?"

"Oh yes! I could make her take it," said Mary, confidently.

"I do not know that," said Harriet, "if her grandmother told her not; and you know Aunt Kitty told us Mrs. Graham never would take any thing for herself when she was very poor."

"Well," said Mary, in a perplexed tone, "what shall I do?—for I want her to have it now as much as you do, since you put me in mind how much good it will do her. Oh! I will tell you, Harriet, what I will do; I will not study at all, and so I cannot get any merit cards, and I will stay out late, and get all the blanks."

As I did not quite approve of Mary's very ingenious plan for obliging Jessie, I stepped up and said, "Do you think that would be quite right to your papa and Miss Bennett, who are trying by the offer of this reward to make you more studious and punctual?"

"Well, what shall I do, Aunt Kitty?"

"Do your best, my dear, to win the reward, and let Jessie do the same. The habits you are thus forming will be of far more consequence to you than the lamb to Jessie."

"But I want Jessie to have it," said Mary, whose generous feelings had now been excited; "besides, I do not think it is a fair trial, for Jessie has so little time to study."

"Then, Mary, suppose you and Harriet go every day and help her in her work at home, so that she may have more time for study."

"So we will," said Mary, with great animation, "that is a real good plan; and I will tell you what, Aunt Kitty, I will study and get the tickets, since you say I ought, but before Miss Bennett counts them, I will make Jessie take some of my merit cards, and I will take some of her blanks, so as to be sure that she will have the most; so, you see, I will have the good habits, and she will have the lamb too. Will not that be clever?"

"Very clever on your part, Mary, but I hope you will not find it easy to make Jessie do a thing which in her would be very wrong. Better lose the lamb than be dishonest."

"Dishonest, Aunt Kitty!"

"Yes, Mary, would it not be dishonest in Jessie to get the lamb by making your father and Miss Bennett believe that tickets which are in reality yours, have been won by her?"

Mary looked quite grave for a minute, then brightening up, said, "Well, Harriet, at any rate it is not wrong to help Jessie, so I will come for you to-morrow morning."

"Very well," said Harriet, "I will go with you, and when we have done all the work, I will help Jessie get her lessons; so, maybe, she may have the most tickets without taking yours."

Mary colored, and though she said nothing, I could not help thinking that she would rather Jessie should get the lamb by any other means than by having the most tickets.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT—THE SECRET.

The next morning Mary came over quite early for Harriet, and they ran to Mr. Graham's full of glee; but they had been gone a very little while, when they came back looking quite vexed. On my asking what was the matter, Mary answered, "That cross Mr. Graham would not let us do any thing."

"Why, Mary, I never heard Mr. Graham called cross before."

"Well, Aunt Kitty, he was cross, for Jessie was very glad to see us, and wanted us to help her pick strawberries, and he would not let us do it, but said we would tread on the vines,—as if we never picked strawberries before."

"Perhaps, Mary, you never did pick them where it was so important to be careful of the vines. You know Mr. Graham's garden is his only means of support. But had Jessie nothing else to do which you could have done for her?"

"I do not know," said Mary, "we were so vexed that we would not ask to do any thing else."

"Do not say *we*, Mary," said Harriet, "for I would have asked old Mrs. Graham to let me count the eggs and feed the chickens, which Jessie said was all she had to do besides picking the strawberries, before school, but you were so angry and talked so loud, that I thought it was better to come away."

Mary looked very much ashamed, and hung her head, as she said, "Well, Aunt Kitty, it is very hard when we mean to do good to be scolded for it."

"And did Mr. Graham scold you, Mary?"

"He looked cross at us, Aunt Kitty, if he did not scold."

"Mr. Graham might have looked not very well pleased, at the thought of having his fine strawberry-plants trampled, and still have felt obliged by your kind feelings to Jessie. But I fear that my little niece must have been thinking more of herself than of Jessie, more of the credit which Mary Mackay deserved, than of the assistance she was going to give, or she would not, because she found one service declined, have been unwilling to offer to help her friend in some other way."—As I spoke I put my arm around Mary and drew her to me.—"Was it not so, Mary?"—she hid her face on my shoulder and was silent,—"Think of it, Mary, and tell me if I am right."

In about a minute Mary raised her head, and said very frankly, "Yes, Aunt Kitty, I believe you are right; and now, if Harriet will go with me, I will go back and see if we can do any thing else for Jessie."

But Harriet exclaimed, "We need not go, Mary, for here is Jessie herself; and now we will tell her what we meant to do, and if she would like it, we will go to-morrow."

Jessie was much pleased with the kind intentions of her young friends, and assured them that they could help her very much, for they could count the eggs, feed the chickens, and put the kitchen pantry in order, all which she generally did before coming to school. From this time Jessie was able to study more, and with Harriet's aid, her lessons were well learned. Still she gained few merit cards, for Mary studied too, and was very punctual, seeming quite in earnest about the prize, which she nevertheless declared, steadily and positively, would be Jessie's. At this declaration Jessie only laughed, but Harriet seemed quite puzzled, saying that she knew by Mary's looks she had some plan in her head. And so it proved she had. The two months which had seemed to Mary, when her father first named them, so long, were ended at last. Two days before the tickets were to be counted by Miss Bennett, Mary begged Jessie to bring hers with her to school, that she might see how many they would each have before they were given in.

"It is of no use, Mary," said Jessie, "for I know exactly how many I have, and I know you have more than twice as many merit cards."

"I know I have more than twice as many blanks," said Mary, "but that is nothing, Jessie. I want to see your cards, and I think you might bring them when I ask you."

"And so I will bring them, Mary," said Jessie; and when she came the next morning she brought a neat little box, which she held up to Mary as soon as she came in sight, calling out, "Here are my cards."

"That is right, Jessie," said Mary; "now you must leave them with me, and to-morrow morning they will be here ready for you."

"Well, Mary," said Jessie, as somewhat reluctantly she gave them up, "take care of them, because though I cannot get the lamb I would like Miss Bennett to see that I have been careful of my

cards as she wished us to be."

Mary promised, and put the box very carefully into a basket where her own cards were kept.

CHAPTER V.

JESSIE'S TRUTH.

On the day appointed, Harriet and I went over by Miss Bennett's request, to see the prize delivered to her who should be found to deserve it. A lamb had been chosen by Mr. Mackay, and without telling Mary any thing of it, he had had a small silver collar engraved, "reward of merit." After the lamb had been washed as white as snow, this had been put on it, and a blue riband tied to the collar by which the lamb might be led, so that Jessie, should she win it, would have no difficulty in getting it home. As I entered my brother's house, I met Jessie and Mary in the piazza. Mary was talking very earnestly, and I heard her say, "There is your box, Jessie. Don't open it till you give it to papa."

"But I must open it, Mary. I want to divide the cards, so as not to give Mr. Mackay much trouble."

"Nonsense, Jessie—what does papa care for trouble? You must *not* open it, I tell you. I have counted the cards, and you will have the lamb."

"Mary, how can you laugh at me so? You know that I cannot get it."

At this moment Mary was called away by her mother. I had watched her closely, and I thought I could see some roguery in the demure smile which played around her mouth, in spite of her evident efforts to be serious. As soon as she was out of sight, Jessie seated herself on the steps and took out her tickets. They were already made into parcels, and I saw her turn her eyes with a wondering look from one to the other,—then she loosed the string which tied each parcel together, counted them rapidly, and then, dropping them into the box, said, "What does this mean?"

I began to be quite interested in this little mystery, of which I suspected Mary knew more than anybody else, so when I went into the schoolroom, I took my seat at a window, the sash of which was raised, and which overlooked the piazza, and kept my eye on Jessie. I was scarcely seated before Mary ran up to her. As soon as she was near enough to see the box opened and the cards loosed, she cried out in a vexed tone, "And so, Jessie, you would open the box after all?"

"Oh, Mary!" said Jessie, "it is the strangest thing—my blank cards are almost all gone, and here are a great many more merit cards than I had. Where can they come from?"

Mary seemed very much amused, and said, "Why, Jessie, I think a good fairy must have put them there."

Jessie looked up into her laughing face for a moment, and then said, "Now, Mary, I know how it came—you put them there just to tease me. Make haste and let us get them right before they call us. I ought to have ten merit cards and four blanks, and here are only two blanks and seventeen merit cards. Take yours, Mary, and give me mine—quick—before Miss Bennett calls us."

As she spoke, she held out the box, but Mary stepped back, saying very positively, "Indeed, Jessie, I will not do any such thing."

Jessie looked at her a moment, and seeing by her countenance that she was resolved not to do it, turned round, saying, "Well, I must go and tell your father just how it is."

She went towards the door, but before she reached it, Mary caught her and drew her back, saying, as she did so, "Jessie, if you say a word to my father or Miss Bennett or anybody about it, I will never play with you again or love you, as long as I live."

Her face was red, and she spoke in a very angry tone.

"Oh! don't talk so, Mary," said Jessie, "please don't talk so. You would not have me tell your father a story, and it would be just like telling him a story if I gave him your cards for mine."

"You need not give them to him," said Mary, "I will do it myself, and Aunt Kitty said it would not be any harm in me to do it. I told you that you would have the lamb, and I am determined you shall have it."

"But I don't want it," said Jessie; "I hate the lamb, and I don't want it."

"It is very ungrateful in you to say so, and I know you do it just to vex me. I know you cannot help wanting that pretty little lamb with its silver collar; and then it would please your father and mother and grandmother so much to see the reward of merit on it."

"But what good would their being pleased do me when I knew I had told a story to get it?" said Jessie mournfully.

"You are very obstinate, Jessie," said Mary; "did not I tell you that you need not say a word, and

that I would give papa the cards myself—so how can you tell a story about it? Besides, I will tell him the whole truth by-and-by, when I have had my fun out."

"Will you, Mary, will you tell him the whole truth—and is it only just for fun?"

"To be sure it is, or I would not say so,—so now, Jessie, give me the cards at once like a good girl, and I will love you so dearly," kissing her as she spoke, "and just go in the schoolroom quietly, and look as sober as you can while they are counting them."

With a reluctant hand Jessie gave up the box, saying, "Remember, Mary, it is just for fun, and you will tell your father before I go home."

"I will tell him in the right time," said Mary; "but if you do not make haste into the schoolroom we will not be there in the right time," and she ran quickly and joyously in—while Jessie followed more slowly and timidly.

Mary went straight to her father, who sat with Miss Bennett near a table, and gave him first a parcel containing her own cards, then handing him the box, said, "Jessie's are in this box, papa." Her father took them, smilingly, from her, and she then came and stood by Jessie, who had placed herself not far from me. The cards were counted. In Mary's parcel were twenty merit cards and eight blanks, which, taken from the others, left her only twelve. Jessie, it was found, had only two blanks to be taken from seventeen merit cards; she could therefore count fifteen, and the lamb was declared to be hers. I had looked steadily upon her while my brother and Miss Bennett were counting, and I saw that she looked very pale, except once when she caught Miss Bennett's eye, and then her face became very red, and her eyes filled with tears. As my brother said, "Jessie has won the prize," she looked imploringly at Mary and whispered, "Now, Mary—please, Mary, tell him now,"—but Mary turned away and seemed not to hear her.

My brother went into the next room and led in the lamb.

Again I heard Jessie's pleading tones, "Now, Mary—please, Mary, now,"—but Mary said nothing.

The lamb was led up to Jessie, and my brother, saying to her, "Here is your prize, my good little girl, which you have well deserved," would have put the riband into her hand, but instead of taking it, she covered her face with her hands and sobbed out, "I cannot take it, sir—indeed I cannot take it, for it is not mine, it is Mary's, and I must tell if she should be ever so angry with me."

Mr. Mackay looked around as for some one to explain Jessie's meaning, but as no one said any thing, he again addressed himself to Jessie herself: "But, my dear, why should you not take it? Perhaps you think, because Mary had most merit cards, the lamb should have been hers,—but you must remember, she had so many more blanks to be taken from them, that they left her with less than you. As for Mary's being angry with you, I am sure you need not be afraid of that,—Mary is not so selfish and unjust as to be angry with her friend for doing better than herself."

"Oh no, sir! that is not it—Mary wanted me to have the lamb, but—"

Jessie stopped, and Miss Bennett now came up to Mr. Mackay and said, "I believe I can explain this. Jessie is very properly grieved at having done a very wrong thing. You may remember that I said I would keep no account of the merit cards given, in order to induce the children to be careful, but Jessie seems to have forgotten that I did not say the same of the blanks; of these I did take note, and I am grieved to find, on reference to my memorandum, that two of Jessie's blanks have been added to Mary's."

Miss Bennett spoke in a very grave tone, and looked at Jessie very severely. She would have said something more, but Mary—who, half ashamed and half angry, had stood with her eyes cast down and the corners of her mouth twitching as if she were just ready to cry—now looked up and interrupted her by exclaiming, "You are very wrong indeed, Miss Bennett, to think Jessie had any thing to do with it. It was I that did it, on purpose that Jessie might have the lamb, and she never knew a word of it till just as we came in, and then she begged me to tell, and I would not. So there—it is all told now—and the next time I try to give anybody any thing, it shall be some one who will be more grateful for it than Jessie."

Poor Jessie! she cried as if her heart would break, and tried to take Mary's hand while she said, "Indeed, indeed, Mary, I could not help it."

But Mary would not be coaxed—she withdrew her hand and turned sullenly away. Mr. Mackay looked at her sorrowfully, then stooping down he unclasped the collar from the lamb's neck, and tying the riband in its place, held it to her while he said, "You have won the prize, Mary,—take it—but I must take off the collar. I cannot give a reward of *merit* to a girl who thinks a lamb more valuable than truth and honesty."

It was now Mary's turn to weep and Jessie's to defend her. "Oh! Sir, do not blame Mary—it was all from kindness to me, sir—indeed it was—and you know, sir, Mary would not tell a story for any thing in the world."

"And yet Mary wished you, Jessie, to tell a story, and to take what you knew did not justly belong to you, and now is angry with you because you were not willing to do so. Either Mary is not very kind to you, or, as I said before, she values more the lamb she would have given you, than the truth and honesty she would have had you give up for it."

Jessie was silenced for a minute, and though Mary continued to weep, it was more gently. Mr. Mackay stood before the children, still holding the lamb,—which Mary seemed as little disposed to take as Jessie,—and looking very gravely. At length Jessie raised her eyes to him and said, "I do not think Mary is angry with me because I would not take the lamb, sir; she is only a little vexed because I did not do as she wanted me to."

We all smiled as Jessie said this, and Mr. Mackay answered, "I believe you are quite right, my dear little girl,"—then, putting his hand on Mary's head, he added, "My daughter, we will leave you alone for a little while, to think whether you are most sorry that Jessie Graham has lost the prize, or that Mary Mackay has not had her own way altogether."

He was turning away when Mary spoke, though in so low a tone that no one could hear her. Mr. Mackay, putting his head down to her, asked what she said, and she repeated, "I do not think it was wrong in me to want Jessie to get the lamb and to give her my cards that she might get it."

"Are you quite sure, Mary, that you did wish Jessie to win the prize? Do you think you would have been pleased that she should have got the lamb in any other way than by your giving it to her? Still, however this may be, the wish to give it was generous, and far from thinking it wrong, I am more pleased with it in my daughter, than even with her studiousness and punctuality;—but, was it right in you, when your kind intention could not be accomplished without a very wrong action in Jessie, to wish that she should do it, and to be angry with her because she would not? Ought you to have thought so much more of your generosity than of Jessie's truth?" Mr. Mackay waited a little while for an answer, then said, "Speak, Mary—was this right?"

While her father had been speaking to her, Mary had ceased to weep, though she still kept her head down, and her face covered with her hands. Even now she could not lift her eyes, though she raised her head a little as she said, almost in a whisper, "No, papa."

Jessie, whose eyes had been fixed upon Mary with the most earnest, anxious look you can imagine, now put her arm quickly around her neck, exclaiming in a joyful tone, "Then, Mary, you will not be vexed with me any more, will you?"

"No, Jessie," said Mary, kissing her, "it was very wicked in me to be vexed with you just because you were good."

"Now, my dear Mary," said Mr. Mackay, "in taking blame for your own fault, and giving to your friend the credit she deserves, you are indeed generous, and I may now put back the lamb's collar—you *merit* the reward."

As he spoke, he kissed both the little girls. Mary sprang into her father's arms and hid her face on his shoulder. As she did so, I saw that there were tears in her eyes, yet she smiled and looked very happy. In a little while she looked up, and seeing Jessie seated on the floor playing with the lamb, said, laughing, "Why, Jessie, I thought you hated the lamb."

"Not now, Mary," said Jessie, "I love it now."

And now it will be easy for my little readers to see that the one thing which Jessie loved more than Mary was "Truth."

CHAPTER VI.

THE COW.

It was but a few weeks after this, that, as Harriet and I were one evening passing Mr. Graham's house, we saw a man tying a rope around the neck of his fine cow, which was noted everywhere for her gentleness and for the quantity of milk she gave. In the yard, not far from the cow, stood Mr. Graham. He was looking very serious, but did not say any thing. But poor Jessie!—her arm was over the cow's neck and her face rested against her side, while she sobbed so loudly that we heard her before we reached the gate. As I did not quite understand what was going on, I hesitated a little about entering, but Mr. Graham saw me, and stepping up opened the gate. As I went in, I said to him, "What is the matter with my friend Jessie?"

He tried to smile as he replied, "Only parting with the cow, ma'am. It is very foolish in her to take on so;—but she has always fed her, and so the creature knows and follows her, and Jessie feels as if she was just like a friend."

"But why are you parting with your cow, Mr. Graham?"

Mr. Graham colored and turned a little away from me as he said, "It is not just convenient to me to keep her at present, ma'am."

I saw from his manner that it would pain him to have me ask further about his reasons for selling her. Supposing that the cow was already sold, I asked who had bought her.

"Nobody yet, ma'am," said Mr. Graham, "I am only sending her to town to be sold."

"Then I am very glad I came here before she went," said I, "for I should like very much to own

her, and I will give you gladly whatever you expected to get for her in town."

Jessie looked up at this, and as she saw her father hesitate, cried out, "Oh yes! do, father, sell her to Aunt Kitty, and I can see poor Mooly sometimes; and then too, if you are ever rich enough to buy her back, I know she will let you have her again."

"You are a foolish thing," said Mr. Graham, as he put his hand kindly on Jessie's head, for we had walked together to the cow—then turning to me, he told me he would be very glad to sell the cow to one who he knew would use her well. The business was soon arranged. The cow was to be taken home at once to my house; but she need not be tied, for Jessie would lead her there, and there was no difficulty in getting her to follow Jessie. Mr. Graham went along with us too, to receive his money. Before Jessie left us I begged her to feed the cow for me.

"That I will, ma'am," said the delighted girl, "and if you will let me, I will come every evening and give her her supper, for I am sure she will like it better, if she takes it from me."

"I shall be very much obliged to you, Jessie, and as your friend Mooly may not be quite so gentle with strangers as with you, if you will come over and keep her quiet when she is milked in the morning, you will be doing me a favor, and then you can carry back the cup of warm milk which Harriet tells me your grandmother drinks every morning."

Jessie looked at me for a moment with a happy smile, and then said, "Oh, ma'am! how glad I am that you walked by our house this evening. This will be almost as good as having Mooly at home ourselves."

CHAPTER VII.

SORROW AND SYMPATHY.

I could not easily forget poor Jessie's distress, and I found myself often thinking what could have made Mr. Graham sell so good a cow. Surely, I said to myself, it cannot be that he is poorer than he has been, and in want of money which he could not get in any other way. I knew that he had had rheumatism so badly during the past winter, that he had not been able to get out to work till quite late in the spring; but, notwithstanding this, as the seasons had been favorable, his garden did not seem to have suffered much. Besides, his family were so prudent and industrious, that I thought they always spent less in the year than he made, and so, that he was able every year to lay up some money against worse times. Jessie came over every morning to see her friend Mooly milked, and to take a mug of milk to her grandmother, which Harriet took care should be large enough to give the children some milk with their breakfasts. In the evening she was always ready to give Mooly her supper; and as I saw her, day after day, come skipping and singing along, I felt comforted about her father's circumstances, for I was sure that Jessie at least had not heard of his being in any great distress or difficulty. One morning a servant came to me to ask whether Jessie should be waited for, as it was, she said, quite time the milking was done, and Jessie was not yet in sight.

"Oh yes! pray, Aunt Kitty, wait," said Harriet, "she will be here presently, I am sure she will—just wait five minutes."

As she spoke, she ran to the window to watch for Jessie, and soon called out, "Here's Jessie; but how slow she comes! Do, Aunt Kitty, look!—You said, the other day, Jessie never walked, and I am sure she is walking now as slowly as her grandmother could. Why, now, she has stopped and turned around as if she was not coming at all. Why, I do believe she is crying! What can be the matter?"

She darted out of the room as she finished speaking, and when I reached the window through which she had been looking, she was already standing beside Jessie with her arm around her, talking to her. For a long time Jessie did not speak, but when she did, she seemed very much in earnest, while Harriet listened with an expression of the most eager interest. At length Jessie's story, whatever it was, was ended, and Harriet seemed to have comforted her, for she wiped her eyes, and looked more cheerful as they passed the window where I stood, walking hand in hand to the yard where the cow and the dairywoman were waiting for them. In a little while, Jessie passed by again on her way home. As she dropped a courtesy to me and wished me good-morning, I saw that her eyes were still red and her face swollen with weeping, though she had pushed her bonnet entirely off her head, that the cool breeze might take away the inflammation. Jessie was such a merry-hearted child that I felt it could be no trifling thing which had distressed her so much; yet I would not ask Harriet any thing about it, because I was sure she would speak of it herself, if Jessie had not made her promise to keep it secret, and if she had, I would have been sorry that she should do any thing so dishonorable as to mention it. There was a servant in the room when she came in, and I saw that Harriet was quite restless during the few minutes that she stayed. As soon as she went out, Harriet closed the door after her and began, "Oh, Aunt Kitty! I am so sorry. Jessie is going away, and Mr. Graham and all—going to some far-off place in the West. And Jessie says her father has lost a great deal of money, and that he is so poor he cannot pay for his place, and so they are going to take it from him. Jessie heard Mr. Butler talking to him about it this morning, and she says Mr. Butler—"

"Stop, stop, Harriet, if Jessie only overheard a conversation between her father and Mr. Butler she was very wrong to repeat it to you, and the wrong must not go any further—you must not tell it even to me."

"Oh, but, Aunt Kitty, Mr. Graham told Jessie he did not mind her telling anybody except her grandmother. He does not want old Mrs. Graham to know it yet; I do not know why. It was Mr. Graham's talking about his mother that made Mr. Butler tell him, Jessie says, that, if he thought he would be able to pay him next year, he would wait for his money till then; but Mr. Graham said something about a bank breaking down—I did not quite understand that, Aunt Kitty,—but at any rate, all his money was in it, and he told Mr. Butler that he never expected to be able to pay him, and that he must take the house back. Mr. Butler said that he would try to get some one to buy it who would not want it till next year, so that Mr. Graham need not go till then; but then, Aunt Kitty, they will have to go."

"I am very sorry for it, Harriet, very sorry indeed."

"I knew you would be, Aunt Kitty, and I told Jessie so, and that you would try to think of something to help her father, and maybe they would not have to go at all."

Harriet was silent and looked earnestly in my face for a minute, then finding I did not answer her, she said, softly, "Will you not, Aunt Kitty, will you not help Mr. Graham?"

"Most gladly, Harriet, if I can, but I do not yet see how. You know I am not very rich just now myself."

Harriet looked quite discouraged and thoughtful for a while, then said, "Could not Uncle Mackay help him?"

"You know that your uncle is about to travel on account of your aunt's health, and you may have heard him complain of being kept here much longer than he wished, in consequence of the difficulty of getting the money which is necessary for himself. Besides, Harriet," said I, interrupting her as she was about to speak, "I feel sure, from what I know of Mr. Graham, that he would not take the money he needs, as a *gift* from anybody, while he is well and strong, and only to lend it to him would be doing him little service, since it would be as difficult to pay it back as to pay for his house."

Harriet looked quite desponding, and said, "Poor Jessie, she will have to go, then."

"There is but one way, Harriet, which I now think of to prevent it. I have heard Mr. Graham say that he had more leisure than he liked, and that he could very well attend to another garden besides his own and your Uncle Mackay's. Now, if we could get more work and more wages for him, he could, perhaps, hire a house for the present, and might in time again lay up money enough to buy."

"That's it, Aunt Kitty—that's it—that is the very best plan," said Harriet, eagerly; "do let me run over and tell Jessie about it."

"Wait, Harriet, till we see some prospect of succeeding in it, before we say any thing to Jessie. After breakfast we will go over to your uncle's, and see if we can learn any thing from him likely to profit Mr. Graham."

Before I had left the breakfast table, Harriet called out, "Aunt Kitty, here are Uncle Mackay and Mr. Graham coming this way." When they reached my gate, however, Mr. Graham passed on towards his own house, and my brother came in alone. He had just heard from Mr. Graham, that he would probably be obliged to leave us soon, and seemed much grieved about it. Mr. Graham had told him that his father had leased his house and garden from Mr. Butler for twenty-one years—that is, had engaged for that time to pay a certain sum of money every year for them. When the twenty-one years were out, Mr. Graham had offered to buy them, on condition that he should not be asked to pay the money for ten years. During this time, he had every year put by something towards paying this debt in a savings bank, and now, when the ten years wanted but a very few months of being ended, and he thought himself quite ready to pay for his house, he discovered that the bank had failed, or, as Harriet said, broken—that is, that it had nothing with which to pay him and others whom it owed.

My brother thought my plan for helping Mr. Graham would be a very good one, if we could only find the work and the wages; but this he feared would not be easy, as there were few persons in the neighborhood who employed a gardener.

"There is my friend Dickinson," he said at length, "who told me, when I saw him last, that he intended to dismiss his gardener, because he could not keep his children out of the garden, where they were forever annoying him by trampling on his flower-beds and breaking his flowers. This would be an excellent place, for he gives his gardener a very pretty house and some ground for himself, besides a high salary, but—"

"Oh!" said I, interrupting him, "do not put in a *but*, for that is the very place we want."

"Yes, Aunt Kitty," said Harriet, eagerly, "that is the very place."

"I fear," said my brother, smiling at her earnestness, "that it is a place which even Aunt Kitty with all her influence cannot get, for Mr. Dickinson declared he was determined never again to employ a man who had children, and you know his determination is not easily changed."

Still, discouraging as the case seemed, I resolved to try, and ordering the carriage, I asked Harriet if she would like to go with me. "No, thank you, Aunt Kitty. I would like the drive, but Mr. Dickinson looks so cross I am always afraid he is going to scold me."

"Did you not tell me, when we were last there, that you would never be afraid of him again, after seeing him play so good-humoredly with William Temple?"

"Oh yes, Aunt Kitty; and now I remember that, I think I will go, if you will ask Mrs. Temple, when we get there, to let me play with William in the nursery."

Harriet was soon ready, and as the day was bright and the road good, we had a very pleasant drive of a mile and a half to Mr. Dickinson's. Before I tell you of our visit, however, you would perhaps like to hear something of Mr. Dickinson himself, of Mrs. Temple, and of little William.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIT TO FLOWERHILL.

Mr. Dickinson was an elderly gentleman, who had had his own way pretty much all his life. In the first place, when he was a child, having had no brothers or sisters, and being of course a great pet with his father—his mother died when he was too young to remember her—he was seldom contradicted or opposed in any thing. When he was about fifteen his father brought home another mother for him, but as he was then at school, he was little under her control. In about a year she too died, leaving a little girl who was his half-sister. As he loved this sister very much, and was not a selfish boy, he would, I doubt not, sometimes have given up his will to her, but she was taken away by an aunt, who took care of her, and with whom she always lived till she married. This sister is Mrs. Temple, and a very pleasant woman she is, and dearly does she love her brother William, as she showed by naming her first son after him. When Mr. Dickinson's father died, he was still a very young man. As he was rich, had nothing to keep him at home, and was desirous of seeing other countries, he went to England, and was for several years travelling in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe. He could tell very pleasant stories of what he had seen and heard abroad, but he always ended by saying he had never seen any place which he liked half so well as Flowerhill. This was the name he had given to his home.

And well might he like it, for it was indeed a beautiful place. The house was built on the side of a hill. It had no up-stairs, being only one story high, yet it was so large that a dozen children might have played in one part of it without disturbing Mr. Dickinson in the other. Then it was shaded by such beautiful large old elm-trees. And the garden—there was not such another garden in the country, for Mr. Dickinson had employed a very skilful English gardener, who had laid it out with great taste, and he was constantly buying for it choice and beautiful flowers. People must have something to pet. Now Mr. Dickinson being a single man, with no children to pet, had learned to make pets of his flowers. You will probably think, from all I have said, that Mr. Dickinson, with no one ever to oppose him, and plenty of money to do what he liked with, must have been a very happy man. When you are a little older you will learn that those are not the happiest people who always have their own way. There were very few people who seemed more fretful and discontented than this Mr. Dickinson. Children, like Harriet, called him cross, and ran away from him, while older people often thought him proud and ill-tempered, and were rather distant with him. Yet those who knew him well, liked him much, for he was a very upright and honest and kind-hearted man. You will be a little surprised perhaps at my calling him kind-hearted, but could you have heard from some poor old people near him, how often he sent them food and fuel in the winter season when they could not go out to work, and must have been both cold and hungry but for him, you would not think it strange. To be sure, they said, he would scold a little when he came to see them, if it was only because they did not make better fires or boil their soup more; but they did not mind this, for they had found out that the more he scolded, the more he gave. Then, though Mr. Dickinson was never quite satisfied with children, who either talked so loud that they made his head ache, or so low that he could not hear them, and if they walked out with him were certain to tread either on his feet or his flowers, he was always very careful that they should not get hurt when near him, and would often spend his money and give himself some trouble to gratify their wishes, if they were not unreasonable. Mrs. Temple and her two children, William, who was about six years old, and Flora, who was nearly four years younger, had been spending the summer with Mr. Dickinson; and William, who was a fine, spirited boy, was a great deal with his uncle, and took more liberties with him than I believe anybody—boy or man—had ever done before.

In driving to Mr. Dickinson's from my house, the road wound around his garden, and passed, on the other side, the house which had been built for his gardener. This was a very pretty cottage, with another garden at the back of it, which, though much smaller than Mr. Dickinson's, and very simply laid out, looked scarcely less pleasing,—with its raspberry and strawberry vines—its currant and gooseberry bushes—its roses and pinks, and its little arbor of grapes, over the entrance to which hung the fragrant honeysuckle and bright red woodbine. The house was shut up, but looked as if it might have quite room enough for Mr. Graham's family. Harriet was sure it was just the thing, and even managed, in the minute we were passing, to get a peep into the poultry-yard, and to ascertain that there was good accommodation for all Jessie's ducks and

chickens.

We found Mr. Dickinson at home. He was reading to his sister, Mrs. Temple, as she sat at work in a room with sashed doors opening into the garden. One of these doors was open, and William Temple soon appeared at it, calling out, "Uncle, do come here and tell me what this beautiful flower is named?"

"Not now, sir, not now," said Mr. Dickinson; and then, before William could speak, added, "Pray, sir, do you not see the ladies, that you take no notice of them?"

William came in, and having spoken to me and to Harriet, who was a great favorite with him, he waited patiently till there was a pause in the conversation, when he edged up to his uncle, and taking his hand said, "Come, now uncle,—do come—it will not take you two minutes, and I must know the name of that flower,—it is the handsomest thing I ever saw in my life."

"You are very persevering, sir," said Mr. Dickinson, but at the same time rose and suffered the little boy to lead him off.

Mrs. Temple asked if I would not follow them and see this wonderful flower; to which I readily agreed, as I thought while in the garden I might find a very good opportunity to speak to Mr. Dickinson about his gardener. We soon came up with William and his uncle. They were standing by a large tub, in which was the flower William had so much admired. It was indeed a splendid plant. When near enough, I heard Mr. Dickinson pronouncing its name very slowly, while William carefully repeated it after him. It was so long that I fear poor William with all his trouble did not remember it long; yet, as you may like to know it I will tell it to you. It was a *Cactus Grandiflora*. The flower was not yet fully open, and on my saying I had never seen one before, Mr. Dickinson begged that I would drive over the next day and look at it in greater perfection, which I promised to do, if the weather remained pleasant. As we returned to the house William drew Harriet off into another walk. Mr. Dickinson looked after them for a moment, and then said, turning to me, "William is the only child I ever saw who at six years old might be trusted in a garden without fear. He will not pluck a leaf without permission."

"Well taught children never do," said I.

"Then, ma'am," he replied, "there are very few well taught children. I have just had to part with a most admirable gardener, because his children were in this respect so ill taught, that they did my flowers more harm than he, with all his skill, could do them good."

"Have you supplied his place yet?" I inquired.

"No, ma'am, I have not. I am determined to engage no one who has children, and I have not yet heard of one who has none."

"Would it not be as well if you could find one whose children were in this respect as well taught as William Temple?"

"That, ma'am, I think would be even more difficult."

"It is perhaps not common, but I know a man who would, I think, suit you in all respects."

"Not if he have children, ma'am," said Mr. Dickinson, with a very determined air.

"You have seen his children, and I think must acknowledge them to be well behaved, for it is of Mr. Graham, my brother's gardener, that I speak."

"I never saw his children in a garden, ma'am," said Mr. Dickinson.

"Suppose I give you an opportunity of doing so," said I, "by bringing his eldest daughter over with me to-morrow. She is, I assure you, a great favorite both with Harriet and with me."

Before Mr. Dickinson could reply to me, Mrs. Temple asked if my brother was going to give up his gardener, that I was seeking other employment for him. I replied that my brother would part with him very unwillingly, but that Mr. Graham had met with great losses, and unless he could obtain a more profitable situation, would have to move away to some distant part of the country where living was cheaper, and where his large family might therefore be more easily supported. I saw that Mr. Dickinson was listening to me, though he said nothing; so, still speaking to Mrs. Temple, I explained the cause of Mr. Graham's difficulties, and then added, "It is for the aged mother of Mr. Graham that I feel this change most. Your brother and I were children when she came to this country with her husband, who soon died, leaving her with this son to support, and nothing but her own labor with which to do it. Your father and some other friends offered her the means of going back to her own family in Scotland. She thanked them, but said, there was no home so dear to her as that where she had lived with her husband, and that she could not leave him, even in his grave, alone with strangers. And now—"

"I will tell you what I will do, ma'am," said Mr. Dickinson, "I will lend Mr. Graham the money to pay for his house."

"Ah! but, Mr. Dickinson, how is he to make the money to pay you again?"

"I will give it to him, ma'am, I will give it to him."

"That will not do," said I, "for Mr. Graham is a proud man, and as determined in his way as Mr.

Dickinson is in his. He will not receive alms while he can earn a living."

Mr. Dickinson was silent a little while, then said, "I do not see what I can do, for I cannot have children here, that is certain."

"May I bring little Jessie with me to-morrow, and show you that she, like William Temple, can walk through a garden without plucking a leaf?"

"If she be cautioned beforehand," said Mr. Dickinson.

"No," said I, "I will give her no cautions."

The children were now again beside us, and William, who had heard the last part of our conversation, called out, "Oh yes, Uncle, let Jessie come—do—she is the greatest gardener in the country, and taught me a great deal,—now I will see if she ever heard of Cac-tus Grand-iflo-ra," pronouncing every syllable with great emphasis.

"For once," said Mrs. Temple, smiling, "I will second William's request,—let the little girl come."

"Oh, certainly, certainly, ladies, let her come. I have no objection to her coming—but, remember, I make no promise to employ her father as my gardener."

"And, uncle, Mary Mackay too, I love Mary Mackay—pray, ask Aunt Kitty to bring her."

William's influence seemed irresistible, and I left Mr. Dickinson's with permission to bring both Mary and Jessie with me the next day.

CHAPTER IX.

HOPES AND FEARS.

We dined at Mr. Dickinson's, and as the weather was warm, waited till near sunset before we returned home. As we got into the carriage, Mr. Dickinson said, "I shall expect you to-morrow, if the weather be fine."

Harriet turned her head anxiously towards the west to see what weather the setting sun would promise us. It was just then under a cloud, but we had not gone a quarter of a mile before it shone out very brightly. Harriet clapped her hands and cried out, "Oh, Aunt Kitty, is it not delightful?"

"It is very beautiful, my dear, certainly," said I, looking at the cloud which glittered like the brightest gold in the sunlight.

"But, Aunt Kitty, I mean, is it not delightful to think that we shall have such a fine day to-morrow to go to Flowerhill?"

"Why, Harriet, are you not a little whimsical, to be so highly delighted with the prospect of doing to-morrow what, when I first proposed it to you to-day, you seemed rather disinclined to do?"

"That was because I thought Mr. Dickinson was cross, but William says he is not cross at all; and then, you know, Aunt Kitty, Jessie is to go with us to-morrow, and I am sure, almost, that Mr. Graham will get the place."

"I wish I felt sure, Harriet, or even *almost* sure of it; but Mr. Dickinson seems very decided not to have any children about his garden."

"But, Aunt Kitty, when he sees how careful Jessie is, do you not think he may?"

"We will hope for the best, Harriet. But even should Mr. Graham not gain the place, Harriet Armand may gain a lesson from this business, and a very useful lesson too. Do you see what this lesson is, or shall I tell you?"

Harriet thought a minute, and then said, "You must tell me, Aunt Kitty, unless it is that I must be very careful in a garden, and especially in Mr. Dickinson's garden." This last was said with a laugh.

"No, Harriet, it is a far graver and more important lesson than this. It is, that you must be careful everywhere to do no wrong—not the least—for that which seems to you a very little wrong may be followed by very great evil, and by evil to others as well as to yourself. Those children who have offended Mr. Dickinson, I dare say, thought it no great harm that they now and then picked a flower, or, in their play, ran over and trampled down the beds in his garden; yet you see how much evil has followed,—their own parents have lost their pleasant home, and now the remembrance of their bad conduct may prevent a good man's getting a situation which would save his family from great distress. God has taught us, my child, that wrong-doing always brings suffering, but what, or how great that suffering may be, we know not. Remember this, Harriet; and remember, too, that when once the wrong is done, however bitterly we may mourn over it, we cannot undo it, and the suffering *will* follow—we cannot escape it."

"But, Aunt Kitty," said Harriet, in a low and hesitating tone, "if we are sorry for what we do

wrong,—if we mourn over it, as you say, will not God forgive us?"

"Yes, Harriet, He will forgive us, and so take away from us the worst of all evils—His displeasure. He will pity us, and his 'loving-kindness' will comfort us under our suffering;—but the suffering must come, and either by enduring it ourselves or by seeing others endure it, we shall be taught how much better it would have been if we had not done the wrong—how wise was that commandment of God which forbade us to do it."

The sun had set before we were at home. Harriet's first inquiry was, if Jessie had been yet to feed the cow. She had been, the servant said, and had gone back home only a few minutes before we arrived. I told Harriet that after we had taken tea we would walk over to Mr. Graham's together, and invite Jessie to go with us in the morning.

"And may I tell her, Aunt Kitty, all about your trying to get the place for her father, and beg her to be very careful not to touch the flowers?"

"No, Harriet, Jessie would, like you, probably feel almost sure of the place for her father, and the disappointment would be very hard to bear if he did not get it. Besides, I promised Mr. Dickinson to give her no caution."

"But, Aunt Kitty, I may just tell her how cross Mr. Dickinson is, so that she may feel very much afraid to touch any thing."

"Harriet!" said I, "have you forgotten already William Temple's assurances that his uncle is not cross at all?"

"No, Aunt Kitty, I have not forgotten—I did not mean how cross, but how *particular* he is."

"I think you had better say nothing to spoil Jessie's enjoyment of a pleasant day. You would do no good by making her afraid to move. Mr. Dickinson would see quickly enough that she was not acting naturally, and would place no confidence in the continuance of such extreme cautiousness." Harriet still looked anxious, and I added, "I can trust Jessie without any cautions."

The evening was very still—so still, that, as we walked to Mr. Graham's, we could hear the grasshoppers jumping from our path, and the lowing of a cow in a field near us sounded so loud, that Harriet started as if it had been some strange noise. As we passed the garden we heard old Mrs. Graham's voice, and though the fence was too high for me to see them, I soon found that she and Jessie were walking just inside of it, and therefore near enough for us to hear what they said. Had they been talking of any thing which they might not have wished a stranger to hear, I would have spoken to them, but as this was not the case, and as I was interested in their conversation, I motioned to Harriet to keep quiet and listen to it.

"Ah, yes, Jessie, it is a pretty place—a very pretty place," said Mrs. Graham.

"But, grandmother," said Jessie, "there are a great many other places just as pretty."

"Maybe so, Jessie, maybe so, but there are none, child, we love so well."

"But when we get used to them, grandmother, we should get to love them, should we not?"

Mrs. Graham was silent for a minute or two, till Jessie said, "Say, grandmother, should we not?"

"I was thinking, my dear, and I do not think I could. You would, Jessie, for the hearts of young people like you are full of hope. You are always thinking of the pleasure you will have to-morrow, or the next week, or the next month, and every change, you think, will bring some enjoyment. But our hearts, Jessie, the hearts of the old, are full of what we remember of the pleasures we have had already, and which can never come back to us, and we love the old places best where we can look around and say to ourselves—'There I had a pleasant walk with such a dear friend; and, There I sat when I heard such a piece of good news; and so on.' Do you understand me, Jessie?"

"Yes, grandmother." After a while, Jessie said in a very low voice, so that I could just hear her, "Grandmother, did not grandfather live here?"

"Yes, my child, and I was just going to tell you, Jessie, that there is one move I would be willing to make; I would be willing to live near, quite near, the church, for it is getting to be hard work for me to get in and out of a wagon, and I cannot walk so far now, and though I am sure you take good care of grandfather's grave, I shall still want to see it sometimes myself."

Flowerhill was quite near the country church in whose grave-yard Mr. Graham had been buried, and Harriet could not resist whispering to me, "Oh, Aunt Kitty, it will just do."

Mrs. Graham said nothing more, and when we entered the house at the front door, she and Jessie were just coming up the steps which led from the garden. Jessie was delighted with the promise for to-morrow, and so often repeated how good it was in Mr. Dickinson to let William Temple ask her, that I saw Harriet was quite afraid that Mr. Dickinson would not appear awful enough in Jessie's eyes, and that she longed to add, "but he is very particular." It was arranged that we were to go quite early in the morning, that is, by nine o'clock, when it would be still cool and pleasant. This hour did not make it necessary for us to rise earlier than we usually did, as we always breakfasted at seven o'clock in summer. Yet, so much was Harriet excited, that three times in the night she called out from her little room, to ask if I thought it near daylight, and she started up in the morning with the first ray of sunlight. As soon as she was dressed, I sent her for Mary Mackay. Before breakfast was on table all my company was collected, and a merrier

company was certainly never seen, except Harriet, who, though pleased, was anxious. Mary jumped, and danced, and laughed, and sung, till Harriet exclaimed, "Mary, if you do so at Mr. Dickinson's he will think you crazy. I am sure he would not trust anybody who danced about as you are doing, in his garden for one moment."

"I do not care to go in his garden," said Mary, "I would rather a great deal play under the trees with William."

"But you must go in the garden, Mary, or you will not see the flower, and you know you were asked to see the flower."

"Don't be afraid, Harriet; I'll go in the garden, and when I do, I'll walk so," putting her hands down close to her side as she spoke, and mincing her steps as if she was treading on something she was afraid of crushing. I had a little suspicion that this lesson was intended by Harriet more for Jessie than for Mary.

CHAPTER X.

THE GARDEN—THE LITTLE AND THE GRAND FLORA.

As Harriet had been taught always to speak kindly to servants, she was quite a favorite with them, and her petition to the coachman that he would drive fast, made him put the horses into such rapid motion that the mile and a half was soon passed, and we were landed at Flowerhill before Mary had half arranged her plans of amusement for the day. Notwithstanding our speed, however, William called out, as we drove up, "What made you wait so long? I have been watching for you this great while."

Mr. Dickinson spoke to the children very pleasantly, and asked very kindly after Jessie's grandmother. As he caught my eye, however, on turning away from her, he shook his head with a look which seemed to say, "Remember, I promise nothing."

William was so impatient to show Jessie the flower and to exhibit his own accomplishments as a florist, that he carried the children off at once to the garden. Mr. Dickinson looked rather anxiously after them as they went tripping gayly along the walks, and very soon proposed that we should follow them. I acknowledge that, confident as I had expressed myself to be, and as I really was, of Jessie's good behavior, my great anxiety that she should be particularly cautious, made me a little nervous, a little fearful that she might at least let the skirt of her dress brush off a leaf, and thus give Mr. Dickinson an excuse for adhering to his determination. I was, therefore, quite ready to join the children, who would, I thought, be more quiet when we were near. The first sight of them, however, set my fears at rest, and I glanced at Mr. Dickinson with something of triumph. There they stood ranged around the tub in which was the strange and beautiful flower they were admiring, yet not a finger was raised even to point at it; on the contrary, they were holding each other's hands as if they feared their own forgetfulness. They moved away as we came up, though not far, and William Temple continued to repeat to Jessie all which he had learned from his uncle of the nature and habits of the plant. After I had observed all the beauties of this pride of the garden, and exhibited as much admiration for them as even Mr. Dickinson could desire, he invited me to walk with him to a distant part of the garden, where he had some other plants scarce less beautiful or less rare than this. Little Flora Temple, who, as I have before told you, was only about two years old, had held her mother's finger and run along by her side from the house, prattling all the way of the "pitty fower" which she was going to see. She now refused to go any farther, saying, "Fola tired—stay, Willy."

Mrs. Temple looked at Mr. Dickinson doubtfully, but as if to show the confidence which the good conduct of the children had given him, he made no objection, saying, indeed, "William will take good care of her,"—so she was left.

With a lightened heart, beginning to feel as Harriet did, *almost* sure that Mr. Graham would have the place, I went. What happened after we had left the children, I must tell you as I learned it from themselves. It seems, that finding her brother too much engaged with Jessie and his new office of teacher to attend much to her, Flora became weary and teased him to take her into the house. "Poor thing," said William, "she is tired standing up. If brother Willy finds a pretty place for her, will she sit down quite still till he runs to the house for Nursey to come and take her up?"

The child assented. Now, unfortunately, just by the Cactus stood a flower-stand, not intended for a parlor, but large and high, making a pretty ornament in a garden when covered with small plants, which were better sunned in this way than if placed on the earth. This flower-stand was in the shape of a half moon; the shelves looked like steps, and were quite strong enough to bear Flora's weight, or indeed William's. They were dry and clean, and seemed to him to offer a very nice and safe seat for Flora, especially as she would be within sight of the house all the time. William was only six years old, and perhaps does not deserve to be blamed very much for forgetting, in this arrangement, that as his back would be towards Flora in going to the house, and as the other children were standing behind the flower-stand, neither he nor they would be able to see her or provide for her safety. They had paid little attention to her, and supposed, when they missed her, that William had taken her to the house with him, while he had in reality

placed her on the third shelf, or step, as he called it, of the flower-stand. Giving her a few common flowers to amuse her, he ran on without thought of harm. Jessie was still occupied with the strange stalk and leaves of this wonderful plant, which she was every minute wishing her father could see—Harriet, equally intent on guarding Mr. Dickinson's treasures from the touch even of Jessie's dress, and Mary in looking for a weed, of which William Temple had declared there was not one in his uncle's garden, when they were all startled by a scream. It was William's voice—then followed a few eager words, "Jessie, look up—Jessie—Harriet—catch her!"

Jessie looked up, and there stood Flora Temple on the topmost height of the narrow flower-stand. Attracted probably by the voices, she had climbed up, intending, no doubt, to get down to them on the other side. William, who first saw her, was too far away to help her, and when Jessie looked at her, she had already become frightened and was leaning forwards with her arms outstretched. Harriet ran around the stand to go up to her—Jessie saw it was too late for this—in one instant she was standing on the tub—the Cactus tub—the next, Flora was in her arms, the child was safe, and the flower, the splendid flower, the pride of Mr. Dickinson's garden, and admiration of his guests, lay on the ground. Falling from such a height, Flora's weight had been too much for Jessie. She had bent under it, and pressing against the stake supporting the flower, it had broken, and before Jessie could raise herself, the flower was at her feet. For a time it was unseen, for all were occupied with Flora, who screamed as if she had really met the fall she had so narrowly escaped. Her nurse took her from Jessie, and moved towards the house with her, followed by all the children, without any one of them having even glanced at the Cactus. After going a short distance, however, the girls, finding they could do nothing to pacify her, returned to look for Mary's gloves and handkerchief, which she had laid down and quite forgotten in her fright about Flora. As they came near the flower, Harriet was the first to perceive the mischief done, and to exclaim, "Oh, Jessie, see what you have done! What will Mr. Dickinson say?"

Jessie was a timid child, and Mr. Dickinson seemed to her the most awful person in the world. Distressed and frightened, she stood for a minute with her hands clasped, looking down at the prostrate flower without speaking a word, then suddenly looking up, said, "Harriet, I am very sorry, but I could not help it, and I must just go to Mr. Dickinson and tell him I did it."

"Ah, Jessie! you do not know all," said Harriet, "or it would not seem so easy to tell him that."

"It does not seem easy, Harriet," Jessie began—but Mary interrupted her, exclaiming warmly, "Why, Harriet! I do believe you think Jessie ought to have let Flora fall rather than have broken that one single flower."

"No, Mary, I do not think so, but I wish anybody else had done it rather than Jessie."

"Why, Harriet?" said Jessie, "why would you rather anybody else had done it?"

"Because, Jessie, I would rather Mr. Dickinson should be angry to-day with anybody than with you."

"But why?" persisted Jessie.

Harriet hesitated—then said, "I may as well tell you, Jessie; for the only reason Aunt Kitty did not wish me to, was that you would be too sure, and there's no danger of that now."

"Too sure of what?"

"Why, that he would have your father for his gardener,"—and then Harriet told of all her hopes and fears, and of my efforts, and of the beautiful house and garden, and six hundred dollars a-year which Mr. Dickinson gave his gardener,—"*And then you know, Jessie, you would not be too far to come every day to school to Miss Bennett; and see, Jessie, there's the church,*" pointing to the steeple, "*so near, and you know your grandmother wants to live near the church, and this was what made me want you to come so very much that Mr. Dickinson might see how careful you were, and then I was almost sure he would let your father have the place; but now—*" and she looked down sorrowfully at the prostrate flower.

Jessie, who had listened with wondering and eager ears, looked down too and said nothing.

After a short pause, Mary Mackay exclaimed, "They are coming,—I hear Mr. Dickinson—but do not look so pale and so frightened, Jessie. I will tell you what I will do—I am not afraid of Mr. Dickinson—he cannot do any thing to hurt me. Now, Jessie, do not begin to say no—I am not going to tell a story—I am just going to *let him think* it was I who broke the flower."

"No, no, Mary," said Jessie—but before she had finished speaking, Mary had picked up the broken branch, and stood in the path before the astonished Mr. Dickinson and myself. Mrs. Temple had excused herself and returned to the house by another way some time before. There stood Mary with the branch in her hand—the branch, with its flower broken and soiled.

"Mr. Dickinson," her voice faltered, and she evidently began to grow frightened, but she continued, "I am very sorry, sir, your flower has got broke."

Mr. Dickinson turned first red and then pale. He said not a word to Mary, but turned to me with a look which I well understood—it said as plainly as words could have done, "You see how right I was about children." This passed in an instant, for you know looks do not take long, and before I could say a word to him—before I could even ask Mary how it happened, Jessie stood beside her. She was very pale. Laying her hand on the branch which Mary held, she said very distinctly,

though her voice was low, "She did not break it, sir—it was I."

We were all silent for a moment, and then Mr. Dickinson spoke, "It was you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, my dear," he continued, speaking very slowly, "I am very much obliged to you, for you have saved me probably from a great many such trials. Had you been as careful and well-behaved as this lady thought you, I should have been hardly able to refuse her request that I would take your father as my gardener, at least on trial for one year, and at the end of that time, I should, it seems, have had little of a garden to keep."

Mr. Dickinson walked on without another word or even look at the little culprits. And I walked on too. You will think me very cruel, and so I thought myself but a minute after, as I heard Jessie's low, half-smothered sobs, and the efforts of Harriet and Mary to console her; but I was really vexed with Jessie, for you must remember I did not know how she had been so unfortunate as to break the plant,—the children had been too much frightened even to think of telling us that. Besides, I was on my way to see a new dairy of Mr. Dickinson's, and as I had asked to see it, he would have thought my leaving him unpardonably impolite. I fear, as it was, I must have seemed very inattentive, for I often forgot to answer him while listening to poor Jessie's sobs, or looking back to the garden walk where she still stood with her head resting on Harriet's shoulder, while Mary held one of her hands and talked with even more than her usual earnestness. What they said I must repeat to you as I heard it from themselves, since it is necessary you should know it in order to understand what afterwards happened.

"I would not cry, Jessie," said Mary, "I would be glad my father was not to live with such a cross, bad man."

"Oh, Mary! you do not know how badly father feels about going away. He thinks it will kill grandmother only to hear about it—and he might have come here if it had not been for me—I am so sorry I came. What shall I do, Harriet?—What shall I do?"

"Let us all go and beg Mr. Dickinson," said Mary; "I am sure if we told him that Jessie had done it all to keep little Flora Temple from hurting herself, he could not be so cross."

"Well," said Harriet, "let us try—we can do no harm—for he cannot be more angry than he is."

Poor Jessie was willing to try any thing, though she had little hope. When she came near us, however, her heart failed her and she drew back. Mary, who was always ready to be speaker, proposed that Jessie and Harriet should stay where they were, while she went forward and told the story. This was agreed to, and we had scarcely entered the dairy when Mary followed us in. Breathing very hard and quick, and looking quite flushed and agitated, she began, "Mr. Dickinson—Aunt Kitty—Aunt Kitty, I am come to tell Mr. Dickinson how Jessie broke the flower."

"There is no occasion, my dear," said Mr. Dickinson, looking quite fretted and angry; "I do not care to know how she broke it, it is quite enough for me to know that it is broken."

"But I want to tell you, sir," persisted Mary, "because I am sure if you knew, you would not be angry with her."

"Angry with her!—I am not at all angry with her. I do not doubt that she is a very good girl, and that I should like her very much, but not in my garden, Miss Mary—not in my garden."

I saw that Mr. Dickinson felt worried, and that Jessie's cause was not gaining any thing from Mary's application, so taking her hand, I said, "Do not tease Mr. Dickinson, my dear,—tell Jessie Mr. Dickinson says he is not angry with her, and that Aunt Kitty loves her better than ever for having told the truth so readily and firmly."

Mary looked very much dissatisfied, but as Mr. Dickinson turned his back to her and talked to me as if she had not been there, it was of no use to stay, and she soon left us.

"Jessie," said Mary, when she got back to her, "Mr. Dickinson is a cross bad man, and I would not mind him at all. He said he was not angry with you, but he was just as angry as he could be, for he would not hear a word I had to say about you—but Aunt Kitty says you must not cry, and that she loves you better than ever for telling the truth."

Pleased as Jessie was with my praise, it could not comfort her for her father's loss, or give her courage to meet the dreaded Mr. Dickinson.

"Harriet," said she, "I do want to go home."

"Well, Jessie, you shall go—I will ask Aunt Kitty to send you there in the carriage, and then let it come back for us."

"No, no, Harriet—then they will all talk to me and want me to stay. It's only a little way, and I walk every week to the church—why cannot I just slip through that garden gate and get home without anybody's knowing it? I shall feel so much better when I have told father and grandmother all about it."

"I dare say you will," said Harriet, "for when any thing troubles me I want to tell Aunt Kitty directly, and your grandmother is just the same to you. I would tell her all, Jessie, for I am sure she would a great deal rather go away anywhere than to have had you tell a story."

"That I am sure of too," said Jessie.

"Well," said Mary, coloring up, "I did not mean to tell a story, but I do not see what harm it would have been to let Mr. Dickinson think it was I that broke his plant, just from seeing the branch in my hand."

"Oh, Mary!" said Jessie, "I know you would not tell a story, and it was very kind in you to want to take the blame from me,—but indeed, Mary, it would not have been right, I'm sure it would not; and badly as I do feel now, I should have felt a great deal worse if I had not told Mr. Dickinson all the truth,—but good-by, girls," for they had walked on while talking, and both Harriet and Mary had gone with her beyond the gate, "I'll go and tell father, and beg him to let me tell grandmother all about it. He said last night he wished she knew, only he could not bear to tell her."

Jessie's tears had ceased as soon as she determined to go home and tell her troubles there, and Harriet and Mary parted from her with smiles, promising to beg me to go back early, and to let them go directly to her house.

CHAPTER XI.

TRUTH REWARDED.

I do not know exactly how long it was before Mr. Dickinson and I returned to the house, but the children were there before us, and were already telling the story of Jessie's griefs to William, who was quite as much distressed for her, and as angry with his uncle as even Mary could desire. As we entered the piazza where the children stood, I asked for Jessie.

"She has gone home," said Harriet.

"Gone home!" I repeated in surprise.

"Yes," said William, looking very boldly at his uncle, "and I think she was very right to go. I would not stay where I was scolded just for breaking a flower."

"William!" said Mrs. Temple, in surprise at his violence, for he was usually very gentle in his temper. Mr. Dickinson folded his arms and looked at him without speaking, as if he wished to hear all he had to say before answering him.

"Well, mother," said William, still trying to speak boldly, though tears were in his eyes, and he could not prevent the quivering of his lip, "I do think it was very hard that Jessie should be scolded just for saving my little sister from being hurt, or maybe killed. I am sure our little Flora is worth a great deal more than any grand Flora."

"Saved little Flora!" repeated Mr. Dickinson, "what does the child mean?" looking at me, while I turned to Mrs. Temple for an explanation.

"William is right," she answered, "in what he says, though very wrong in his manner of saying it. I am sorry Jessie has gone without my thanks, for, from the account given both by William and the nurse, she has evinced extraordinary presence of mind for so young a child, and has saved Flora from a very dangerous fall."

"Fall from what?"

"From the large flower-stand which stood near the Cactus, on a shelf of which William seated her while he came to the house for her nurse. Flora climbed to the top, and would have fallen on the flower, or worse, on the stake which supported it, had not Jessie saved her."

"And in saving her broke the flower. I see it all now," said Mr. Dickinson; "but why did not the child tell me so?"

"I tried to tell you, sir," said Mary, "in the dairy, but you would not let me."

Mr. Dickinson colored, as if he was ashamed to remember how angry he had been.

"And, Miss Mary Mackay, I think you had some intention of telling me a story; of making me believe, if Jessie had let you, that you had broken the flower; why was this?"

Mary hung her head and looked very much ashamed, but answered, "I did not mean to tell a story, Mr. Dickinson, I only meant to let you think it was I, because it was better for you to be angry with me than to be angry with Jessie."

"You only meant to let me think it was you;—and have you been so ill taught, young lady, that you do not know that in deceiving me by your looks and manner, you were as guilty of falsehood as if you had spoken it? But why would it have been better for me to be angry with you than with Jessie?"—then, without waiting for an answer, Mr. Dickinson turned to me and asked, "Did I not understand you, ma'am, that Jessie was to know nothing of your plans, that I might see how she would behave when unrestrained by any cautions?"

"I did tell you so," said I, "and was, I assure you, true to my promise."

"Aunt Kitty," said Harriet, "after Jessie had broken the flower, I was so sorry that I told her and Mary all about it."

"All about what?" asked Mr. Dickinson.

"About Aunt Kitty's wanting you to have Mr. Graham for your gardener, sir; and that I thought you would have had him, and have given him that pretty house and garden, and six hundred dollars a year, if Jessie had not hurt any thing."

"Then Jessie knew all this when she told me what she had done?"

"Yes, sir, it was this that made Mary want her to let you think she had done it; but Jessie said she should never feel happy if she did not tell you the truth, and that she was sure her grandmother would rather go away than have her tell a story."

"She is a noble little girl," said Mr. Dickinson, "and her father shall be my gardener, and have the house and garden, and six hundred dollars, and another hundred besides for Jessie's sake; and if you will excuse me, ma'am, I will order my horse and ride over to Mr. Graham's at once. I may overtake the child."

How happy Harriet looked—how Mary jumped and danced—how William, springing into his uncle's arms, kissed him, declaring he loved him better than he had ever done in his life, you may all imagine without my telling. As soon as they were still enough for me to be heard, I begged that Mrs. Temple would excuse me, and that Mr. Dickinson would order my carriage and permit me to accompany him, as I would not miss seeing Jessie's joyful surprise for any thing.

The carriage was ordered, and in a very few minutes we were on the road to Mr. Graham's. We looked eagerly at every turn for Jessie's straw bonnet and plaided gingham dress, but nothing was seen of her. As we could not overtake her, and did not wish to startle Mr. Graham's family by driving unexpectedly to his house, we determined to leave the carriage at mine and walk quietly over. We had gone but a few steps from my door when we met Mr. Graham. He colored, on seeing Mr. Dickinson, and would have turned off without stopping to speak to us. I was sure from this, he had seen Jessie and heard her story, and that he felt a little hurt that Mr. Dickinson should have been so angry with her, for an accident which she could not help. Before he could get out of our way, Mr. Dickinson was up with him and said, "Excuse me for stopping you, Mr. Graham, but I have come to apologize to your little girl for my anger to-day, which I find was very unreasonable. I was told, sir, before she came to my house, that she had been taught to be careful in a garden. I find she has been well taught in more important things. She is a noble child, sir. I shall ask her to appoint my gardener, and if she offer the place to her father I hope he will not refuse it, for I shall be pleased to have in my employment a man so well principled as I am sure he must be."

Mr. Graham was quite confused, and stood a little while looking at Mr. Dickinson, as if he did not understand him; then seizing his hand, he said in a hoarse voice, while his lip trembled like a child's, "God bless you, sir—God bless you. You have saved me from the greatest sorrow I ever had—not that I minded the money so much, sir, for thank God, I am strong yet, and could work for it again—but my mother, sir—my poor old mother, it would have killed her, sir. I always thought it would, and this morning when I summoned courage to tell her about it, though she tried to talk cheerfully, I saw she was struck down, and I knew if we went away, we should leave her behind—she would never live to go—and now, oh sir! I can only say again, God bless you!"

Mr. Graham could not say another word, for the tears came in spite of him, and covering his face with his hands, he turned away from us, as if he did not like that we should see him weep. He need not have been ashamed, for I was sobbing, and even Mr. Dickinson's voice trembled as he said, "It is your daughter you must bless, Mr. Graham; but we will leave you now, sir, for I am quite anxious to make my peace with Jessie."

We both passed on, knowing that Mr. Graham would rather be by himself while he was so agitated.

CHAPTER XII.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE MAKES ALL PLEASANT.

When we asked at the house for Jessie, we were told she was not there, having followed her grandmother, who, before she returned, had walked out. On inquiring in what direction they had gone, we were shown a footpath which led first across a field and then through a wood, down to a stream of water on which a saw-mill had been built many years ago. The old mill had been long out of order, and the spot where it stood was so shut in by trees, and was so still, that but for the occasional sound of a wagon rumbling over a bridge not far off, or the merry whoop of a child at play in the wood, you might have fancied, when there, that there was not another person within miles of you. Mr. Dickinson and I both knew the place well, and we walked on quite briskly, he leading the way, for the path was too narrow for even two persons to walk side by side. We were

quite silent, for Mr. Dickinson never talked much, and I was engaged with my own pleasant thoughts. In less than ten minutes we came in sight of the old mill, and the open space around it. In this open space, near to the stream, one large old oak had been left standing, the roots of which grew out of the ground and then bent down into it again, so as to form quite a comfortable seat. As we came near this tree, we heard a child's voice speaking, and Mr. Dickinson, supposing that Jessie was just telling her tale to her grandmother, motioned to me to stop. As I was quite sure that Jessie would tell the simple truth, I had no hesitation in doing this. Mrs. Graham was seated on the root of which I have told you. Her face was towards the water, and she was leaning back against the body of the tree. She had brought her knitting with her, and her needles were moving as quickly and as constantly as if she had been in her parlor at home. As we stood we had a good side view of her, though she could only see us by turning quite around. As Jessie sat on the grass at her grandmother's feet, she was quite hidden from us, except the back of her head, a part of her dress, and one hand which rested on Mrs. Graham's lap. We soon found that Jessie's story must have been told before we came, for her voice ceased as I obeyed Mr. Dickinson's sign to stop, and Mrs. Graham replied to her, "Yes, Jessie, this is one of the places that I spoke to you of yesterday evening that I love so well. Many a pleasant hour have I passed with your dear grandfather under these shady trees, talking of old friends and of our home across the sea, and this morning when I heard that we were to go to a new home among strangers, I came here to mourn that I must leave it. But, Jessie, this was wrong, and now I feel it was, for while my child and my child's children are true and honest, I have much more cause to be grateful than to grieve. If we carry with us good consciences we shall find some prettiness in every place and some good in every person."

"How is that, grandmother? our goodness cannot make them pretty and good."

"It does not make them so, Jessie, but it makes us feel them to be so."

"I do not see how, grandmother."

"Look, Jessie, at the water, and tell me what you see in it."

"The blue sky and a white cloud sailing over it, and the trees on the other side—the water is so clear, grandmother, that I can see every leaf."

"Well, Jessie, when we came here last and the water was low and muddy—do you remember what you saw then?"

"I could hardly see any thing at all, grandmother, and what I did see looked black and ugly."

"And yet, Jessie, there was the same bright blue sky above, and the same green trees on the other side. Now, Jessie, there is some beauty and some goodness in every thing God has made, and he who has a pure conscience is like one looking into a clear stream; he sees it all; while to him who has a bad conscience, all things look as you say they did in the muddy stream—black and ugly."

"Now, grandmother, I know what you mean, and I know it is true too, for if I had told a story to-day, and so father had got that pretty place, I am sure I never should have liked it or thought it pretty again; and then I should have been afraid of Mr. Dickinson, and have felt as if he made me tell the story, and so I should not have liked him. But now, grandmother, I think he is a very good man, though he is a little cross sometimes, and I do not feel afraid of him at all."

"No, Jessie, those who do right are seldom afraid, for you know the Bible says, 'the righteous are as bold as a lion.' I am very glad, my child, of all that has happened to you to-day. You may have harder trials of your truth than even this before you die, but you will remember this day, and how happy you have felt for telling the truth; and you will remember, too, if all the good things on earth are offered to you as the price of one falsehood, that your old grandmother told you truth is better than all, Jessie,—truth is better than all. Will you not remember this, Jessie?"

"Yes, grandmother," said the child, in a low earnest voice.

"So may God bless you, my daughter," and Mrs. Graham laid her hand solemnly on Jessie's head.

Mr. Dickinson and I had been unwilling to interrupt this conversation, but he now stood aside that I might pass on, as he thought they would be less startled at seeing me than at seeing him. Jessie was the first to hear my step, and, turning her head quickly, to see me. She was on her feet in a moment, and said, with a bright happy smile, "Oh! I am so glad to see you, ma'am, for you will hear me, and I can tell you how it was, and then I am sure you will not be angry with me."

"I know all already, Jessie, and am only angry with myself that I should have seemed displeased with you even for a moment. No one is angry with you now, Jessie, and Mr. Dickinson has come with me to tell you himself that he is not."

"Oh! ma'am!" said Jessie, with a little start, though she had just said she did not feel at all afraid of him. She looked around and saw Mr. Dickinson already standing close beside her.

"Do not be afraid, Jessie," said he, "for, as your grandmother told you, those who do right need not fear any one. If either of us should be afraid, it is I, for I was very unjust to you in refusing to hear your excuses, when I might have known, from what had already passed, that you would have told me nothing but the truth. But I have heard all since, Jessie, and have come to make amends for my injustice."

How Mr. Dickinson was to make amends to Jessie I need not repeat to you, for you have heard it

already. But Jessie's joy—this cannot be described. She was wild with delight. Her grandmother was her first thought, and as soon as she understood Mr. Dickinson, she was at her side exclaiming, "Just hear, grandmother—just hear! Father is to have that pretty place after all, and it is just by the church—and you know, grandmother, you wanted to be by the church. Oh, grandmother! do tell Mr. Dickinson how glad you are."

Mrs. Graham's gladness showed itself in a way that Jessie did not quite understand. Tears sprang to her eyes and rolled down her cheeks, while yet there was a smile upon her lips; and when she attempted to speak, her voice was so choked with weeping that she could say nothing. Surprised and disappointed, Jessie turned to Mr. Dickinson, and as if to apologize for what seemed to her so strange, said, "Indeed, sir, I am sure she is very glad, though she is crying."

"I do not doubt it, Jessie," said Mr. Dickinson.

"I hope not, sir, I hope not," said Mrs. Graham, who had by this time recovered her voice; "I am both glad and thankful—first to Him," looking up to heaven, "who gave you the heart to be so kind, and then to you, sir, whom I hope God will bless for all your goodness."

Mr. Dickinson soon left us, having an engagement at home. He was to take my carriage and send Harriet and Mary, who had remained to spend the day with William, back in it. I begged that they might leave his house in time to be at home by five o'clock, and I invited Jessie to come over at that hour to meet them. I will leave you to imagine what a happy evening they passed, for though they said a great deal, and it all seemed very pleasant at the time, I doubt whether much of it would look very wise when written down. I will tell you, however, of three things which were decided upon. First—Mary Mackay promised to try to remember Mrs. Graham's lesson to Jessie, that "truth is better than all," especially as Jessie assured her that she had found it so; for that even before she knew of Mr. Dickinson's kind intentions, she had felt quite happy at having told the truth—happier a great deal than any thing could have made her which she had gotten by telling a story. Next, that Jessie was to have Mooly back again, Harriet having begged her of me as a present for her friend. Last, that when Mr. Graham had moved, Harriet and Mary, and two or three other little girls, of whom the first named was "Blind Alice,"^[1] were to spend an evening with Jessie.

[1] See the story of Blind Alice, by Aunt Kitty.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HAPPY PARTY.

It was the first week in September before Mr. Graham moved, and the beginning of the second before his family were so settled as that Jessie could fulfil her promise of an evening's entertainment to her young friends. They were all invited the day before to come at four o'clock, that they might have an hour to see all the beauties which Jessie had discovered, and all the improvements which she had made in her new home, and then, taking tea at five o'clock, might all be at their homes again before the evening became chill. I had a whispered request from Jessie, that though there were to be no grown ladies there, I would just come with the children; a request which you may suppose I did not refuse. When the afternoon came, I took Mary and Alice and two other little girls with me in the carriage, while Harriet rode her own pony. Jessie was waiting in the piazza to welcome us, and William Temple stood gallantly ready to help us from the carriage; and before the hour was gone, every nook and corner of the poultry-yard and garden had been explored. They were both in very nice order, and Alice, as Jessie led her around the garden, was constantly exclaiming, "How delightful!" while she inhaled the perfume of roses and pinks, and honeysuckles and jessamines. It was too late for strawberries or raspberries, but when this garden was made, Mr. Dickinson had had some fine peach and pear trees set in it, and these were now covered with ripe fruit, and from the grape-vine hung large clusters of the rich purple grape. The table for the children was spread under the grape-arbor, and when at five o'clock they were called to it, they found,—not cakes and sweetmeats and tea,—but a dish of warm, light biscuits, of Mrs. Graham's own making—a bowl of soft peaches with cream and sugar—baskets of pears and grapes, and a cup of Mooly's rich milk for each child. The sun was low, and only a few of its rays found their way through the reddish-colored grape-leaves into the arbor; and, sure I am, those rays never fell upon a happier group. They were still enjoying their feast, when hearing some one speak to Mr. Graham, who was busy propping up an overloaded branch of a pear-tree, I looked around and saw Mrs. Temple and Mr. Dickinson with Flora Temple in his arms, coming towards the arbor.

"Mr. Graham," I heard Mr. Dickinson say, "why have you not taken your little visitors through the other garden?"

"Why, sir," said Mr. Graham, "though they are all very good children, they are not just as used to gardens as Jessie, and they might be careless—but if you would let me, I would like to take that poor blind child through the green-house, for she is so fond of flowers, and I doubt if she ever smelt a lemon blossom."

"Certainly, Mr. Graham, I shall be pleased to have you take her."

Mrs. Temple took Flora from her brother and joined the little party under the arbor, while Mr. Dickinson remained outside, seemingly engaged with Mr. Graham, but I suspect much more attentive to the merry voices of the children. At length William called him in, and I am sure no one who saw him then for the first time would have called him "the cross Mr. Dickinson." I said this to old Mrs. Graham, and her reply was, "Nothing, I think, ma'am, makes people so pleasant and good-humored as seeing happy faces,—especially when they know, as Mr. Dickinson does, that they made the happiness."

Our party separated in good time, but not before Mr. Graham had taken Alice to the green-house. She went with him, not knowing where he was taking her, and was so delighted with the strange perfume, and so curious to know from what it came, that Mr. Dickinson, who had followed them, cut off a cluster of flowers from a lemon-tree for her. After this, the highest expression of satisfaction with any thing which Alice ever gave, was to say, "It is almost as pleasant as Mr. Dickinson's green-house."

When William was leading me to the carriage, he begged me to put my head down, as he wanted to tell me a secret. I did so, and he whispered, "I am coming to spend Christmas with my uncle, and I told him I wanted to see a play acted, for I never saw one; and he says I shall see one then and act in it too, and he will write it himself, and it is to be called, "All for Truth, or the Flower well Lost."

That I shall have an invitation to see this play I have little doubt; so my next story for you may be of Christmas merry-making at Flowerhill—at the cross Mr. Dickinson's. Let this teach my little readers, that if children are good and pleasant themselves, they will seldom find any one cross to them long.

THE END.

FLORENCE ARNOTT:

OR,

IS SHE GENEROUS?

CHAPTER I.

A WINTER MORNING.

When last I took leave of my young friends, it was autumn, and we were looking forward to Christmas entertainments at Flowerhill, where a play written by Mr. Dickinson himself was to be acted. Those of you who have read Jessie Graham, may remember that I thought it probable my next story for you would be of these entertainments.

Mr. Dickinson kept his promise. The play was written; and a fortnight before Christmas, came William Temple, full of joyful expectation. The day after his arrival he rode over with his uncle to see me, and to invite Harriet and Mary to be at Flowerhill the next morning, to hear the play read, and to receive their parts, for parts they were both to have. Soon after Mr. Dickinson and William left us, the sky was overcast with heavy clouds, which, as evening approached, became more and more wild and dark. I predicted a snow-storm, and Harriet and Mary went to sleep with little hope of being able to fulfil their engagement.

The snow-storm came, but it lasted only a few hours of the night, and the next morning's sun rose clear and bright. Bright indeed, dazzlingly bright, as its rays fell on the pure, white snow with which the whole ground was covered, or shone through the icicles, with which every tree was hung, making them look like glittering diamonds, in each of which there seemed a tiny rainbow.

I had ordered the carriage at an early hour, and we had scarcely breakfasted when the merry jingle of the sleigh-bells told that it was at the door. Even the horses seemed gayer than usual, and whirled us along so rapidly, that had not the reins been in the hands of Henry, whom I knew to be the steadiest and most careful coachman in the country, I should have been half frightened. William saw us from the parlor window, and had the door open for us as soon as we were out of the sleigh. We were just cold enough to enjoy the warm parlor; and as we drew close to the blazing wood fire, Mary exclaimed, "Aunt Kitty, do you not wish it was always winter?"

"No, Mary, for I love spring flowers and summer and autumn fruits."

"Oh! I had forgotten them," said Mary, "but I am very glad there is a winter too."

"So am I, Mary, very glad, and very thankful to Him who gives us the varying pleasures which make each season welcome."

We were interrupted by Mr. Dickinson, who came in with the play. He read it for us, and I am sure no play was ever heard with more pleasure. Harriet and Mary received their parts, and were now quite impatient to get home, that they might begin to study them.

This pleasant morning visit was all which I saw of the Christmas entertainments at Flowerhill, for on my return home, I found a carriage waiting for me, and a letter requesting me to come to a very dear friend, who was both ill and in trouble, and needed a nurse and a comforter. You may be sure that I made no delay in complying with this request; but before I tell you any thing of my visit, I would give you some account of my friend, Mrs. Arnott, and of her daughter Florence, as she had appeared to me about eighteen months before, when I had spent some weeks with her mother under very different circumstances.

CHAPTER II.

THE VISIT.

Mrs. Arnott was younger than I, yet not so much younger but that we had been playmates in childhood. As we grew older we continued warm friends. When she married, I rejoiced in her happy prospects, and found but one thing in Mr. Arnott I would have desired to change—he lived thirty miles from me, and this was felt as a wide separation between friends who had been accustomed to meet every day. I soon found that the separation was to be much greater. Mr. Arnott liked travelling, had a large fortune, and little to do. He took his wife to England; and after travelling in England, Scotland, and Wales, they passed over to the continent of Europe, and having seen whatever was of most interest in France, Switzerland, and Germany, went into Italy, and spent more than a year in the city of Florence. Here their little girl was born, and received her name in remembrance of a home which they had found very agreeable. When Florence was about two years old, her father and mother returned to America. They came in the autumn, and joyfully as I welcomed back my friend, I soon began to fear that she would not be able to spend many winters with us. Her constitution had always been delicate, and her long abode in the soft, warm climate of Italy, seemed to have unfitted her completely for the endurance of our rough and cold northern winters. The first winter she went out very seldom, the second not at all, and the third she showed symptoms of serious illness so early, that her physician advised Mr. Arnott to take her at once to a more southern climate. They went to Florida, and their delightful country place was again let for several years, while they spent their winters at the south and their summers in travelling through the middle and northern states.

In this way, Mrs. Arnott seemed gradually to acquire more vigorous health, yet it was not till Florence was more than ten years old, that they returned to their own home with some hope of being able to remain at it during the whole year. As soon as they began to feel themselves settled, Mrs. Arnott wrote to ask a visit from me, requesting that I would bring my nieces, Harriet Armand and Mary Mackay, with me. She was very urgent in this last request, saying, that she hoped to benefit her little Florence by the society of children of nearly her own age, who had been as carefully educated as she knew Harriet and Mary had been. I will copy for you a part of my friend's letter, from which I gained some knowledge of the disposition of Florence, even before I made this visit.

"You will soon see," wrote Mrs. Arnott, "that my little girl's education has been sadly neglected. By her education, I do not mean what is ordinarily taught in schools. Wherever we have made our home, even for a few months, we have procured for her the best teachers we could find, and as she is a child of quick mind, she is quite as well informed as most children of her age. But to the education of her *heart*, which I know you will think with me of far more importance, no attention has been paid. Her father's extreme indulgence to this only child, my feeble health, and our roving life, have left her so unrestrained, that I begin to fear she is becoming very self-willed. Yet her temper is naturally so amiable, and her feelings so affectionate, she is so anxious to please those she loves, and so grieved at the least appearance of blame from them, that I hope it will not be difficult to correct her faults."

As I felt much interested in this little girl, and thought, with her mother, that the association with other and more carefully taught children might be serviceable to her, I determined at once to accept the invitation for Harriet and myself, and if my brother and Mrs. Mackay would consent, for Mary too. Indeed, I hoped more advantage for Florence from the companionship of Mary than of Harriet. Harriet was so gentle, and would yield to her young friend so quietly, that Florence would seldom discover from her how much she was yielding, and how unreasonable her own exactions were. But Mary had a strong will, and though she had been taught that she must on many occasions submit to the will of others, it was always done with a very great effort. I was quite sure, therefore, that Florence would know whenever Mary yielded a point to her, and moreover, that she would be very plainly informed if Mary thought her demands unreasonable.

Mr. and Mrs. Mackay readily consented that Mary should go with me, and Mary was always pleased with the prospect of a visit, especially if the visit could be made with Harriet and Aunt Kitty. Of my designs for the improvement of Florence, I did not, of course, say any thing to either of my nieces.

Our visit was made in June, when it was too warm to travel in midday, so, rising very early, we

were five miles from home before the sun rose; and before it became uncomfortably warm, had gone seventeen miles, to a little village where we were to dine, rest our horses, and remain quiet till the afternoon became cool, when fourteen miles more of travelling would bring us to Mr. Arnott's. We arrived there just about sunset. Florence was playing on the green before the door with a little dog, which ran jumping and barking beside her, when the carriage swept round a turn of the road, which brought us in sight of the house.

Florence had travelled too much, and been, therefore, too much accustomed to new faces, to run away from us, even had we been strangers, and we were not strangers, for she had seen us all in the preceding summer, when her mother had made a visit of a few days in our neighborhood; so, instead of running away, she called out, on seeing us, "Papa, mamma, here they come!" and opening the gate, stood ready to receive us, with a face full of smiles.

Bed-time soon follows sunset in summer, at least for children. Yet it came not too soon this evening for Harriet and Mary, who were tired by their thirty miles travelling. But Florence thought it very unkind in them to leave her so soon "this first evening." Her entreaties were so urgent that they would stay a little while longer, that her young companions would have found some difficulty in getting away without aid from me. Taking Florence's hand, as she was endeavoring to hold Harriet and Mary back from following the servant, who was going to show them their bed, I said, "Did you hear me tell those little girls that they must go to bed?"

"Yes," she replied; "but they have been here such a little time, and it is so early yet; I only want them to stay a little longer."

"I do not doubt they would try to oblige you, though they are tired and sleepy, but they are accustomed to do just as I wish them; and I wish them to go to bed at once. You will have a long summer's day for talk and play to-morrow, and only a short summer's night for sleep. So now bid them good-night; and I think you had better go too, for I shall call you up very early in the morning, as I expect you to show me the garden and the dairy before breakfast."

"And the fish-pond, too," said Florence, "the fish-pond, too."

"Is there a fish-pond, too? Well, all these will require us to rise early,—shall I bid you good-night, too?"

"Yes; I may as well go," said she, looking around and seeing that Harriet and Mary were already gone.

So closed the first evening of our visit.

CHAPTER III.

THE SWING.

The morning was cloudless, and the garden looked beautifully, with its leaves and flowers glittering with dew-drops. But I only saw it from my window, for though Harriet and Mary, starting from sleep at the first sound of my voice, sprang eagerly up, and, dressing in haste, waited impatiently for the tap of Florence, which was to summon us to our morning walk; they waited in vain. Florence could not be awoke, or when awake, could not be induced to rise; and breakfast was announced, and we were all seated at table before she made her appearance. She looked far more discontented and dull than those whom she had disappointed. This did not surprise me, for I knew she could not feel very well pleased with herself; and those who are not, are seldom pleased with others.

"Well, Florence," said her father, "so you have slept so long that your friends have lost this fine morning in waiting for you, and have seen nothing of all you promised last evening to show them."

Florence colored, hung her head, and replied in rather a sulky tone, "I could not wake myself."

"No," said Mr. Arnott, "but—"

"Come, Mr. Arnott," said I, interrupting him, "the disappointment is past—we have many other pleasures in store for to-day, we can afford to postpone this one; and I doubt not Florence will be ready in time to-morrow. To secure it I will call her myself. May I, Florence?"

She looked pleased, and replied promptly, "Yes, ma'am."

I had two reasons for interrupting Mr. Arnott. One was, I thought Florence was already so much grieved and disappointed that it was useless to distress her farther. Another, and perhaps a more important reason was, that I wished to serve this little girl by helping her to correct her faults; and I felt that in order to be able to do this, it was quite necessary that she should learn to love me, to place confidence in my kindness, and take pleasure in my society. Now you will readily see that she would not be likely to do any of these things, if through me she were made to feel uncomfortably.

After breakfast, Mr. Arnott invited the children to take a walk with him, adding, "I have

something to show you, which even Florence has not seen."

"Which I have not seen? What can it be? Do, papa, tell me what it is," said Florence, coming back from the door, which she had reached on her way for her bonnet.

"You will know in a few minutes," said Mr. Arnott, "that is, if you will put on your bonnet and come with me, instead of keeping us all waiting. See, Harriet and Mary are ready," pointing to them as they now entered the parlor.

Florence ran off for her bonnet, saying, however, as she went, "I will ask nurse—if she knows, I am sure she will tell me."

"She does not know," Mr. Arnott called out.

As I love pleasant surprises, especially when children are to enjoy the pleasure, this little mystery was a temptation to join the walkers too strong for me to resist, so before Florence came back, I was ready too, and went off as full of curiosity and pleased expectation as any of the party. Mr. Arnott led us through the garden into the orchard beyond it. As we entered the garden, Florence said, "Now I know what it is, papa—you are going to show us a new flower."

"Indeed, I am not, Florence."

As we passed into the orchard, she suddenly exclaimed, "Now I have it, papa, now I have it; the cherries we were looking at the other day are ripe, and you are going to get us some."

Her father smiled, but said nothing.

"That is it, papa, is it not?"

"Wait a few minutes, Florence, and you will see."

"Well, I give it up, now, for we have passed all the cherry-trees."

Mr. Arnott turned towards a wood which skirted the orchard on the north, and long before we reached it the secret was told; for, on the stoutest branch of a magnificent oak, which he had, by removing his fence, enclosed within the orchard, hung a swing—a new and strongly made swing, with a very comfortable seat. We all quickened our pace as we came in sight of it, and many were the exclamations of admiration and delight from the children.

"Such a beautiful swing, under such a cool, shady tree, how delightful!"

Florence jumped, danced, clapped her hands, and at length darted off, and, bounding into the swing, called to her father, "Come quick, quick, papa, and swing me."

"After I have swung your friends, my dear."

Florence looked disappointed, and both Harriet and Mary drew back, saying, "Oh no, sir! Swing Florence first."

Mr. Arnott saw that to persist in his politeness would distress them, so saying, "I will swing you twelve times, Florence," he touched the swing, and away it rose, rapidly yet steadily, through the air, higher and higher each time, till, as Mr. Arnott counted twelve, Florence shrieked, half with fear and half with delight. Mr. Arnott caught the swing as it descended, and stopped it.

"Oh papa! is that twelve?"

"Yes, Florence; did you not hear me count?"

"Well, just once more, papa."

Mr. Arnott stooped and whispered to her—she reddened, and getting down slowly, said, "Now, Harriet, you get in."

Harriet got in, and counting for herself, sprang out as the swing descended for the twelfth time. Mary had her turn, and looked so well pleased, that, had her father been in Mr. Arnott's place, she would, I doubt not, have said, like Florence, "Just once more, papa." As she came out Florence again sprang in.

"Now, papa, once, only once—or twice," she added, as her father extended his arm at her entreaty.

But after giving one toss to the swing, Mr. Arnott turned resolutely away, saying, "You are never satisfied, Florence, but I will not indulge you any farther this morning, for the sun is getting too warm for any of you to be here longer—in the cool of the evening we will try it again."

Florence looked not very well pleased, but as we all turned towards the house, she came out and followed us.

CHAPTER IV.

GIVING.

I do not intend to give you a history of what was done by the children each day of our visit, for this would make a very long story. When it was fine weather they helped the gardener, as *they* said, or hindered him, as *he* sometimes complained—walked in the orchard, looking for ripe fruit—or swung, and on a cool evening Mr. Arnott would sometimes take them out on the river in a pretty little sailing boat, or drive them two or three miles in a light, open carriage. When it rained, they overhauled Florence's toys, of which there were trunks full, or amused themselves with her books. They seemed to agree very well, at least we heard of no disagreements, though I fancied, towards the latter part of our stay, that I sometimes saw a cloud on Mary's brow, but I asked no questions, and it passed off without any complaint.

One afternoon, when we had been there about a week, as Mr. and Mrs. Arnott and I were seated in the piazza enjoying the pleasant breeze, the children rushed in from the garden, seeming very anxious to give us some information, which, as each tried to speak louder than the others, it was quite impossible for some time for us to understand. At length, by hearing a little from each, we made out that there were ripe strawberries in the neighborhood—*really ripe*—for the gardener had seen them, and he said they were as large around as his thumb.

"And you want me to send for some," Mr. Arnott began,—but, "Oh no, papa!" "Oh no, sir!" every voice again exclaimed, "we want to go for them."

"Go for them!—and pray, young ladies, how will you go?—am I to drive you?"

"Oh no, papa! we want to walk; and Andrew"—this was the name of Mr. Arnott's gardener—"says they will let us go into the garden and pick them ourselves—and you know, mamma, Eliza can go with us and carry our baskets," added Florence, anticipating her mother's objection to their going without some attendant to a place a mile off.

And so it was arranged, and in a few minutes they set out, Eliza carrying the baskets, and each taking a shilling to pay for her berries. It seems they had gone only about half-way, when they met a poor woman with a sick child in her arms, sitting to rest herself in the shade by the side of the road. The woman looked so pale and sad that the servant, Eliza, who was a kind-hearted girl, spoke to her, and asked what was the matter?

"Sick and weary," said the poor woman.

"But how did you come to be in the road here by yourself?—and where are you going?" asked Florence.

"Why you see, Miss, I have been to the city, where a great many people told me that I might make twice as much money without slaving myself to death, as I was doing, for the children; and so I took this baby and went; but the baby fell sick, and indeed I think the city air did not suit either of us, for I fell sick too, and could not work at all, and I longed so to get home and smell the country air, and see the other children and friends' faces, instead of strangers, strangers always, that, as soon as I could walk, I set out, and thank God, I have got only eight miles more to walk, for I live at M—."

"But why do you walk?" asked the children.

"Ah, young ladies, poor folks that have not any money to pay for rides, must walk. As long as my money held out I got a ride on a cart now and then for a sixpence, or a shilling, and that was a great help; but I have not even a sixpence left now to buy a bit of bread if I was ever so hungry."

In a moment Harriet's shilling was in the poor woman's hand; Mary's followed. She burst into tears, and thanked them again and again. Florence looked at her shilling, then at the woman, and said, "I have half a dollar at home, and that is four times as much as a shilling, you know, and if you will wait here till I have got the strawberries I am going for, you can go back with me and I will give you that."

"Thank you, my dear young lady," said the poor creature, "but I hope to get home this evening, and that I shall not do if I stop and go back on my way—yet," she added, "half a dollar is a great deal. I wish I were not so tired."

"Florence," cried Harriet and Mary, both at once, "I will go back for the money if you will tell me where it is, and the poor woman can rest here till I come back."

"My good woman," said Eliza, "you are not fit to walk or even to ride eight miles to-night. Now our gardener's wife has a spare room in her house, and she is a kind woman, and will do every thing she can to make you comfortable; and to-morrow morning, I dare say, the gardener can get you a lift on some farmer's cart all the way to M. So now, instead of waiting here, you had better go back at once, and Miss Florence can give you the half dollar when she comes home."

"Yes, I will give you the half dollar," said Florence, "and that," she repeated, turning to Mary, "is four times as much as a shilling, you know."

So it was arranged—the woman went back—the gardener's wife accommodated her—the gardener found a farmer going to M. the next morning, who promised to take her there on his cart—and when Florence came home she gave her the half dollar, which, being four times as much as a shilling, evidently made her, in her own opinion, and in Mary's too, four times as generous as Harriet or herself.

CHAPTER V.

GENEROSITY.

A few days after the events related in the last chapter, Mary came into my room to show me a basket and a doll's dress which Florence had given her. They were neither of them quite new, but they were not at all the worse for wear, and Mary was quite delighted with them, and with Florence for giving them. "Aunt Kitty, I do love Florence," said she, "she is so generous."

"Is she, my dear?" said I, in a very quiet tone.

"Why yes, Aunt Kitty, do you not see what she has given me?—and she has a book for Harriet, a very pretty book, which she means to give her when she is going away,—and she gives away money; you know she gave half a dollar to that poor woman the other day."

"All this, Mary, does not prove that Florence is generous."

"Well, I do not see, Aunt Kitty, how anybody can be more generous than to give away their playthings, and their books, and their money."

At this moment Harriet entered the room. Mary, from thinking that I was opposed to her in opinion, had become very much in earnest on the subject, and she called out, "I am very glad you are come, Harriet. Only think, Aunt Kitty does not think Florence is generous. Now Harriet, is she not generous—is she not very generous?"

"I do not know, Mary,—sometimes she is, but I did not think she was the other day, when she would not give her ripe plum to that poor sick child who wanted it so much."

Mary colored; "But, Harriet, I am sure the wooden horse she gave him was worth more than a dozen plums."

"I dare say it was, Mary, but the child did not want that."

Mary became now a little angry, as she was apt to do when she could not convince those with whom she was arguing.

"Well, Harriet, I think it is very unkind in you to speak so of Florence, and to say she is not generous, when she thinks so much of you."

"Stop, stop, Mary," said I, "you are now as unjust to Harriet as you accuse her of being to Florence. She did not say that Florence was not generous, but only that she had not made up her mind on that subject, that she had not seen enough to convince her that she was; and this, remember, was all which I said. Florence may be as generous as you think her, but you have not told me enough to convince me of it. When we have known her longer we shall all be able to judge better what she is. In the mean time I am very glad you like her, for I am very much interested in her myself."

"Well, Aunt Kitty, I do like her," said Mary, in a very energetic manner, "and I am sure I shall never be any better able to judge her than I am now."

I made no reply, and the conversation ended.

Mary did not forget it, however, nor feel quite satisfied with its termination, for the next morning, as I was sitting in my room alone, she came in, and after moving about a little while, seated herself by me and said, "Aunt Kitty, I want to ask you a question."

"Well, my dear, what is it?"

"I want to know when you do think a person is generous?"

"A person is generous, Mary, when he gives up his own gratification or advantage for the gratification or advantage of another."

"Well, that was what I always thought, Aunt Kitty—and now I am sure a little girl does that when she gives away her books and her playthings, and her money, does she not?"

"When a little girl becomes tired of books and playthings, Mary, they cease to amuse her, do they not?"

"Yes, Aunt Kitty," said Mary, "if she get tired of them,—but I never get tired of books and playthings if they are pretty."

"Perhaps you may not, my dear," I replied, "but some other little girls do, and those little girls are most apt to do so who have the greatest number of such things. Now, should they give away those of which they are tired—which had ceased to amuse them—could you say they had given up a gratification?"

"No, Aunt Kitty," said Mary, speaking very slowly, for she was beginning to understand my meaning.

"Then this would not be what we mean by being generous?"

"No, Aunt Kitty,—but money—you know nobody gets tired of money—suppose a little girl gives

that."

"Well, Mary, suppose she gives money, and that she knows when giving it that some kind friend will replace it, or indeed, give her a yet larger sum to encourage what he thinks a good feeling—could you say she had *given up* a gratification—would this prove her to be very generous?"

As I asked this question I looked in Mary's face with a smile,—the smile she gave me in return was plainly forced.

After waiting a moment, during which she seemed to be thinking very deeply, she spoke again. "Well, Aunt Kitty, but suppose she is not tired of the books and playthings, and does not expect to get the money back?"

Mary felt quite sure of her ground now, and looked steadily in my face. "Then, Mary, she would be a generous girl, provided she did not expect to receive in exchange for her gift some other *selfish* gratification or advantage which she valued yet more highly."

Again Mary was silent and thoughtful for a while, then said, "Why, Aunt Kitty, I heard my father say once, when he gave some money to help some poor sick soldiers, that it was a great gratification to him; did that make him not generous?"

"No, no, Mary, for that was not a *selfish* gratification. That gratification was caused by the good which he knew the money would do them,—but if your father had given it for the praise which he expected to receive for so doing, or if he had done it to please persons from whom he hoped afterwards to receive some other favor in return—would he have been generous, do you think?"

"No, Aunt Kitty," said Mary, promptly.

"I think, Mary, you are now beginning to understand fully what generosity is. Remember, to be generous, you must not only give up something—but it must be something you value—something which is a gratification or advantage to you—and you must give it up for the gratification or advantage of another. Ignorant or thoughtless people sometimes call a person generous because he is careless of money, and throws it away on foolish, useless things; do you think him so?"

"No, Aunt Kitty."

"And why not, my dear?" Mary hesitated. "I have been teaching you a useful lesson, Mary," said I, "and I would see if you have learned it well,—tell me, then, why you would not think such a person generous."

"Because, Aunt Kitty, what he gives up is not for the gratification or advantage of another."

"Right, my love, you have learned your lesson well, and will, I hope, often put it in practice."

At this moment, Harriet put her head into the room, calling out, "Mary, do come and see how Florence has dressed up Rover."

Rover was the name of a dog which had been lately given to Florence, and which was a great pet with her. Away ran Mary—all her grave thoughts quite forgotten for the present.

CHAPTER VI.

PARTING SCENES.

Though Mrs. Arnott's health was, as I have said, so much improved that she now hoped to be able to remain through the winter at her own home, Mr. Arnott was desirous that she should spend some weeks of the summer at the warm springs of Virginia, from the waters of which she had always seemed to derive great benefit. Mrs. Arnott was quite willing to do any thing by which she might hope that her health would continue to improve, but she acknowledged to me that the idea of taking Florence there distressed her.

"Since I have been at home," she said, "and have been able to observe closely my child's habits and temper, I see much reason to fear that she has already suffered greatly from the careless indulgence which can scarcely be avoided when we are always surrounded by strangers. She is now almost eleven years old, and I feel there is no time to be lost in endeavoring to correct the faults of her character, and that this can only be done by a degree of watchfulness, and of steady, yet gentle control, which I know from experience it is impossible to exercise either in travelling or at a crowded watering-place."

"Why should you take Florence with you?" I asked.

"What else can I do with her?"

"Send her home with me. You will not be gone, Mr. Arnott says, more than six weeks. For an object so important as your child's improvement, you will not, I am sure, my dear friend, hesitate to separate yourself from her for so short a time. You know nothing pleases me more than to surround myself with children; and though I acknowledge there is no teacher like a mother, when the choice lies between a mother at a watering-place, and—"

"There is no room to hesitate," said Mrs. Arnott, interrupting me: "I should rejoice to have Florence with you even were I to remain at home; and if I can win her consent, your invitation will be gladly and thankfully accepted, for of her father's wishes I have not a doubt."

"Well," said I, "you will remember that I leave you in two days, so that you have little time to lose in deciding."

"To-morrow," said Mrs. Arnott, "to-morrow I will speak to Florence; then if she give her consent, there will be no time for change."

The morrow came, and when I met Mr. Arnott, he said to me in a low voice, which was unheard by any other person, "I am very much obliged to you for your offer to relieve us and benefit our little daughter, for a great benefit I am sure it will be to Florence to be placed with other children, and under what I know will be your kind and gentle, yet firm influence."

Mrs. Arnott looked pale and sad, and complained of a bad headache. As I saw her look tenderly at Florence, and heard how her voice softened in speaking to her, I knew what caused both her headache and her paleness. It was the thought of parting with her child for the first time in her life. The separation would, I knew, be very painful to this fond mother; but I also knew that she would willingly bear the pain to herself, for the advantage which she hoped Florence would derive from it.

After breakfast, Mrs. Arnott and I passed into another room, where we had been accustomed to spend the morning, because it was at that time of the day shaded and cool. We had scarcely entered when the three children passed the window near which we sat. They seemed very merry, amusing themselves with the wonderful but awkward efforts made by Rover to catch an elastic ball that Florence was tossing up.

Mrs. Arnott called Florence.

"What is it, mamma?" said she, scarcely stopping from her play long enough to look around.

"Come here, my daughter, I have something to say to you."

Florence came to the window.

"No, Florence, you must come in, I want to talk to you a little."

For a moment Florence's countenance was clouded; but it was only for a moment, when, laughing, she cried out, "Here, Rover, here, sir—come in with me, Rover, for mamma wants to talk to me, and while she is talking you can be playing ball,"—and she came racing in, Rover at her heels, and Harriet and Mary following to see the fun.

Mrs. Arnott pressed her hand to her forehead, and I saw that all this uproar increased her headache, but it was impossible for several seconds to make the children hear us. At length I succeeded in silencing Harriet and Mary, and in making Florence understand that the noise gave her mother pain, and that she had better send Rover out.

"Does mamma's head ache?" she said; "I am sorry for it—but just see Rover, mamma, try to catch this ball—just see him once—do, mamma—that can't hurt you, I am sure, and it is so funny."

Before I could remonstrate, or Mrs. Arnott could refuse, if she intended to refuse, the ball was thrown. Again Rover, who had been watching every movement of Florence, was barking, leaping, and turning somersets in the air; and again the children were laughing, Florence as loudly as ever, and Harriet and Mary with quite as much enjoyment, though a little less noise. As I found speaking of little use, I stepped up quietly to the merry group, and, catching the ball as it rebounded from the floor, put a stop at once to their mirth and Rover's efforts.

"Now, my dear," said I to Florence, "your mother wants to speak a few words to you, so sit down quietly by her while I take Rover out, for she is in too much pain to be amused by him."

Florence looked surprised, and for a moment not very well pleased, but as she found that I spoke gently and pleasantly to the dog, and praised his beauty, while he ran good-humoredly by my side, rubbing his curly head against me, her countenance brightened, and she seated herself without any objection. I beckoned to Harriet and Mary to follow me, and when we were out of the room, I gave Rover and the ball into their charge. Telling them to wait in the piazza for Florence, and obtaining from them a promise that they would be very quiet, I returned. I had left the door of the room open, and as I reached it, I heard Florence say, "Oh no, mamma! I had a great deal rather go to the Springs with you and papa." At this moment she heard my step, and turning, looked quite confused as her eye met mine.

"Do not be ashamed, Florence," said I, "that I should have heard you. I should be sorry if you did not love your papa and mamma well enough to prefer their company to mine; but I hope you love them so well that you will do cheerfully what is not quite so pleasant to yourself, when you are told that it will please them." Florence hung her head, looked very grave, and said nothing. "Speak, Florence," said I, "would you not be willing, for your mother's sake, to do what might not be very pleasant to yourself?"

After a little hesitation, Florence, without raising her head, said in a dissatisfied tone, "I don't see what good it could do mamma for me to go where I do not want to go."

I would have told Florence of her mother's delicate health, and of how much more benefit she

would probably receive from travelling if she could be free from care; but Mrs. Arnott, seeming to think there was little hope of influencing Florence in this way, interrupted me, saying, "But, my love, why should you not wish to go home with Harriet and Mary? You know how much you enjoyed your visit of two or three days to them last summer,—and Harriet has since then got a pony—you might ride on horseback if you went now."

"Will she let me ride him?" asked Florence, looking up at me with sudden animation.

"I am sure she will," I replied.

"And may I carry Rover?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, I will go, for I should like to ride on horseback; and then, mamma, I'll have Rover with me, and how odd it will be to see him jumping up and trying to get to me on the horse, just as he tried to-day to catch the ball," and she laughed out, and was again all smiles and good-humor.

The consent of Florence having been obtained, the preparations for her visit were soon completed, and as we set out before the sun had risen on the following morning, there was, as Mrs. Arnott had said, no time for her to change her mind.

Florence could not but love her kind and gentle mother dearly, and I did not wonder to see the tears start as she bade her good-by; but Rover was to be looked after—the wild-flowers with which the road was lined were to be admired—the rising sun was to be seen—and amidst all these, Florence soon forgot to be sad.

CHAPTER VII.

CHANGES.

I have nothing strange to tell you of our journey. Mary's father and mother were expecting us, and we arrived in time to take tea with them, sending the carriage home with our trunks. After tea, I walked home with Harriet and Florence, while Rover gambolled along as gayly as if he had had no travelling that day.

The next morning there was no difficulty in getting Florence up, for she was so impatient to mount the pony, that I could scarcely persuade her to wait till I was dressed and able to go with her and witness her first lesson in horsemanship. Pony was so gentle that I felt there was little danger in trusting her on him, and so delighted was she with her new amusement, that she rode wherever she went, and I think Harriet was only twice on horseback during her visit, and one of these rides was not taken for her own pleasure. They seldom went out without me, but one morning when I was very much engaged, Mary came over to say, that her governess having gone on a visit to a sick friend, from which she would not return for two days, her mother had given her permission to invite her young friends in the neighborhood to spend the next day with her, and as she was going this morning to give her invitations herself, she wished Florence and Harriet to go with her. Florence was quite ready to go, provided she could ride; so pony was saddled, and as I knew where they were going, and felt there was really no danger in the way, I allowed them to go without me, sending with them, however, a servant whom I knew to be careful and discreet. Gay, laughing and chatting, they set out. The farthest house to which Mary intended extending her invitations was only three quarters of a mile distant, yet as she had several calls to make, I did not expect them to return under an hour and a half, or perhaps two hours. Greatly surprised was I, therefore, when in about half an hour I heard tones which seemed to me very like Mary's, but not gay and laughing, as I had last heard them. Then came a few words from Florence, and there was no mistaking the fact, that her voice was decidedly sulky. Mary was already in the piazza, when, laying aside my work, I approached the window. Harriet was not with her, nor was Florence in sight. With some alarm I inquired, "Where are Harriet and Florence?"

"Florence has rode to the stable, and Harriet has gone for the doctor," Mary replied.

"The doctor!" I exclaimed, still more alarmed; "for whom? Is any thing the matter with Harriet?"

"No, but Mrs. O'Donnel's baby is ill—oh! so ill, Aunt Kitty!—and Harriet has gone for the doctor, and Margaret has stayed with the baby, and sent me back to beg you to go there."

Confused as Mary's account was, it was clear enough that aid was wanted, and without waiting to ask any further questions, I set out, taking with me such simple medicines as I thought might be useful, if I should arrive before the doctor. As I left the parlor Mary followed me, and begged very earnestly to be allowed to go with me and carry some of my vials.

"But Florence, Mary, would you leave her alone?"

"I do not believe Florence cares to have me stay with her, Aunt Kitty, and I am sure I do not wish to stay," said Mary, coloring.

I remembered the angry tones I had heard, and thought it was perhaps wisest not to leave these children together while they were so evidently out of temper, so returning to the parlor, where Florence had just made her appearance, I asked her if she would like to go with me.

"No," she replied, "I am tired."

"Then, my dear, rest yourself on the sofa a while, and when you get up, look in that closet and you will find some peaches. Mary is going with me, but I will send Harriet to you as soon as I see her."

"I do not want Harriet or Mary either," said Florence, impatiently.

I soon found that I had not left all the ill-humor behind when I left Florence, for we were scarcely down the steps before Mary expressed her conviction, that "there never was such another selfish girl as Florence Arnott."

"Mary," said I, "I once told you that you were hasty in pronouncing Florence to be very generous; but that was not so blameable as your present condemnation of her, whatever she may have done. It may be unwise to be ready to praise so highly on the acquaintance of a few days, but it is unamiable to blame so severely for a single fault."

"But, Aunt Kitty, it is not a single fault. I have been thinking a long time, almost ever since you told me what made a person generous, that Florence was not so generous as I thought at first; but I do think anybody that would rather a poor little baby should die than to lose a ride for themselves, is very selfish, very selfish indeed," repeated Mary, with great emphasis.—"And now, Aunt Kitty," she continued, "I will tell you how it was, and then you will see if I am not right."

"Stop, my dear Mary," said I, as she was about to commence her story, "you are just now very angry with Florence, and would not therefore be a fair witness in the case. I had rather hear from some one else how it was."

"Why, Aunt Kitty," said Mary, with a very proud look, "you do not think I would tell you a story, I hope."

"No, my love, I am sure you would tell me nothing which you did not believe to be true; but anger makes the words and looks, and even the actions of people, appear to us very unlike what they really are. However, you have no time to tell me any thing, even if I wished it, for here we are at Mrs. O'Donnel's."

My readers may not be as unwilling as I was to hear what Mary had to say, so I will tell them what I afterwards heard of the morning's adventures from Margaret and Harriet, as soon as I have given them some account of Mrs. O'Donnel and her baby.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MOTHER AND CHILD.

The little cabin, for it was nothing more, in which Mrs. O'Donnel lived, had been put up only a few months. It was built in a little wood which skirted the road between my house and the village, and stood so near the road that the traveller, as he passed along, could hear the baby who lived there, crying, or the song with which his young mother was hushing him to sleep. She was a very young mother; and there she lived, you might almost say, with no one but her baby—for Pat O'Donnel, her husband, was one of the hands on board a steamboat which went from our village to H— every morning and returned in the evening, and though he was always at home at night, he was away every day except Sunday, from day-dawn till dark. He had built this cabin, and brought his young wife and his baby son to live there, that he might spend every night with them.

I know nothing more of these people than I have now told you, when the circumstances occurred which I am about to relate, except that Mrs. O'Donnel worked very industriously in a little garden which had been fenced in for her near her cabin, and that on Sunday, the husband and wife, with their bright-eyed boy, might be seen going to church, looking clean, and healthy, and happy. But Harriet had become better acquainted with the family than I, for she loved children, and could never pass little Jem—this was the name of the baby—without a smile or a pleasant word, and the child soon learned to know her; and when she came near, would jump and spring in his mother's arms, give her back smile for smile, and since he could not talk yet, would crow to her words. The mother was pleased with the notice taken of her boy, and whenever we passed the house, would bring him to the low fence nearest the road, and with a courtesy, and "How d'ye do, ma'am?" to me, would hold him to Harriet to kiss, sometimes putting in his hand a bunch of flowers for his young friend, who seldom left home to walk in that direction without taking some present for him. Even when setting out with Mary to deliver her invitations, little Jem had not been forgotten; and when I saw Harriet saving the largest of two peaches I had given her, and putting it in a little basket which she carried in her hand, I well knew that it would go no farther than to Mrs. O'Donnel's cabin. Accordingly, when she came in sight of it, she quickened her pace, saying to her companions, "I want to stop at Mrs. O'Donnel's a minute, so I will run on; and if you do not go too fast, I will be with you again before you have passed there."

Before she reached the house, she called out for little Jem, and wondered that neither his laugh nor his mother's pleasant voice answered her. She would have thought they were not at home, but the door was open, and Mrs. O'Donnel was too careful to leave it so, when she was far away. Unlatching the little gate which opened on the road, she crossed the yard and entered the house. There sat Mrs. O'Donnel, her hands clasped in an agony of grief, and tears washing her face, and falling unheeded on that of her poor boy, who lay extended on her lap, no longer laughing and crowing, but pale and still, with his eyes half closed.

Harriet's exclamation of, "What is the matter, Mrs. O'Donnel?" roused the poor mother, who, looking up, said, "Oh, Miss, and glad am I you're come, for my poor baby loved you, and you're just in time to see him die."

"Oh! I hope not, Mrs. O'Donnel," said Harriet. "He will not die. Do you think he will?" she added, more doubtingly, as again she looked in his pale face, and kneeling down by him, took the little hand which lay so feebly by his side.

"And indeed, Miss, I fear he will die," said the poor woman. "All yesterday I saw he was not well, and grieved was I to see Pat going this morning, and leaving me with him all alone—but Pat laughed at me for a coward, and when I heard him laugh, I took heart and thought it was all my foolishness—but ah, Miss! it isn't laughing he'll do when he comes home the night;" and at the thought of her husband's sorrow, Mrs. O'Donnel sobbed aloud. Soon recovering herself, she continued: "I saw Pat off, and when he was out of sight I came back, and looked at my baby as he lay asleep. It was daylight then, and I saw he had a beautiful color. Now I know the color was just the fever burning him up, but then I thought he was better, and I was so glad that I couldn't help singing, though I did it softly for fear of waking him; and little was the work I did, going back again and again to the bed to see my pretty baby looking so well—and at last I stooped down to kiss him, and whether I woke him, Miss, I don't know, but all at once he opened his eyes wide and stared at me, and he doubled his fists and stretched himself out, and made such a noise in the throat, that it was dying I thought he was just then—and I screamed and cried, but there was nobody to hear me, and soon he stopped making the noise and shut his eyes again, and ever since he has lain still, just like this."

Any one who has seen a child in convulsions, will know what had been the matter with little Jem; but Harriet knew nothing about it, and, you may suppose her dismay, when, as she was looking at her little playfellow, a spasm crossed his face, his head was thrown back, his limbs stiffened, and that distressing noise in the throat was again heard. The mother shrieked, and Harriet, rushing to the door, screamed to Margaret, who, with Florence and Mary, was waiting in the road for her, that little Jem was dying. Margaret was a good nurse, and one of those useful people who think more of helping those who suffer, than of mourning over them. As soon as she entered the house, she saw what was the matter, and saw, too, the very thing which she most needed,—a large pot of water, under which Mrs. O'Donnel had made a fire before she became alarmed about her child. In another minute, she had drawn a tub from under a table, poured into it the hot water from the pot, cooled it to the proper temperature, by the addition of some from a pail which stood near, and before Mrs. O'Donnel at all understood her proceedings, her child was stripped and laid in a warm bath.

As the convulsion passed off, Margaret said, "Now, Mrs. O'Donnel, your child is coming to, and you must not be so frightened, for I have seen many a child have fits, and be just as well as ever afterwards; but you must be very quiet, ma'am, for if he goes to sleep afterwards he ought not to be woke; and, Miss Harriet, you cannot do any good crying here, but if you will get on pony and ride for the doctor as fast as you can, you will be doing a great deal of good, and Miss Mary had better go back and tell her aunt."

In an instant Harriet was by the side of the pony, urging Florence to get off, that she might mount and go for the doctor. But to this arrangement Florence strongly objected. My readers must not be too angry with her, they must remember she had not seen the child, and did not know how very important even a few minutes might be in such a case as his. Still, it must be confessed, she thought more of herself than of any one else, as she replied to Harriet's entreaties, "Why cannot I go for the doctor? I can carry a message just as well as you."

"But, Florence, you do not know where the doctor lives."

"Well, you can go with me and show me."

"Florence, I cannot walk as fast as the pony can go. Do, Florence, come down and let me have him."

Florence did not stir, and Harriet wrung her hands with impatience, as, turning to the door, she called out, "Margaret, Florence will not let me have the pony."

Margaret came out, but neither her remonstrances, nor Harriet's entreaties, nor the reproaches of Mary, had any effect upon Florence. Indeed, Mary's reproaches probably only strengthened her resolution, as it is not by making people angry that we induce them to yield their wishes to ours. Some minutes were lost in this useless contest, when Harriet said, "Margaret, I will not wait any longer, I will walk as fast as I can, and if the doctor is only at home he will soon be here."

When Mary and I arrived at Mrs. O'Donnel's, neither the doctor nor Harriet had yet made their appearance. I did for the poor baby all I could venture to do without a physician's advice, and

then watched with much anxiety for Dr. Franks. I had been there probably half an hour, when Harriet came in, flushed and panting. "Where is the doctor?" was the first question.

"He will soon be here," she replied; "I am sure he will, for Mrs. Franks knew where he was, and she sent off a boy on horseback for him."

Harriet looked so heated, that, fearing the effect of further excitement on her, I determined to return home immediately. So, giving Margaret some directions, and telling Mrs. O'Donnel that I would see her again in the afternoon, I left them.

CHAPTER IX.

REPENTANCE.

We walked home quite slowly, on Harriet's account. We had been so long away that Florence would, I thought, have become quite tired of loneliness and ill-humor, and quite prepared to welcome us with cheerful, friendly smiles; indeed I should not have been greatly surprised to meet her on the way, or at least to see her in the piazza watching for us. But we reached the house—entered the piazza—passed into the parlor, and still no Florence was seen. I called her, but she did not answer, and a servant told me she thought Miss Florence had gone to lie down, as she had told her that she was sick, and did not want any dinner. I went to her room immediately, and found her asleep. She had evidently been weeping, for her face was flushed, her eyelids red and swollen, and as I stood by her, she sobbed heavily more than once. Harriet had stolen in after me without my seeing her, and as I turned to darken a window, the light from which shone directly on Florence, she looked anxiously in my face, and asked in a whisper, "Is she very sick, Aunt Kitty?"

I did not like to tell Harriet that I thought Florence more sulky than sick, so I only replied, "I hope not, my dear. She has cried herself to sleep, and if awoke now, will probably have a headache, so we will let her sleep on."

When we had dined, Mary prepared to return home. Harriet had quite recovered from her fatigue, and I proposed that she should go home with Mary and spend the afternoon. She hesitated at this for a little while, and then said, "I had rather go to Mrs. O'Donnel's with you, Aunt Kitty."

"But, Harriet, I would rather you should go to your uncle's."

Seeing she still lingered by me, and looked dissatisfied, I added, "I have a very good reason for my wish, Harriet, which, if I should tell it to you, would, I am sure, make you go cheerfully; but I would rather you should trust me, and do what I ask without hearing my reason. Can you not?"

She readily answered, "Yes," and getting her bonnet, only stopped to ask that I would let her know how little Jem was as soon as I came back. This I promised, and she and Mary set out.

It was on account of Florence that I had sent Harriet away. I had at first been interested in this little girl for her mother's sake, but I had now become much attached to her and deeply interested in her for her own sake. She was naturally a child of quick feelings and warm affections, and I could not see her anxiety to please me, her loving remembrance of her father and mother, her constant solicitude about them, and her delight at hearing of them, without regarding her tenderly, and earnestly desiring to see that one fault removed, which was daily acquiring strength, and which would in time destroy all that was pleasing or amiable in her character. For this one fault, which I am sure I need not tell my readers was selfishness, I found, too, more excuse in the circumstances of Florence, than I could have found in those of most children. She was an only child, and her fond father and mother had always so plainly shown that they considered her the first object in life, and thought that every thing should yield to her wishes, that Florence is perhaps scarcely very much to blame for having learned to think so too. I had long wished for an opportunity to show Florence her own selfishness and its great evil, and as Margaret had, while I was at Mrs. O'Donnel's, told me what she knew of the morning's adventures, I believed that this opportunity I had now found. That Mary had spoken the truth to Florence on this subject, I did not doubt; but I was as sure that this truth had been spoken, not in love, but in anger, and this never profits any one. I did not think it would be necessary for me to speak at all, for I thought Florence had now prepared for herself a lesson which would tell her all I wished her to know, far more forcibly than any words of mine could do. What this lesson was, how I induced Florence to look at it, and what were its effects on her, you shall now hear.

When Florence awoke, I was sitting by her bedside, and I met her first glance with a pleasant smile. She cast a wondering look around her, and again resting her eyes on me, asked, "Where is Harriet?"

"Gone home with Mary," I replied; "and I want you to make a visit, and take a drive with me,—so get up, lazy one, and when you have washed your face and brushed your hair, come to the parlor, and you shall have some dinner."

As I spoke, I playfully lifted Florence from the bed, and placed her standing on the floor, and

before she had time to ask any further questions, or make any objections, I was gone. When she came out, I had such a dinner prepared for her, as I knew would best please her taste, and near it stood a small basket filled with choice fruit. Florence was hungry, and said little till she had finished her dinner. She then asked where I was going.

"I am going to take a drive to a farmer's about four miles off, who has the best cherries in the neighborhood,—but first, I am going to Mrs. O'Donnel's to see her sick baby, and I want you to go with me, and help me take her some things which I think may be of use to him."

While speaking, I laid a small bundle on the table by Florence. She looked at the bundle, then at me, and then down on the floor. At last she spoke, "I do not want to go to Mrs. O'Donnel's."

"Do not want to go to Mrs. O'Donnel's! I am very sorry for that, for I must take these things to the baby. But why do you not wish to go?"

"Mary called me selfish this morning, and—and—I do not want to go there."

"Mary called you selfish! I will not ask you why she did so, because, as I would not let her tell me your quarrels, I must not be partial and hear them from you; but surely to refuse to do a kind action to a sick baby, is not the best way to convince her that she was unjust." I saw that Florence hesitated, and pursuing my purpose, said, "Come, put on your bonnet, and do not let Mary's petulance prevent your doing right, and deprive me of my companion."

As she had no objection to make, Florence put on her bonnet, took up the bundle, and followed me, though I could see it was with inward reluctance. During our walk I spoke to her cheerfully and pleasantly, leaving her but little time for thought.

When we came in sight of the house, she became grave and silent. I, too, ceased talking. I held Florence's hand, and, as we approached the door, I could feel that she drew back; but I took no notice of her efforts, and she entered with me into the presence, to all appearance, of the dying. Florence had never before stood by the side of one so ill; and to see the pretty, laughing baby, with whom she had played so gayly but a few days since, lying so changed; to hear his deep, groaning breath; to see the poor mother, as she sat, shedding no tear, making no moan, but gazing on her child with a hopeless agony which none could mistake, was enough to cause her to turn pale and burst into tears; yet I thought it probable that Mary's angry speeches were now remembered, and that some of the bitterness of remorse was in the heart of Florence. No one moved when we entered. Even Dr. Franks, who was there, remained seated, holding his watch in his hand, and occasionally making a sign to Margaret to give the child some medicine which stood on a table by her. I was myself overcome, for though I had expected to find the child ill, I had not been prepared for such apparent hopelessness in his case. Poor Florence! Her lesson was likely to be more severe than I had anticipated.

Seeing that I could do no good, feeling that I could speak no comfort there, I quietly laid down what I had brought on the floor beside Mrs. O'Donnel, and taking the hand of the weeping Florence, passed out. Dr. Franks followed me. I heard his step, and turning, when we were far enough from the door not to be heard within the house, I asked him whether he had any hope that the child would recover.

"Only that hope," he replied, "which we feel as long as there is life. He cannot long remain as he now is; if he recover at all, he will soon show signs of being better. If I could have been called earlier, even half an hour earlier, before the child's strength had been so far exhausted, the case would have been comparatively simple, and easily relieved; but now—" and he shook his head despondingly.

Florence had looked up anxiously in Dr. Franks' face while he was speaking. She now dropped her head, covered her face with her hands, and sobbed loudly and violently. This caused the doctor to look at her, and that look probably reminded him of Harriet, for he said, "By the by, I never knew Harriet so thoughtless as in this business. Why, when she found I was not at home, did she not ride on for me herself, instead of waiting for a boy to catch and saddle another horse, a business of half an hour at least, all which time I was riding away from here, so that it made a difference of fully an hour in the time of my arriving. That hour would, in all probability, have saved the child."

Any excuse for Harriet would have seemed an accusation to poor Florence's excited mind, and I was silent, but as the doctor said, "That hour would in all probability have saved the child," her cries became so wild and distressing, that I moved with her farther from the house, while the doctor returned to his post.

"What is the matter, Florence?" said I; "why are you so much distressed? Is it because you fear the baby will die?"

"No, no, it's because I've killed him—oh! I've killed him," she repeated, with almost frantic vehemence; "the doctor says so; the doctor says if Harriet had rode he would have got well, and I would not let Harriet ride."

I never felt my own helplessness, my own littleness, and God's supreme power, so much as at this moment. Here was the very lesson which I had wished to teach Florence, which I had brought her there to learn, *the great evil of her selfishness*. I had wished her to see that pale, suffering baby—to feel grieved—to be angry with herself, that for a trifling amusement she had been willing to prolong those sufferings, to lengthen out his mother's sorrow,—perhaps, to make the

lesson more impressive, I would have been willing that Florence should feel for some minutes an apprehension that the disease would terminate fatally. But here was no vain apprehension; the child was, to all appearance, dying; his physician believed that he would die, and I felt that, if he did, Florence would always suffer from the conviction that she had caused his death. As I heard her frantic cries, and saw her agitated frame, I trembled for the consequences. I stood awed before that Almighty Being who was teaching me as well as her, the great sin of selfishness, the suffering which follows all sin, was teaching us that the only path of safety is that narrow path of right-doing which He has marked out for us, and that the slightest wandering from this path might lead to woes of which we had not even dreamed. These are solemn lessons, which I hope my little readers will learn from the example of others, that they may never, like Florence, be taught them in their own persons.

In my fears for Florence I could find no comfort, but in the remembrance that God, her great Teacher, was also her loving Father. While I was standing beside her, unable to speak, striving, with mute caresses, to sooth her agony, with a sudden movement she looked up to me, exclaiming, "Oh! beg the doctor to make him well."

"The doctor, my dear Florence, cannot make him well; God only can do that."

"Well, beg God, then."

"I will, dear Florence, and so may you, for He is as near to you as to me, and He hears the simplest prayer of the simplest child."

In an instant she was on her knees beside me, exclaiming, in the most imploring tones, "Oh, God! please to make the baby well,—oh! please to make him well."

Florence had often said her prayers, but this was probably the first time she had ever prayed from the heart. I stooped down to her, and said—"And please take this wicked selfishness from the heart of Florence, that she may not do such great wrong again, and bring such sorrow on herself and others." She repeated my words slowly and solemnly, adding, "and oh! please make the baby well," and concluding her prayer with the sacred form to which she had been accustomed, "For Christ's sake, Amen," she rose up comparatively calm. Hers had been a prayer of such simple faith as none but a simple-hearted child, and those who, in the words of our Saviour, become as little children, can offer, and such prayer always brings consolation.

"Now, Aunt Kitty, let us go back to the house:"—seeing I hesitated, Florence added, "you need not be afraid that I will make any noise; I will be very still. I only want to go where I can see him."

The fear that Florence would make a noise had not been the cause of my hesitation. It was on her own account. I had wished Florence, as I have already said, to feel the evil of her selfishness; I did not wish her to forget the pain she had suffered and was suffering; I would not have driven away, if I could, the serious thoughts which were now in her mind; but her agitation had been so great as to make me very anxious, and I hesitated to take her back where she might be yet further excited. She appeared, however, so much in earnest in her wish, that, after a little consideration, I thought it wisest to indulge her, and we returned to the house. Florence seated herself on a low stool by Margaret, on whose lap the baby now lay, and watched him with scarcely less constancy than his mother. Her lips frequently moved, and I had no doubt that she was again asking God to make him well.

I will not weary you by telling you how long we watched there, or through what changes the little sufferer passed. The sun was not yet set, when his symptoms were so materially amended that the doctor said to Mrs. O'Donnel, "Now, my good woman, be comforted; your child is better, and will, I hope, with care, soon be well."

The poor mother had uttered no sound for many hours, but now her long-smothered feelings burst out. With a wild cry she started up, and, holding out her arms, would have caught her child to her bosom; but the doctor, pushing her back into her seat, whispered, "Hush, hush—he is sensible now, and you may frighten him into another fit."

She hushed her cry in a moment, and remained quiet in her chair; but she burst into tears and wept piteously. As soon as she recovered her voice, she exclaimed, "God bless you, sir; God bless you all, for it's good you've been to me, watching by the poor, lone woman's child, as if he had been the rich man's son. And he will be better, you say, before Pat comes. Oh! glad am I, poor fellow, that he didn't see him at the worst."

When I could look around for Florence, she had left the cabin. I went out and saw her standing by the carriage, which had been some time waiting for us. She was speaking eagerly to Henry, and as she turned to meet me, I saw that she looked much excited, though very happy. I found, too, that her head and hands were feverish to the touch, and I became very anxious to get her quietly home. When I proposed going, however, Florence replied, "Not yet," and turned towards the house.

I put my arm around her, and drawing her to me, said very seriously, "Florence, you asked God a little while ago to take away all selfishness from your heart. Do you remember it?"

"Yes," she immediately replied, "and I hope he will, now that He has made the baby well."

"I am sure He will, Florence, if you only show that you were sincere in asking it, by watching your own feelings, and resisting your selfish inclinations."

"Well, so I will," said Florence.

"Then, my love, you will do now as I wish you. By remaining longer here you may make yourself sick from fatigue and excitement, and so, for the gratification of your own inclinations, give great pain to me and to all who love you. This would be selfish, would it not?"

"Yes," said Florence, "so it would, though I did not know it;" and she entered the carriage without further hesitation.

This was probably the first time that Florence had ever voluntarily yielded her own wishes to those of another—the first generous act she had ever performed. It may seem to my readers a very little thing, but I felt that Florence had resisted herself, had conquered herself, and this is never a little thing.

When we got home I sent the carriage on for Harriet, and giving Florence her tea without any delay, went with her, early as it was, to her room, promising, if she went to bed at once, to sit with her till she slept. She had been accustomed by her mother to say her prayers aloud, and I was glad to hear, as I listened to her this evening, that she did not forget to thank God for making little Jem well. She was very much disposed to talk when she had lain down; but as I was desirous to keep her as quiet as possible, I told her that in the morning I would hear all she had to say, and that now I would tell her a story of her mother and myself when we were children. A story was what of all things Florence most liked to hear, so she was very attentive to me, and begged, when I had ended one, that I would tell her another. I took care that the second should not be very interesting, and before it was finished, Florence was in a sleep which, though at first disturbed and nervous, soon became quiet, and from which she did not awake till the sun was shining brightly on another day.

CHAPTER X.

A GOOD BEGINNING.

"Well, Harriet," said Dr. Franks, as he came into our breakfast room before we had risen from table, "I was half angry with you yesterday, when I thought you had ridden to my house and then turned back and sent a boy for me, instead of following me yourself. But my wife saved you a scolding by telling me you walked there. And now, Miss Simple, pray what was that for? Of what use is your pony if he cannot bring you for a doctor when a child is in convulsions?"

Harriet colored and looked confused, but Florence colored still more deeply. I saw that the doctor expected an answer, and both the children looked at me to explain, but I would not interfere. The doctor seemed annoyed at our silence, and catching hold of Mary Mackay, who was just entering the parlor, he drew her forward, saying, "Why, Mary Wild," a name he had long given her, "could not have done a more thoughtless thing."

Low and hesitatingly, Florence spoke, "It was not Harriet's fault."

"It was not Harriet's fault!" the doctor impatiently repeated; "whose fault was it then, pray?"

"It was mine,"—the first difficulty conquered, Florence spoke more boldly—"It was mine. I was riding the pony, and would not let her have him."

I knew Dr. Franks well, and I saw that he was about to reply to this with a severity which, however Florence might have deserved the day before, would then have been cruel; so before he could speak, I drew her to me, and said, "Not a word of blame, doctor, for Florence has already said harder things to herself than you can say to her. Besides, you would have known nothing of it but for her, and she must not suffer for her truth telling."

I was pleased with this little incident, for though Florence had only done justice to Harriet, selfishness often makes us unjust as well as ungenerous; and I knew to tell the truth as fully as she had done, must have given her great pain. I was glad, too, to find that Harriet and Mary both seemed to feel this, and were very cordial and pleasant in their manner to her afterwards.

The next afternoon we went to the farm where we were to find the best cherries in the neighborhood; and there Florence's new principle of action displayed itself frequently. She was evidently on the watch for opportunities to be generous. The best place under the trees, the finest cherries, for which she would once have striven, she now pressed upon Harriet and Mary; and whenever she had thus conquered her former habits, she would turn her eyes to me with a timid appeal for my approval. But the act on which she evidently most valued herself, was, asking to return in the carriage, and so giving up the pony to Harriet, when we were going home.

It was but a few days after this that Mr. and Mrs. Arnott came for Florence, on their way home from the Virginia Springs. During these few days, she continued to manifest the same earnest desire to correct her faults. I told her father and mother of the interesting scenes through which she had passed, and of what seemed to be their happy result. Mrs. Arnott shed tears, and Mr. Arnott shook my hand repeatedly, declaring that I had done more for their happiness than I could conceive, if I had brought Florence to see and endeavor to correct this one great fault.

The evening before we parted, I had a conversation with Florence which interested me very much. We were walking, and I had purposely taken the path which led by Mrs. O'Donnel's cabin. When we came in sight of it, Mrs. O'Donnel was standing at the door with little Jem, now quite well, in her arms. We spoke to her as we passed, and then Florence said, "I shall always love little Jem, Aunt Kitty."

"Why, Florence?"

"Because, if it had not been for him I should not have found out what a selfish child I was, or have learned to be generous."

"And do you think you have learned to be generous, Florence?"

She colored and seemed confused for a moment, then looking up in my face said, with great simplicity, "I hope so. Do you not think I have?"

"I think you are learning, and learning very fast. It was fortunate, dear Florence, that you discovered the evil of your selfish habits while you were so young; but the habits even of ten years are not to be broken in a day. You will often find it difficult to resist them. If you will write to me when you go away, and tell me all the difficulties and trials you meet in your efforts to conquer them, I may sometimes be able to help you. Will you do this? Will you write to me?"

"Write to you! oh! I shall like it,—at least I shall like to get your letters, and read mamma just as much as I choose of them."

"But you must remember, Florence, that my object in our correspondence will be to give you my aid in learning to be generous. That I may be able to do this, you must be very honest with me, and tell me whenever you have done, or even been tempted to do a selfish thing."

"May I not tell you, too, when I have been generous?"

"Certainly, my dear; tell me all you wish to tell me of yourself, I shall be glad to hear it all; but I hope you will soon feel that you have a great deal more to tell me of your selfishness, than of your generosity." Florence looked at me in speechless surprise. "Because, Florence, I hope you will soon become really generous, generous *at heart*, and then those things which, now that you are only trying to be generous, it is hard for you to do, which you notice because they are done with a great effort, will be so easy and so common that you will forget to tell me about them—that you will not even notice them yourself."

"But how, when I get to be so generous, can I have any selfishness to write you about?"

"Ah, Florence! we are never quite free from selfishness, any of us, and the more generous we become, the more plainly do we see selfishness in acts and feelings which seemed to us quite free from it once. Do you not feel this yourself? Do not things seem selfish to you now, which only a week ago you did not think so at all?"

"Yes," said Florence, in a low voice, and then walked thoughtfully and silently by my side.

The next morning Florence returned home, and I did not see her again for nearly eighteen months. But I heard from her often, for our correspondence commenced very soon. Her first letters were filled with her own generous acts,—how she had risen early when she was very sleepy, that she might not keep nurse waiting—how she had sat quite still almost all day, when she had wanted to run about very much, because mamma was not well, and would have been disturbed by noise—how she had given her cousin Mary her very prettiest book, because she said she liked it. But it was not long before Florence began to write of her grief for selfish feelings, which, to use her own language, "if she tried ever so hard to get rid of them, would come back." Once or twice a letter came from her full of the bitterest shame and self-reproach for the selfishness of some action, which, a little while before, Florence would not have felt to be in the least degree wrong. I rejoiced at all this, for I saw it was as I hoped; Florence was becoming generous *at heart*—selfishness was becoming a hateful thing to her, and a strange thing, which like other strange things, could not make its appearance without being noticed. I would copy some of these letters for you, but I have other things to tell you of Florence, which I think will interest you more than her letters.

CHAPTER XI.

A NEW CREATURE.

Almost eighteen months after Florence had left us, came that bright and beautiful winter's morning which I described to you at the commencement of this book. You may remember that on that morning I accompanied Harriet and Mary to Mr. Dickinson's to hear a play, which was to form part of their Christmas entertainments, and that on returning home, I found Mr. Arnott's carriage waiting for me. The driver brought a letter from Florence, begging me to come as soon as possible to her sick and sorrowing mother. The letter was short, and did not tell me what was the cause of Mrs. Arnott's distress. I immediately packed a trunk, and sending Harriet home with Mary, prepared for my journey. It was one o'clock, however, before, with my utmost haste, I

could set out, and the roads were so filled up with the snow of the previous night, that we travelled slowly, and I had gone little more than half way when the short winter's day was over. I therefore stopped all night at the same little inn where I had dined when going to Mr. Arnott's with Harriet and Mary. The next morning I was again on the road so early that I arrived at Mr. Arnott's before breakfast,—indeed, before any of the family, except Florence, was up. She did not expect me so early, and I entered the house so quietly, that I stood in the parlor with her before she knew that I had arrived.

No one who had seen the face of Florence, as her eye rested on me, could have doubted her delight at seeing me; yet, surprised and delighted as she was, she made no exclamation, but coming close to me, put her arms around me, and kissing me repeatedly, said, in a very low voice, almost a whisper, "How kind you were, Aunt Kitty, to come so quickly! We did not think you could be here before this evening."

In the same low tone I answered, "Your letter made me too anxious to admit of any unnecessary delay. But how is your mother now?"

"She will be better, I am sure, when she sees you, for I think it is agitation which has made mamma ill. She slept but little last night, and is asleep now, which makes me try to keep every thing quiet."

While Florence was speaking, she was helping me to take off my cloak and bonnet. Then drawing a large rocking-chair before the fire, she seated me in it, and kneeling down by me, loosened the lacings of the moccasins which I had worn over my shoes in travelling, and took them off. Before she rose, she rested her head for a moment affectionately on my shoulder, and said, "Aunt Kitty, I am very, very glad to see you again."

Florence was greatly changed in appearance as well as in manners, since we parted. She had left me, a child, looking even younger than Harriet, though, in reality, two years older; but a year and a half had passed, and she had grown so rapidly, that, though not yet thirteen, she might easily have passed for fourteen or fifteen. Her face, too, had changed. Florence had always been spoken of as a pretty child. I suppose she was so, for she had a fair, smooth skin, very dark, glossy, and curling hair, and fine eyes; yet her face never particularly pleased me, and even those who talked of her beauty, did not seem to care much about looking at her. But now there was a sweet thoughtfulness and peacefulness in her countenance, which made me turn my eyes again and again on her with increasing love. Not that I loved her for being beautiful, but for the serious and gentle spirit, which I was sure had given the expression, of which I have spoken, to her countenance,—which would have given the same expression to the plainest features, and which I would advise all my little readers to cultivate, if they are desirous of beauty—that beauty which all admire most, and which nothing, not even old age or disease, can destroy.

But these changes in appearance were by no means the most important which I already saw in Florence. In every word and action I saw that she was thinking more of others than of herself. I have told you how quietly she received me, never forgetting, in her surprise at my unexpected appearance, that a loud exclamation from her might awaken and agitate her mother, while for my comfort she seemed equally considerate. My readers will, perhaps, think that these things were little worthy of notice, and gave slight proof of any great change of character in Florence—slight assurance that she had conquered her selfishness. But in this they are mistaken. It is precisely in these little things which occur daily, hourly, in the life of each of us, that a generous nature shows itself most truly. A very selfish person may, on some rare occasion, make a great display of generosity,—may even be excited into doing a really generous action, but it is only the generous in heart who can be generous daily, hourly, in little as in great things, without excitement and without effort. Some of my young friends may have been accustomed to think themselves very generous, yet to keep their generosity, as fine ladies keep their diamonds, only to be exhibited on great occasions. Let me assure them that if it is not shown, too, in everyday life—in thoughtfulness of the feelings of others, readiness to yield their own gratifications for the advantage of others—it is no true diamond of generosity, but only some worthless imitation. Others, perhaps, have wished that they had opportunities of showing how generous they are. Let them now learn that they have such opportunities every day—every hour. Whenever your parents call on you to do what is not agreeable to your inclinations, and you obey them cheerfully, pleasantly, instead of showing by your ill-humor that you only do not disobey because you dare not, you are sacrificing your own inclinations to promote their pleasure, and in so doing you are generous. Whenever you give up the plays you like best, the walks you most admire, and choose those which you know will give the greatest pleasure to your companions, you are generous. You will now be able to judge for yourselves of the alteration in Florence's character, from her conduct under the circumstances I am about to relate to you, and I need not, therefore, trouble you again with such long explanations.

Soon after my arrival, Florence left the parlor, saying she would go to the kitchen and tell them to bring up our breakfast, as she did not like to ring the bell, which was very loud. She returned in a few minutes, followed by a servant with the breakfast tray. As we seated ourselves at table, I inquired for Mr. Arnott.

"He is asleep still," said Florence. "He told me last night to call him before breakfast, so I went to his room just now to do it; but I knew he had been up a great deal with mamma last night, and he seemed to sleep so sweetly, that I just said, 'Papa,' very softly, and as he did not stir for that, I came out as quietly as I could."

"So if I had not been here you would have breakfasted alone."

"No—I should have waited for papa—it is so much pleasanter to breakfast with him."

An early ride is a great quickener of the appetite. I was consequently somewhat longer than usual at the breakfast table, and before I had risen, Mr. Arnott appeared. After welcoming me very cordially, he kissed Florence, saying, however, as he did so, "You deserve to lose your kiss for not calling me this morning. You should never break a promise, Florence, however trifling it may seem to you."

"I kept my promise, papa, and called you. Indeed I did," she added, as Mr. Arnott shook his head, "though I acknowledge I did it very softly."

"Ah, Florence! we are told of people who, only seeming to keep their promises, are said 'to keep the word of promise to the ear;' but you did not even keep yours to the ear, at least not to my ear, for I heard nothing of your call."

"But you believe I did call you, papa," said Florence, earnestly.

"Certainly, my daughter, I believe what you tell me, but I would have you remember that promises should be kept in the sense in which they are made, and that, though it should be at some inconvenience to ourselves."

"I will remember it, papa, but it was *your* inconvenience I was thinking of, when I did not awake you," said Florence, smiling.

"I do not doubt that," said her father.

While Mr. Arnott and I were conversing, Florence was called out of the parlor, and as soon as the door closed on her, he interrupted some observation he was making on the state of the roads, to say, "I am truly obliged to you for coming so quickly, for it is necessary that I should leave home immediately on very important business, which I will more fully explain to you before I go; yet I have not been willing even to announce my intention of going, till my poor wife could have the support of your presence."

When Florence returned, Mr. Arnott asked, "Where is Rover, that he does not come to share my breakfast this morning?"

"Why, is my old friend Rover still alive?" said I; "I wonder he has not been here to welcome me."

"He would have been, I dare say, Aunt Kitty, for Rover never forgets his friends, but he is three miles away from here now," and in spite of Florence's efforts to speak carelessly, her voice trembled.

"Three miles away from here! What do you mean, Florence?" said Mr. Arnott.

"Just what I said, papa. Edward Morton lives three miles away, does he not? Rover belongs to him now."

Florence spoke very fast, and turned her face away from her father, so that he did not see, as I did, that her lip was quivering, and her eyes were full of tears.

"Why, Florence, I am surprised at you. I would not have believed it possible that you could part with Rover to any one. I thought you loved him almost as well as he loved you."

Mr. Arnott spoke almost angrily at this proof, as he thought it, of want of kindness in his daughter for her old playfellow. Florence, unable longer to control herself, burst into tears, and sobbing, said, "So I do, papa, love Rover just as well as he loves me, and yet I do not feel sorry he is gone, for nurse said he kept mamma awake at night barking under her window; and you know we could not keep him out of her room in the day, and when she was nervous and in pain, I saw it worried her to have him there."

Mr. Arnott's eyes glistened as he drew his daughter to him, and kissed and soothed her. I remembered the scene with Rover and the ball during my last visit to Mrs. Arnott, and, I dare say, my readers will remember it too. After a while Mr. Arnott said, "Well, Florence, it was very right in you to think of your mother's comfort, and I suppose I must reconcile myself to parting with Rover for a time—but only *for a time*, Florence; when your mother gets well, Edward, I doubt not, will give him back to you."

"Perhaps he would, papa, but—" Florence hesitated, looked in her father's face, colored, and looked down again.

"But what, Florence? Surely you would like to have Rover back."

"To be sure I would, papa, but I thought a great deal about it before I gave Rover away, and I chose Edward Morton to give him to, because I knew he would love Rover and take good care of him; and do you think, papa, it would be right, after Edward gets to love him almost as well as I do, to ask him to give him up?"

"No, my daughter, it would not be right. You have thought very justly."

I could not help adding, "And very generously too."

Florence colored with pleasure at our approbation; but Mrs. Arnott's bell rang, and she left us at once to inform her mother of my arrival.

CHAPTER XII.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

Matters of business are never, I think, very interesting to young persons. I will not, therefore, attempt to give you a very particular account of the circumstances from which Mr. Arnott's present perplexities and his wife's sorrowful anticipations arose. All that is necessary for you to know, is soon told.

Mr. Arnott had some years before placed in the hands of a merchant, who was an old and valued friend, a large sum of money to be employed for him—so large a sum that, if lost, he would be no longer a wealthy man. His pleasant home must then be given up, and his wife and daughter be deprived of many of those comforts to which they had been accustomed, and which delicate health made almost necessary to Mrs. Arnott's life. This merchant, who had resided in Montreal, had lately died very suddenly. Not long before his death, some changes had taken place in his business which made new arrangements necessary to secure Mr. Arnott from loss. He had urged Mr. Arnott's coming to Montreal, as an interview between them was very desirable before the completion of these arrangements. But Mr. Arnott had very imprudently delayed going, till the death of his friend had made the evil past remedy. The letter which announced his death, mentioned also, that he had left no will—at least none had yet been found—and that his nephew would therefore inherit his property. Mr. Arnott knew this nephew, and thought him to be a very avaricious, and not very honorable man, and was sure that he would take every advantage of what he now felt to be his own culpable negligence. You will easily see how important it was, under such circumstances, that Mr. Arnott should go as soon as possible, and examine for himself, whether there yet remained any means of making good his claims.

When he spoke of his intended departure, Mrs. Arnott turned pale, and I saw that she was much agitated, but she tried both to look and to speak cheerfully. Florence, to whom it was quite a new thought, could not so command herself. She looked from her father to her mother, said in an accent of the utmost surprise, "Go away, papa?" and burst into tears.

Mr. Arnott rose, and with an agitated countenance left the room. Mrs. Arnott knew that her husband had much at present to disturb him, much which would make any unhappiness in her or Florence peculiarly painful to him. He was parting from them for a long and dangerous winter's journey—he left her in feeble health—knew not how long he might be detained from home, or whether he should ever return to this place as to a home. As soon as he went out, she turned to Florence, and while her own voice trembled with emotion, said, "My daughter, we must not let our regret make us selfish. Remember, your father is the greatest sufferer. He must not only endure the pain of parting, but he goes to meet great difficulty and perplexity of mind, and perhaps much hardship. Let us do our best not to add to his distress by ours. To leave us cheerful and well, will do much to keep him so." Florence tried to subdue her sobs, but for some time very unsuccessfully. "Go to your own room, my love," said the tender mother, as she drew Florence to her and kissed her cheek, "go to your own room, and come back to us when you can come with a happy face. It is not an easy effort, Florence, but you can make it, I am sure, for your father's sake."

Florence went to her room, and when, in about an hour, she returned to us, it was with a cheerful face, and all her usual animation of manner; and though I often saw the tears rush to her eyes when her father's absence was named, I never again saw them fall. Even when he went, in their parting interview, she tried to look and speak cheerfully; and, though some tears would not be restrained, it was not till he was out of sight and hearing, that she gave full vent to her sorrow.

Mr. Arnott left us early in January. The weather, during the whole of this month, was very cold and stormy, and the bleak, cheerless days seemed drearier than ever after his departure. Mrs. Arnott's health, too, continued delicate, and yet I felt that she really little needed me, for she could not have a more careful nurse, a more tender comforter, than she found in the young Florence.

The last week in January brought letters from Mr. Arnott. He had just arrived in Montreal when he wrote. Of course he could say nothing of business, but he was safe and well, and Mrs. Arnott felt that her worst apprehensions were relieved. She had tried to be cheerful before, she was now cheerful without trying.

February opened with mild, delightful weather. Florence went out one morning for a walk, but she soon came back with a bounding step, a bright color, and a countenance animated and joyous. "Oh, mamma!" she exclaimed, "it is a most delightful day, just such a day as you used to enjoy so much at the South. I almost thought I could smell the jessamine and orange flowers."

"Why, Florence," said Mrs. Arnott, "you almost tempt me to go out too," and she looked wistfully from the windows.

"And why not, dear mamma, why should you not go too? It could not hurt you—do you think it

could?—to take a drive in this bright, sunshiny day. I dare say, Aunt Kitty would enjoy it, too," turning to me.

Mrs. Arnott smiled; "Not such a drive as I should have strength for, Florence. I could not go more than a mile or two, and that must be in the close carriage. No, no, it would be a very dull drive for both of you.

"Dull, mamma, a dull drive with you, the first time you were able to go out after being so long sick? I am sure Aunt Kitty does not think so—do you, Aunt Kitty?"

"No, my dear; and, I think, if you will order the carriage, that your mother will be persuaded to try it."

Florence was off like an arrow. Every thing was so soon prepared for our excursion, that Mrs. Arnott had no time to change her mind. Our drive was a very quiet one, yet Mrs. Arnott enjoyed keenly the change, the motion, and the little air which she ventured to admit. To see her enjoyment was very pleasant to me, and put Florence into the gayest spirits. We went about two miles, and were again approaching home, when we saw a handsome open sleigh coming towards us, driven by a gentleman, and almost filled with young people of Florence's age. The bells drew Mrs. Arnott's attention.

"Who are those, Florence? Can you see at this distance?"

"It looks like Mr. Morton's sleigh, mamma," said Florence, coloring. "But I did not think they would come this way," she added.

"Come this way!—to go where, my child? Do you know where they are going, Florence?"

"Yes, mamma, they are going—at least they were going to M., to see some animals that were to be exhibited there to-day."

"And which you have talked so much of, and wished so much to see. I think it was scarcely kind in Clara and Edward not to ask you to go with them."

"Oh, mamma! they did ask me."

"And why did you not go, Florence?"

"I meant to go, mamma—that is, I meant to ask you this morning if I might go, but I thought—that is—when you talked of coming, I liked so much better to come with you that I gave it up."

"*That is*," said Mrs. Arnott, smiling, "you thought I would enjoy my drive more if you were with me, and you thought very truly, but you should not have broken your promise, Florence, without some apology, even for such a reason."

"It was not a positive promise, mamma, and you know it would not take them out of their way at all to stop for me, and I did leave a note for Clara, to tell her why I did not go. But what can bring them this way, I wonder?"

The sleigh was now quite near, and the gentleman driver, who proved to be Mr. Morton himself, the father of Edward and Clara, making a sign to our coachman to stop, drew up alongside of our carriage. Giving the reins to Edward, Mr. Morton sprang out, and opening the door of the carriage, shook his finger playfully at Florence, saying, "So, young lady, this is your good manners, is it?—to tell not only young ladies and gentlemen, but an old man like me, that you like your mother's company better than ours, with all the lions, and elephants, and giraffes to boot. But we have caught you at last;—I may take her, may I not, Mrs. Arnott?"

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Arnott, smiling at his playfulness.

"How kind it was of you, Mr. Morton, to come so much out of your way for me!"

"Kind, was it?—I understand your wheedling ways; but come along, Miss Florence, you are my prisoner now," and snatching up the laughing Florence, he bore her in triumph to the sleigh. After seating her there, and seeing that she was carefully wrapped up, he turned back to the carriage with more grave inquiries after Mrs. Arnott's health, and assurances that he would take good care of Florence.

"I am very much obliged to you for coming for her," said Mrs. Arnott, "for this exhibition is one which she has long wished to see, and I should have been grieved had she lost it."

"As to my coming for her, I could not well help myself," said the good-humored Mr. Morton, with a laugh. Then turning to me, he added, "Our friend Florence never thinks of herself, so we feel obliged to think a great deal of her, and the grave looks and grumbling tones with which the announcement that she would not go with us was received, showed me that the only chance I had of making our little party a party of pleasure, was to overtake and capture her. You were easily tracked by your wheels, for nobody else seems willing to lose the little sleighing which this fine weather will probably leave us; but, fine as it is, I am keeping you out too long in it," seeing Mrs. Arnott draw her cloak more closely around her, "so good-by."

Hastily mounting his sleigh, he drove rapidly off, many a hearty laugh and gay voice mingling their music with the merry bells.

Another letter from Mr. Arnott came about this time, written cheerfully, hopefully, though he had

not yet made even an effort to accomplish the objects of his journey. This delay was occasioned by the absence of a lawyer, who had always been employed by his deceased friend, Mr. Atwater, and from whom Mr. Arnott hoped to receive important information and advice. He had been absent when Mr. Atwater died, and no one knew enough of his movements to be quite certain when he would return, yet Mr. Arnott determined to wait his arrival as patiently as he could, and to do nothing till he saw him. He would probably be detained but a short time after seeing him.

From the day this letter arrived, Florence began to prepare for her father's return, and to cast many an eager glance up the road with the hope of seeing him. But even her father's return was not the most interesting subject of thought to Florence just now. She knew the apprehensions of her parents, the change of circumstances which possibly awaited them. For herself, this change of circumstances was not at all dreaded; for, though Florence loved her home, and would be sorry to leave it, she thought it would be almost as pleasant to live in a beautiful little cottage, covered over with roses and woodbine, with a pretty flower-garden before the door; and to raise chickens, and make butter and cheese for the market, seemed to her delightful employments. Pleasant as this picture was, and it was the only one which poverty presented to her, Florence saw that her father and mother did not regard it with quite such agreeable feelings as herself, and for their sakes she began to think how it might be avoided.

Mr. Arnott had always been a great lover of music, and to this part of Florence's education great attention had been paid, yet I had never heard her play so frequently as now. Had she not been afraid of wearying her mother, she would, I think, scarce ever have left her piano. She suddenly stopped, one morning, when I was the only person in the room with her, in the midst of a piece of music, and turning quickly to me, said, "Aunt Kitty, do you not think I play very well?"

I was amazed, for Florence had never seemed to me a vain child. I looked at her—she met my eye, and did not seem in the least confused.

"Yes, Florence, I think you do play very well."

"As well as Miss Delany?" she again asked. This was a young lady who was a teacher of music, and whom I had once heard play at Mr. Arnott's.

Still more amazed, I replied, "I am not, perhaps, a fair judge of Miss Delany's powers, as I heard her play but once, but I think you do."

"Oh! I am so glad you think so," said Florence, springing from her seat, "for then I can give music lessons too, and make something for papa and mamma, if he should lose that money. Do you not think I may, Aunt Kitty?"

"Yes, my dear Florence, I do not doubt you can, if it become necessary, which I hope it will not—but what put such an idea into your head?"

"I have had a great many ideas in my head about making money, since I heard papa talking of this business; but I believe what made me think of this, was Lucy Dermot's coming here last week. Lucy's mother, you know, Aunt Kitty, is very poor, and I remembered hearing Miss Delany say once, that Lucy had the finest voice and quickest ear for music of any child she had ever known, and that she thought it a great pity they could not be cultivated, for then she might support both her mother and herself handsomely. So I said to myself, mine have been cultivated, and if they are not so good as Lucy's, I may do something for papa and mamma with them."

Mrs. Arnott came in, and nothing more was said on the subject, but I now understood Florence's devotion to her music, and the pleasant expression which her countenance wore when she was practising. It was her generous motive which gave a charm to what would otherwise have been very tiresome.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THREE WISHES.

"Run to the window, mamma, run to the window, and see who is come," cried Florence, a few days after, bursting into the room where her mother and I were sitting, just before dinner.

It was not necessary to run to the window, it was only necessary to look into Florence's joyful face to see that her father had come. I lifted my eyes to Mr. Arnott's face as he entered: there was no cloud on his brow, no expression but that of grateful joy in his eyes, and I said to myself, all has gone prosperously with him. It was even so. The lawyer, on his return, delivered to Mr. Arnott papers which he had drawn up for Mr. Atwater, and which, with his will, had been left in his hands for safe-keeping. These papers fully secured Mr. Arnott's property. He had lost nothing, but had gained from past anxiety a very useful lesson—never to put off important business, even for a day.

In the evening we gathered around the fire, with grateful and happy hearts, to hear and to tell the events of those weeks of separation. Already, however, when Florence was not present, Mr. Arnott had heard from his wife of her constant tenderness, and watchful attention to her comfort, and from me of her generous plans for aiding them, should the ill fortune come which they

anticipated. He did not praise her in words, but she could not meet his eye, or hear his tones, without feeling that she was dearer than ever to her father's heart. Just before we separated for the night, he drew her to him, and seating her on his knee, said, "Florence, did you ever read the fairy story of the three wishes?"

"Yes, papa."

"Well, I will be your good fairy. Make three wishes, and they shall be granted."

Florence laughed gayly.

"Why, papa! fairies are always women."

"Well, I will be a magician; they are men, are they not?"

"Yes."

"Now make your wishes."

"What shall I wish for, mamma?"

"Stop," said Mr. Arnott, "they must be your own wishes; nobody must prompt them, or the spell is broken."

"And if I make a wrong wish, may I not take it back, and wish over again?"

"No—so be careful what you say."

Florence became grave, and was silent for a few minutes; then looking up with a smile, said, "I have two wishes, but I cannot think of a third."

"Let me hear the two, and you can take a longer time to think of the third."

"Well, first, I wish little Jem O'Donnell could be sent to school, and when he gets big enough, could be taught a trade—that is one wish."

"That is one wish! I thought that was two wishes."

"Oh no, papa! only one."

"Well, let it pass for one. It shall be done, that is, with his parents' consent, which you must get Aunt Kitty to procure for you. Now for the second wish."

"I wish little Lucy Dermot could be taught music, so as to give lessons, and support her mother and herself."

"You extravagant girl," said Mr. Arnott, "it is well I limited your wishes to three, or I should be a ruined man."

"Oh, papa! fairies and magicians never find any fault with our wishes, if they are ever so extravagant."

"Well, Lucy Dermot shall be taught music, if she be able and willing to learn. Now for the third wish."

"Oh! I must have till to-morrow to think of that. That is my last wish, and it must be something very good."

"To-morrow, then, I shall expect to hear it; and now you may go and dream of it. Good-night."

I went down early the next morning to put some books, which I had finished reading, into their places in the library, an apartment communicating with the breakfast-parlor by a door, now standing open. While I was there, Mr. Arnott entered the parlor, and immediately after, Florence bounded in, exclaiming, "Oh, papa! I have found out my third wish."

"Well, my daughter, what is it?"

"Why, you know, papa, nurse has a daughter, and she is her only child, just as I am your only child; and she is very good, too, nurse says."

"Just as you are very good, I suppose."

"Oh no, papa, I did not mean that; but she is going to be married—at least, she would have been married a year ago, nurse says, but the man she is to be married to is working hard to try and get a house for her to live in first—"

"And how did you hear all this, Florence? Did nurse know of my promise to you, and did she ask you to speak of this?"

"Oh no, papa! she does not know any thing about it. I thought when I had such a good chance, I ought to do something for nurse; so, when she was putting me to bed last night, I asked her what she wished for most in the world, and she said she was so well taken care of that she had not any thing to wish for; and I said, 'Not if anybody was to promise to give you just what you should ask for, nurse, could you not find any thing to wish for then?' and so nurse told me about her daughter, and said she did wish sometimes she had a home for her, and I thought my third wish should be for a house for her. Just a small house, you know, papa, with flowers all about it, and a

garden, and a poultry yard, and a dairy, and—"

"Stop, Florence—here are half a dozen wishes at once. I will tell you what I will do. I will have a small but comfortable house built—"

"And a garden to it, papa?"

"Yes, a garden and a poultry yard; the dairy can wait until it is wanted, and the flowers they can plant themselves. This house you shall give to nurse, and she can let her children have it until she wants to occupy it herself. It is only right, as you say, that something should be done for her."

"Oh, thank you—thank you, papa! That will be my very wish."

"And now, Florence, your three wishes have been wished, and not one of them for yourself. Have you no selfish desires, my child?"

"Oh yes, papa!" said Florence, in a serious tone, "a great many."

"I should like to know how you find them, Florence?"

Mr. Arnott meant to express by this, that he never saw these selfish desires manifested by Florence; but she understood him literally to mean, that he wished to know how she discovered them, and she answered; "Why, you know, papa, Aunt Kitty made a little prayer for me once, when I was very, very selfish, and I thought I would say that prayer every night till I had no more selfishness left; so every night I went over in my own mind what had happened in the day, to see if I must say it, and, papa, there has never been a single night that I have not had to say it, and I am afraid it always will be so."

"It will, my dear child, for there is selfishness in our hearts as long as we live; but while you watch over yourself, and pray earnestly to God against it, he will give you power always to act generously—to subdue your selfish feelings."

I have told you enough of Florence, my dear young friends, to enable you to answer the question—is she generous? But my book has done little if it has not made you ask a question of much more importance to each one of you—are you yourself generous? Before you answer, yes, remember that the truly excellent are always humble, and that Florence never felt how much selfishness was in her heart, till she became generous. Should your conscience answer, no, imitate Florence in her simple, earnest prayer, and honest efforts to amend, and be assured that the same heavenly Father will hear and help you.

THE END.

GRACE AND CLARA:

OR,

BE JUST AS WELL AS GENEROUS.

CHAPTER I.

AUNT KITTY'S GREETING.

Nearly a year has passed, my dear young friends, since first Aunt Kitty met you with a "Merry Christmas or Happy New-Year." The snow, which then spread a veil over all things, has long since melted away. The spring flowers which succeeded it have withered. The summer and autumn fruits have been gathered. Again winter has stripped even the leaves from the trees, and we awake each morning expecting to find that again he has clothed them in robes of spotless white. And now that the season for holidays and merriment has returned,—now that your friends greet you not only with smiling faces and pleasant words, but with presents, as marks of their affection and approbation, Aunt Kitty, too, comes with her token of remembrance.

Before she presents it, will you permit her to ask how you have received those which she has already sent you. Have you learned from "Blind Alice" and her young friend Harriet, that to do right is the only way to be happy, and from "Jessie Graham," that it is true wisdom to speak the simple truth always, and from "Florence Arnott," that selfishness is a great evil, and will, if you indulge it, bring great sufferings on yourselves and others? If you have learned these lessons and practise them, then am I sure that your Christmas will be merry and your New-Year happy,—that the good-humored tones and ringing laughter of your young companions will never be changed into wrangling and fretful cries, or the smiles of your older friends into grave and disapproving looks. That I think of you, this little book will prove, and though I may not see you, I shall probably hear of your improvement and enjoyment, and my holidays will be the pleasanter for them.

These holidays I shall pass in the country at the house of my friend Mrs. Wilmot, to whom I have already made a very long visit. There are residing here six young girls, the eldest little over twelve, and the youngest under ten years of age. Already they have learned to regard a walk with Aunt Kitty, as a reward for a well-recited lesson, and to cluster around her by the evening fire, with wishful eyes and earnest voices asking for one story more. At any hint of my going home, their remonstrances and entreaties are so vehement, that, I think, when it becomes absolutely necessary to leave them, I shall have to steal away.

I am about to introduce these little girls to you by name, to tell you how their time is generally employed, how their holidays are passed, and thus to make you quite well acquainted with them.

CHAPTER II.

HAZEL GROVE.

Mrs. Wilmot was left a widow when her two daughters, Grace and Lucy, were very young—so young that Lucy, who is now ten years old, does not remember her father at all, and Grace, who is twelve, has only a very faint recollection of a gentleman, who, when he was lying on a couch in the parlor, used to have her brought to him, and kiss her, and give her some of the candies which he always seemed to have near him. Mrs. Wilmot found herself not very rich on the death of her husband, and as she was a very highly educated and accomplished woman, she was advised to keep a school for young ladies. She did not remove into a city to do this, for her own pleasant house is near enough to a large town to admit of her having day scholars from it; and she took no boarders, but four girls, the children of friends who had known her long, and who were glad to have their daughters under her care, on any terms. These four girls are about the age of her own children, and have been educated with them as sisters. Indeed, as they call her "Mamma Wilmot," but for their being so much of the same age, a stranger might suppose them all her own children. Their names are Clara Devaux, Martha Williams, and Kate and Emma Ormesby. These two last-named girls are twin sisters, and so much alike that it was formerly frequent sport with them to perplex their young companions by answering to each other's names. This they can no longer do, as Kate has grown tall and thin, while Emma is still a fat, chubby little girl. Mrs. Wilmot, about two years ago, had some property left her, which would have supported herself and her daughters very comfortably without the profits of her school, but she had become so much interested in her young boarders, that she was not willing to part with them. She gave up, however, all her day scholars, and then wrote to me requesting that I would visit her, as she would now, she said, have only her six little girls to teach, and would therefore have leisure enough to admit of her enjoying a friend's society. As soon as possible after I received this letter, I went to Hazel Grove, the name of Mrs. Wilmot's place, taking Harriet with me.

We arrived at noon of a bright day in October. We had already begun to enjoy the glow of a fire in the chill mornings and evenings, but, at that hour, the sun was so warm that it might almost have cheated us, as well as the little birds and insects, into believing that summer was not quite gone.

Hazel Grove is a very pretty place. It fronts a fine, bold river, to whose very edge the lawn, on which the house stands, slopes gently down. On the opposite side of the river, the banks are steep and thickly wooded. On the left of the house, as we approached, lay a large orchard, which still looked inviting, with its yellow pears and its red or speckled apples. On the right, was a fine old wood of oak and maple and beech trees, intermingled with the smaller hazels, from which the place takes its name. Have you ever, in Autumn, when the nights became cold, watched the trees, as their green first grew deeper and more vivid, and then was changed from day to day into every varying shade of color, from russet brown to pale yellow—from deep rich crimson, to bright scarlet and flaunting orange? If you have, you may know how gayly this wood was looking when first we saw it.

But pleasant as all this was, there was something in the old stone cottage, with its yard bordered with flowers and shaded with large black-walnut trees, which pleased me yet better; and best of all was the view which I caught of the parlor through the open windows. There sat Mrs. Wilmot in a rocking-chair, with six little girls around her, to whom she was reading. These girls were all busily at work, except one bright-eyed, curly-headed little thing, seated on a low stool at Mrs. Wilmot's feet, whom I afterwards found to be her youngest daughter, Lucy. She, too, had some work in her hand, but she was so much interested in what she was hearing, that her needle stood still, while she looked up into her mother's eyes, as if she would read the story in them. I had only a single minute to see all this, for the noise of letting down the carriage steps caused Mrs. Wilmot to look out, and in an instant the book was laid aside, the work thrown down, and she hastened to meet us, followed by her children.

The rest of this day was a holiday to the children, and while Mrs. Wilmot and I sat talking over old friends and old times, they led Harriet to their gardens and their baby-houses, their swing, and the playground where they were accustomed to trundle their hoops and jump the rope,—showed her the calf, Martha's pet lamb, Kate's and Emma's English rabbits, Clara's dove, Lucy's kitten, and Grace's puppy, which were each the most beautiful of their kind that had ever been seen. The next morning I was introduced to all these beauties, and quite won the hearts of their owners by my evident admiration of them. When my visits were over, Mrs. Wilmot called her little

girls to their lessons, in which Harriet, at her own request, joined them. Mrs. Wilmot had a good library, and while she and the girls were engaged with their studies in the morning, I was generally there, reading or writing. At dinner we met again, and the afternoon was passed together in some entertaining and pleasant way at home, or in driving, walking, or visiting some of the agreeable people with whom Mrs. Wilmot was acquainted in the town.

CHAPTER III.

THE FRIENDS.

Amongst the children at Hazel Grove, there were, as you may suppose, varieties of disposition and character, and though they seemed all to feel kindly and affectionately to each other, each of them had some chosen companion, to whom their plans were confided, and with whom all their pleasures were shared. Kate and Emma, the twins, were almost inseparable; Lucy Wilmot and Martha Williams walked together, assisted each other in their gardens, and nursed each other's pets; while Clara Devaux and Grace Wilmot read from the same book, pursued the same studies, and sought the same amusements. Yet there could scarce have been two persons less alike than Clara Devaux and Grace Wilmot. Clara was gay and spirited, generous and thoughtless. A quick temper often made her say unkind words, which an affectionate heart made her feel, in a short time, far more painfully than the person to whom they were addressed. Grace was, on the contrary, of a grave, serious nature, and seemed always to take time to think before she acted. She, too, possessed a very affectionate heart, and the least appearance of coldness or anger from one she loved, would distress her much, but she had scarcely ever been known to speak or even to look angrily. In one thing, however, these girls were alike,—they were both remarkable for their truth. I do not mean only that they would not tell a story, for this I hope few little girls would do, but they would not in any way deceive another, and if they had done wrong, they did not wait to be questioned, but would frankly tell of themselves. Mrs. Wilmot, in speaking to me of their attachment, said she was pleased at it, for she thought they had been of use to each other; that Clara had sometimes stimulated Grace to do right things which, without her persuasions, she would have been too timid to attempt, and that Grace had often prevented Clara from doing wrong things into which her heedlessness would have led her but for her friend's prudent advice.

Not far from Mrs. Wilmot's lived a man who was feeble in health and somewhat indolent in his habits. He had three little daughters, the eldest of whom was little more than four years old when their mother died. She was an active, industrious woman, and had always taken good care of them, but as their father was far from rich, they fared hardly after her death, and were often sadly neglected. They could not go to any school except Sunday-school, because their father could not afford to pay any thing for their education, and at Sunday-school they were seldom seen, because there was no one to take care that their clothes were mended and washed in time.

"Poor children," said Grace one day, when she and Clara had passed them in walking, "how sorry I am for them! They have no kind mother to take care of them and teach them as I have."

"No, but they might go to Sunday-school, if they would," said Clara; "and they could learn a great deal there."

"Yes, Clara, but are you sure that we should ever have gone to Sunday-school, if we had had no one to see that we were ready, and send us there?"

"No," said Clara, "I do not think we should."

The girls walked silently on for a few minutes, when Clara said, "Grace, suppose we teach these poor little children."

"We teach them, Clara—what an idea!" exclaimed Grace.

"And why not? I am sure we can teach them to read and to say hymns and verses from the Bible, and we shall be learning something more and more every day to teach them, as they grow older. Come, let us turn back and ask them if they will come to school to us."

Clara was already retracing her steps, but Grace put her hand on her arm and stopped her. "Stay, Clara,—it seems very good, and I am sure I should like to teach them if I can,—but let us ask mamma about it first, and if she thinks it right, she will show us the best way to do it."

Clara readily agreed to this proposal. When they returned home, Mrs. Wilmot was consulted. She highly approved the plan, and promised to aid them in its execution, provided the time which they gave to their little pupils was taken, not from their studies or work, but from their amusements. For many months before my visit, Clara and Grace had commenced their school, devoting one hour each day to these motherless children. There was something very touching to me in seeing these young teachers' patient and persevering efforts to instruct their charge. Especially did it please me to see the gay, pleasure-loving Clara, lay aside her bonnet, when ready for a walk or ride, put up her battledoor, or jump from the just-entered swing, when she saw the little girls approaching. I said something of this kind one day to Mrs. Wilmot, and Clara, who was nearer than I thought, overheard me. She colored, looked quickly at me, as if she would speak, and then, her courage failing, looked down again.

"What would you say, Clara?" asked Mrs. Wilmot.

"That if it had not been for Grace, ma'am, I should have often put off teaching them, and maybe, should have given it up altogether before this."

"And how has Grace prevented you, my dear?"

"Why, the first time I wanted to put off the lesson was once that Mr. Gilbert called to give me a drive in his new carriage, just as the children came. But when I said 'let us put them off,' Grace looked very sorry, and said, I must remember how much trouble we had had in getting them to come to us; and now, if we put them off for a drive, they would think we did not care much for the lessons, and would perhaps not come again. Grace seemed so serious and earnest, that I was ashamed of having even thought of putting them off; and so I have never said any thing about it since, though I have been very tired sometimes."

Grace had entered while Clara was speaking, and now said, "Ah, Clara! but we would never have begun to teach them if it had not been for you."

My young readers may understand from this sketch what Mrs. Wilmot meant by saying that Clara stimulated Grace to do right things, and Grace prevented Clara from doing wrong ones.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG TEACHER.

The first Saturday after my arrival at Hazel Grove, I found, after breakfast, that Clara, instead of getting her books, as usual, produced some colored silks and a frame for embroidery, in which was an apron with a border of beautifully shaded white, pink, and crimson rose-buds, just commenced. At the same time, Grace brought out her paints and brushes and an unfinished flower-piece, which showed both great taste in its design and great care in its execution. These things were laid on the table, and then these two girls seemed to have nothing to do but to watch for the arrival of some one whom they evidently expected with impatience. At length Clara cried out, "I see her, Grace—there she is."

I looked and saw, still at a distance from the house, the figure of a girl apparently not older than those who were so anxiously expecting her. She carried a portfolio under her arm, and walked with a quick, buoyant step, which showed that she was both well and cheerful.

"Who is that?" said I to Grace.

"Cecille L'Estrange, ma'am," she replied.

"And is she coming to take lessons with you?"

"No, ma'am," she said, smiling, "she is coming to teach us."

"To teach you!" I exclaimed, with surprise, "why, she is a child, like yourselves. What can she teach you?"

"Oh! a great deal more than we have time to learn," said Clara, while Grace added,

"She is two years older than Clara and I,—she is thirteen."

I had no time to ask farther questions, for Cecille was at the door. She entered smiling, and said, "Ah! you wait for me—but I am punctual, it is just the time," pointing to a clock on the mantelpiece, which said exactly nine o'clock. As she spoke, her eye turning towards that part of the room where I was sitting, she colored, and looked down. Grace, who always seemed thoughtful of the comfort of others, saw this little embarrassment, and introduced her to me.

Either this introduction, or something in my manner to her, set her quite at her ease; and when I asked if I should be in their way, it was with a very sweet, engaging smile that she replied, "Oh no, indeed! I should very much like to have you stay, if you please."

Before I say any thing more of Cecille L'Estrange, it will, perhaps, be best to tell my young readers, that she was a French girl, and therefore, though she understood English perfectly well, and spoke it better than most foreigners do, she sometimes expressed herself in a different manner from what an English person or an American would have done: and when she was very much excited from any cause, either pleasant or painful, she would bring in a French word here and there, without seeming to notice, or even to know it herself. These words, however, I will always translate into English for you.

I had nothing to do for some time but to watch my companions as they sat busily engaged, and their silence only broken now and then by a direction from their young instructress. Seldom have I seen any one who interested me more than this young instructress. Now that I saw her more nearly, I still thought that she did not look older than Clara or Grace; indeed, she was smaller than either of them. Her features, too, were small; and though, when quite still, there was an earnest, grave expression in her face, when she spoke or smiled, it was lighted up with such animation and gayety that she seemed like a playful child. I watched her very earnestly, for there

was something about her which made me think, that young as she was, and cheerful as she now appeared, she had felt sorrow and trial. At one time, in moving some things which stood on the table out of Clara's way, she took up a small bronze figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. She did not put this down immediately, but continued to hold it and look at it, till her countenance grew very sad, and she sighed heavily. Just then, Grace, having put the finishing touch to a splendid rose, placed the piece before her eyes without speaking. In an instant all sadness was gone from her face, and, clapping her hands together, she exclaimed, in French, "What a beautiful flower!" then, laughing at her own forgetfulness, added, in English, "It is beautiful! is it not, madam?" showing it to me as she spoke.

It was beautiful, and I praised it as it deserved.

A few minutes after this, Cecille, glancing at the clock, started up, exclaiming, "I must go, it is after eleven!"

"Wait five minutes," said Clara, "and just show me how to put in that last shade, and I will soon finish this corner."

Cecille looked distressed, turned her eyes from the work to the clock, took the needle from Clara's fingers, and then dropping it, said, "I will come back this afternoon, and show you; but you must let me go now. I told my grandmamma that I would come back to her at half-past eleven. I shall just have the time now to get home before that; and if I stay longer she will be frightened for me."

She took up her portfolio, courtesied to me, bade the girls good-by, again assuring Clara that she would come back, and in less than two minutes was out of sight.

"I am sorry," said Clara, as she was putting up her work, "that I asked her to show me any more to-day, for now she will take that long, tiresome walk back again."

"Besides, Clara," said Grace, "you know she is always at work when she is at home, and she will lose so much time coming twice to-day."

"Well, I am sure, Grace," said Clara, reddening at what seemed to her a reproach, "I did not ask her to come again, and I can do no more than be sorry for it now."

"Yes, we can do something more," said Grace, "we can walk over after dinner and tell her not to come."

"So we can and so we will," said Clara, relieved at once by seeing that she could do something to remedy the evil.

CHAPTER V.

CECILLE.

When Mrs. Wilmot joined us I told her how much I had been interested by the young Cecille, and begged her to tell me all she knew of her.

"That I will readily do," Mrs. Wilmot replied, "but the all is not much. She has been but a short time near us, for it was only late in the last winter, when the roads were full of snow and ice, that a stage full of passengers from B. was upset, not far from us. None were hurt but an old lady, who had her arm broken. It was quite impossible for her to continue her journey, yet she seemed, I was afterwards told, much distressed at being compelled to remain. The pain occasioned by her removal from the road to a neighboring house caused her to faint; and before she recovered her consciousness the surgeon had been called, and every thing was in readiness for setting the arm. A little girl, who had been travelling with her, stood weeping beside her, addressing her in French in the most plaintive and tender tones, and by the endearing title of 'mamma.' As the poor lady revived she spoke to this child in the most rapid and energetic manner, while she repulsed the proffered assistance of the surgeon. She spoke in French, which no one present understood, but it was evident from her manner that she was insisting on something which the poor child was vehemently, yet respectfully and tenderly opposing. At length the surgeon said, 'Your mamma, is wrong, my dear, to leave her arm so long unattended to. It is already swelling, and every minute's delay will make the operation more painful.' As he ceased speaking the old lady turned to the child and said something with great energy. The little girl now, in a very hesitating and embarrassed manner, explained that the lady whom, when speaking in English, she called grandmamma, did not want any thing done to her arm. 'She will die then,' said the blunt but honest and kind-hearted Dr. Willis. The little girl wrung her hands in agony, and a groan for the first time burst from the lips of the old lady, showing that though she either could not or would not speak English, she understood it well. A sentence addressed to her by the child in the most imploring tone caused the tears to spring to her eyes. As Cecille,—for she was the child,—spoke to her grandmother, she had drawn out a small embroidered purse. This action revealed to Dr. Willis the secret of the old lady's reluctance to have any thing done to her arm. She was afraid to incur the expense of a surgical operation. The bluntest people become gentle when their kindly feelings are excited, and I have no doubt it was with great tenderness that Dr. Willis addressed

himself to Madame L'Estrange in his endeavors to induce her to accept of assistance which, though necessary to her life, she would have rejected from the fear that she could not pay for it. How he managed it I know not; but he did at length win her consent, to the almost frantic joy of Cecille.

"A fractured limb is, you know, a very serious thing with an old person, and it was many weeks before Madame L'Estrange recovered from the fever occasioned by hers. Dr. Willis saw that she was often painfully anxious on some subject, and remembering the little purse, he was not long at a loss to conjecture the cause. Yet it was a subject on which he knew not how to speak. It was no easy matter, you know, to say to a lady, 'I see that you are very poor, and I would like to help you.'

"One morning the doctor found Cecille weeping bitterly. With some soothing and some questioning he gained her confidence, and found that the week's board paid that morning had nearly emptied the little purse—that her grandmother felt that they could not continue to live on the poor widow, to whose house she had been carried, and where they had since remained, without the means of paying her,—yet that they knew not where or how to go. 'And what did you mean to do if you had not been stopped here? Your money would not have supported you any longer in another place,' said Dr. Willis. 'Oh sir! if we could only have got to some large city, grandmamma says I could soon have made money enough for her and myself too.' 'You make money!' repeated the doctor with surprise, looking at the delicate figure and soft white hands of the child. 'What could you do?' 'I can do a great many things. I can embroider on muslin and silk—I can make pretty fancy boxes—I can paint—and grandmamma thinks, with some practice, I could take miniatures.' The doctor listened to this list of Cecille's accomplishments and shook his head dejectedly. Had Cecille said she could scrub and she could wash, he could have seen how money could be made by her, but these fine lady works he had been accustomed to think only so many ways of wasting time. Fortunately for our little Cecille, all persons did not consider them so unprofitable. The doctor called at our house after visiting Madame L'Estrange, and with his own mind full of Cecille's sorrows, he repeated to me, in the presence of my children, what he had just heard. Clara scarcely allowed him to finish before she expressed a determination to have a muslin cape and a silk apron embroidered, a fancy box made, a picture painted, and a miniature either of Grace or herself taken. I begged, however, that before giving her orders she would calculate her means of paying for them. These means amounted to five dollars a month, which her father had permitted her to spend as she pleased from the day she became ten years old. Clara soon found that it would be long before this would remunerate Cecille for half the employment she was arranging for her. She looked at me in despair, and seemed half provoked when I smiled at her perplexity. 'Then I cannot help her,' she exclaimed sorrowfully. 'Stay, stay, my dear,' said I, 'do not be so hasty in your conclusions. You may help her very much, though you cannot do every thing for her. How would you like to take lessons of Cecille, and learn to do these things for yourself instead of having them done for you?' 'Oh! I should like it above all things, but will papa let me, do you think?' 'I have no doubt that your papa will not only let you, but be very much pleased if you choose to devote a part of your pocket-money to your own improvement. Your allowance of five dollars a month will pay Cecille a fair price for so much of her time as will enable her to teach you some one of her accomplishments, and will leave you something for other pleasures too.' Clara was delighted with my proposal. I permitted Grace to join her in her lessons, and for ten dollars a quarter from each of them, Cecille spends two hours in their instruction on every Wednesday and Saturday morning. But this is not all she does. She works very industriously at home, and when her work is completed she brings the article to me, and I forward it to a friend of mine in the city, who has hitherto been able to dispose of whatever she has done to great advantage. In this way this little girl has for some months supported not only herself but her feeble and aged grandmother."

"Poor things," said I, "if this is all their support, I fear they must often want."

"Indeed, I think you are mistaken. Their clothing is always neat, and they appear to live comfortably."

"Then," said I, "they must have some assistance from others; for according to your own account, the sum which Cecille receives from her pupils would amount in a year to only eighty dollars. She must gain as much more from other work to be able to pay even the most moderate board for two persons; and then what becomes of their other expenses?"

"Ah! our Cecille, or rather her grandmother, is a better manager than you would be of her little funds," said Mrs. Wilmot, smiling. "They do not board, but hire from the widow Daly two rooms in her cottage. For these they pay only half of what Cecille receives from Clara and Grace. They keep no servant, but for a trifle obtain each day, from one of Mrs. Daly's daughters, an hour's assistance in putting every thing around them into neat order. How they live, I know not; but I am sure Cecille could not be so cheerful as she is, if her grandmother suffered any serious want. Of one thing I am sure—they do not run in debt for any thing; for Cecille, with many blushes and great timidity, begged her young pupils here to pay her by the month, as her grandmother had engaged to pay her rent in that way, and would be very much distressed if she were obliged to be in debt, even for a single day."

CHAPTER VI.

THE VISIT.

If my readers have been only half as much interested in Mrs. Wilmot's account of Cecille as I was, they will not have thought it too long. Before it was concluded, I had determined to become better acquainted with Cecille L'Estrange; and when, immediately after an early, one o'clock dinner, Clara and Grace put on their bonnets, knowing that they were going to see her, I asked to walk with them. They were very glad to have my company, but asked if I would go with them through the wood and across the fields—there were only two fences to climb, and if they went by the road, they were afraid Cecille would have set out before they could get to her house. This suited me well; for I had always rather go through a wood and across fields, than by a dusty road—so we were soon on the way. We walked on very quickly, not even stopping to pick the late fall flowers which we saw, though we marked their places that we might get them as we came back. The second field we crossed opened upon Mrs. Daly's orchard, from which we passed through the yard, and would have entered the house by the back door, had not Mrs. Daly met us and begged that we would go around to the front. "Not that I care about it, ma'am," said she to me in an apologizing manner: "front or back, it's all the same to me; but the good old lady in there"—pointing to the room near which we stood—"she's a clever body, but she has some queer notions. I guess she's been a lady born, and she don't like somehow that people should see them work—so she wants everybody to go to the front door, and in the parlor, where they only do some of their light works; and as I said before, it's all the same to widow Daly—so if you please, ma'am, I'll show you the way round."

While Mrs. Daly was speaking, I had caught a view through the half open shutter of the inside of the room to which she had pointed. An old lady, dressed in a silk wrapper which even at that distance looked old and faded, was seated in one of Mrs. Daly's high-backed, straw-bottomed chairs, near a small table on which was spread a clean white towel. A plate with a slice of bread was before her. At the fireplace stood a young girl stooping over a furnace of coal, on which was a small pan. Though she had changed her dress and covered her head with a handkerchief, probably to keep her hair free from ashes or soot, I had no difficulty in recognising Cecille. She held a spoon in her hand, and occasionally used it to turn or stir what was in the pan. I was so much interested in observing her movements, that I said to Mrs. Daly that I would let Clara and Grace go to the front door, and speak to Cecille, and I would await them where I then was. The children and Mrs. Daly had just left me, when I saw Cecille's glowing and pleased face turned towards her grandmother, while by the motion of her hand she seemed to ask for her plate. The old lady held it out, the pan was taken from the fire, and what seemed to me an omelet was laid on the plate. This, you know, is made of eggs, and it requires some skill in cookery to make it well. I judged from Cecille's looks that she thought this was well done. She was evidently more pleased with her success, more vain of her powers, in cooking, than in painting and embroidery. From her grandmother's pleased countenance, I was sure she was praising the omelet and its maker. After a while, however, the old lady looked a little sad. She kissed Cecille's cheek as she was bending over her, and taking the handkerchief from her head, smoothed the hair back from her forehead. Then she offered Cecille her plate, and seemed to urge her to take some of her own cookery; but, with a smile and shake of the head, Cecille turned to a cupboard, and taking from it a bowl of milk and another plate of bread, placed them on the table. She was just seating herself by her grandmother, when Mrs. Daly opened the door. After some words from her, Cecille rose and left the room, and but a few minutes passed before I was again joined by my young companions. We walked more leisurely home again, and did not now leave the flowers unplucked.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLIND MAN.

As we were sitting, one afternoon during the next week, near the parlor windows, the girls and myself at work while Mrs. Wilmot read out for us, we heard the gate open, and looking up, saw an old man, whose clothes seemed to have been long worn, and whose white hairs were covered with a ragged straw hat, approaching the house. A little boy was with him, and as he came near, we saw that this little boy was leading him, by which we knew that the poor old man was blind. He seated himself on the step of the house, and taking off a bag, which was slung over his shoulder, drew a violin from it, and began to play. The children wished to go out and speak with him, and as Mrs. Wilmot did not object, they were soon gathered round him. I followed them. They listened for a while without speaking. Then Lucy Wilmot, the youngest of the group, pressed up to his side, saying, "Cannot you see at all, sir?"

"No, my little miss. But though I cannot see you, I can hear your pleasant voice, and I know that you are sorry for the old blind man, and feel kindly to him, and I am sure that when you know he has had nothing to eat to-day, though he has come a great way, you will give him something."

In an instant all were in motion, and Mrs. Wilmot was soon busy preparing a plate of victuals, with a dozen little hands waiting to carry it to the old man, when prepared. After they had given it to him, the girls came back into the house till the first note of his violin told them that he had dined, when again they flocked around him. Most people, and especially most old people, like to tell their sorrows. The old man was therefore quite ready to answer their questions, and they

soon learned his little story. It was a very sad one. He had removed some years before with his son's family to a newly settled western state. The land on which they had made their home proved very unhealthy. His son and his son's wife were both in their graves. He had been very ill himself, and had only recovered with the entire loss of sight, and with a constitution so broken that he felt he had not long to live. "And glad shall I be," he said, "to lay this weary, sightless body down in the grave, to which so many I love have gone before me; but first I would take this poor orphan boy to those who will take care of him."

The tired travellers had yet fifty miles to go before they would reach the home of the old man's only remaining child, a daughter, who, though she had children of her own, would take care of the boy, he said, for the love of him and of her dead brother. Poor little boy! how sad and weary he looked, and how bitterly he wept when the old man talked of his father and mother!

My little readers will easily believe that this sad story excited great pity, and they will not be surprised to hear that on Clara Devaux's proposing that they should give the old man something, each little girl brought her sixpence or her shilling and threw it into a bag which Clara herself held. As the proposal had been hers, I was very desirous to see what she would give, but this I could not do. Whatever it was, it made no noise as it fell into the bag, from which I thought it must be paper money, and consequently could not be less than one dollar.

Some of Grace Wilmot's movements on this occasion excited my surprise and curiosity very much. As soon as Clara's proposal was made, she ran into the parlor, took from her work-basket a pocket-book, and taking out all the money it contained, counted it carefully upon the table before her. I could see that there were two bills and two silver half dollars. Grace took one of the bills, and putting the rest of the money away, turned towards the door, but before she had reached it, she seemed suddenly to have changed her mind, and going back, returned the bill and took in its place one of the half dollars. As there was no one in the parlor but herself, Grace did not suppose she was seen, till raising her head, she caught my eye, as I stood at the window, looking fixedly at her. She colored very much, and running hastily to Clara dropped her half dollar into the bag.

Now you will say that this was a great deal for a young girl like Grace to give. So it was, and few little girls could have given so much. But I had seen that Grace had more money, and that she had thought of giving more and then had withdrawn it, and I could not help asking myself over and over again what could have been her reason for doing so, whether she had kept it back for some more important purpose, or whether it had been only for some selfish gratification. On the answer to this question my opinion of Grace Wilmot would, I felt, greatly depend. Though I had to wait many weeks for this answer, you will learn, when you have read this little book, that I received an answer, and what that answer was.

CHAPTER VIII.

INDIAN SUMMER.

About a fortnight after my first arrival at Hazel Grove commenced that delightful season which we call Indian Summer. I dare say you all know that by this we mean the two or three weeks of mild pleasant weather which we generally have in November, after the frosty nights and cold winds have made us suppose that Winter has come. I have no doubt that you all love better to be in the open air at this season than at any other,—that you play more merrily when out, and go in more reluctantly. But you have perhaps enjoyed the season without exactly knowing the reason of your enjoyment. Now I would have you, when next there is an Indian Summer, notice how pure and balmy the air is, and of how deep and rich a yellow are the beams of the sun. I would have my young friends observe all the beautiful and pleasant things with which God has surrounded them, for if they do not, they will fail to give Him, in return, the tribute of loving and grateful hearts which is due to Him.

It was on one of these bright, pure, golden days in Indian Summer that I seated myself as usual after breakfast in Mrs. Wilmot's library, but I tried in vain either to read or write. Do what I would, my eyes would turn to the windows, and instead of the words on the page before me, I saw the leaves on the trees, the white clouds sailing over the bright blue sky, or the little birds hopping from branch to branch. If I had had lessons to learn that day I know not what I should have done,—but I had no lessons to learn, so I threw my book aside, put on my shawl and bonnet, and was soon walking in that beautiful wood whose appearance on my first arrival I have described to you. Delightful indeed was my walk—full of pleasant sights and sounds,—and often did I wish for some of my young friends to partake of my enjoyments, as I saw a shower of bright-colored leaves whirling about in the air whenever the wind stirred the branches of the trees, or a shy rabbit spring away to a safer hiding-place, or a startled squirrel dart to the topmost boughs which overhung my path, as the dry leaves rustled under my feet. So I wandered on, observing all these things, but meeting no one till I had nearly passed the wood. Then I heard a low, gentle voice singing. I listened, approaching as softly as possible. Soon I could hear the words, and found that they were French. It was a hymn describing the beauties of nature, and expressing the devotion of a grateful loving heart to Him who made it so beautiful. I afterwards had the words of this hymn from Cecille, and have tried to translate them into English verse for you. Here is my translation.

CECILLE'S HYMN.

I.

Thine, Father, is yon sky so bright,
And Thine the sun, whose golden light
Is shed alike on brook and sea,
On lowly flower and lofty tree.
So Thou, in equal love, hast smiled
On seraph high and humble child.

II.

No sea on which the sun doth look
Gleams brighter than yon little brook,
The loftiest tree, the lowliest flower,
Alike rejoice to feel his power;
And Thou, while seraphs hymn thy praise,
Dost bend to hear my simple lays.

When I was quite near Cecille my steps caused her to look around. She did not seem at all startled or surprised at seeing me, but with a pleasant smile held out her hand to me as I bade her good morning.

"I see, Cecille," said I, "that this lovely weather makes you an idler as well as me."

"Not quite an idler, ma'am," she replied, showing me a drawing she had made while sitting there, of the Widow Daly's cottage and orchard.

"For what is that pretty drawing intended, Cecille?"

"I hardly know yet, ma'am. The sun looked so bright and warm, that grandmamma knew I longed to be in it, so she made me put away my embroidery and come out, and this was the only thing I could do out here."

After looking at it a moment in silence, she added, "Do you not think it would make a pretty painting for the top of a work-box?"

"Yes, very pretty; but are you never idle, Cecille?"

"Not often, ma'am," said she, modestly.

"And do you not get weary of being always at work?"

"Weary of working for grandmamma—dear, good grandmamma!" she exclaimed, with energy. "Oh, no!—never." A minute after, speaking more quietly, she said, "Perhaps I should get tired, but when the work seems dull and hard, I always remember what Mr. Logan told me to do."

"And what was that, Cecille?"

"He said that at such times I must think of something that grandmamma wanted very much, and say to myself, this will help me to buy it when it is done, and he was sure then I would not get tired, or want to put my work down."

"Mr. Logan was a very wise man. Where did you know him?"

"In N., a little village that we went to when we first came over from France, when my dear papa was with us. He lived there with us for four years before he went back to France. My own dear papa, how I wish I could see him!"

"You remember your father then," said I.

"Remember him!" she repeated; "why it is only two years since he left us to go back to France."

"And what made him leave you, Cecille?" said I—then in an instant, feeling that my interest in Cecille had made me ask a question which it might be wrong in her to answer, I added, "Do not answer me, my child, if it was any thing which you think your father would not wish you to tell."

"Oh, no!" said Cecille, smiling, "it was only because some friends wrote to him to say that if he would come to France, they thought they could get the king to give him back an estate that had been unjustly taken from him."

"And should he get it, would you return to France, Cecille?"

"Yes, for papa and grandmamma love France so well, that they will never, I think, be quite happy anywhere else. My mamma is buried there too, on that same estate."

"Do you remember her, Cecille?"

"No—she died when I was a very little baby, and my grandmamma took care of me just as if she had been my own mamma. Papa told me all about it the night before he went away from us, and then he divided all the money that was left of what he had brought from France into two parcels, and he made me count what he took, and showed me that it was just enough to pay for his going

back; and he told me how much was in the other parcel, that he was to leave with grandmamma. It seemed a great deal to me then, but papa said it was very little, and that it could not last long. Then he told me that he had taught me all he could himself, and had others teach me what he could not, in order that I might be able to work for grandmamma and myself, and I must do it when that money was gone, if I hoped for his blessing."

"And what made you leave N.?"

"Because it was such a little village that I could hardly get any work there. Mr. Logan advised us to go to New York; and we set out to go there, but the stage broke down with us here, and if it was not that poor grandmamma had suffered so much, I should be glad it did."

"You like your home here, then?"

"Oh, yes! dear Dr. Willis and Mrs. Wilmot are so kind to us. And then it is so pleasant to teach Clara and Grace, and every month to carry home some money to grandmamma."

"Then you carry to her whatever is paid you?"

"Yes; and after she has taken out what will pay Mrs. Daly our rent, and any thing else we happen to owe, she gives me back the rest to do what I please with. I long for this month to be gone, that I may get my money,—for I have something very good to do with it this month."

She looked up so pleasantly in my face, that I said, "Will you not tell me what it is, Cecille?"

"Yes, if you will not tell, for I want to surprise grandmamma. I am going to get her some flannel. I have found out already how much it will cost, and I will have a plenty of money, with a little that I laid by from the last month, to get it. Then I will get some one to show me how to cut it out, and it shall be all made before grandmamma sees it. Do you not think she will be pleased?"

"Very much pleased, I doubt not," I replied, "and you must let me cut it for you, and assist you in making it."

"Will you do that? That will be very kind."

We were both silent a little while, when Cecille, suddenly looking up, asked, "Do you not speak French?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Then you must come and see my grandmamma. Will you not?"

"Certainly—with pleasure; but does she not speak English?"

"A little, but it is not easy to her—and so I do not ask people to see her who cannot understand her French."

"Shall I go with you now?" I asked.

Cecille looked up to the sun and down again, without speaking. I saw she was a little embarrassed, and said, "You would rather I should not go to-day."

"Yes—for it is near grandmamma's dinner-time, and I must go to get it for her," she added, rising.

I rose too, and taking her hand, said, "Well, good-by, Cecille—remember we are not to be strangers any longer."

"No, no," she said, warmly, "friends—good friends now." She held up her face to be kissed, picked up her pencil and drawing, and hastened away. Before she had gone far I could again hear her carolling cheerfully, "Thine, Father, is yon sky so bright."

CHAPTER IX.

PREPARATION.

After this pleasant meeting, Cecille and I, as you may suppose, were very friendly. I visited her grandmother, as I had promised, and found her a very agreeable and excellent old lady. I often made my visits to her when Cecille was obliged to be away, and then she loved to sit and talk to me of her. I told her that Cecille said she had taken care of her when she was an infant, and had been to her as her own mamma. She replied to this, that she had tried to do her duty by her, and that she had been repaid tenfold for whatever she had done by Cecille's tenderness and respect.

"Ah, ma'am," she would say, "you do not know what it is to suffer want. We often did this, and I would have been sad indeed, if my little girl's cheerfulness had not made me ashamed. I could then speak little English, and Mr. Logan, who was our only friend after my son left us, could speak no French; so that all my comfort came through Cecille. One day, just before we left our last home, she came running to me, full of gladness, exclaiming, 'O, grandmamma, I have good news for you.' I thought at first that my son had come back, or at least that there was a letter from him; but it was that Cecille, in reading her Bible, had just met with a verse saying, that 'the

young ravens may lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing.' 'And now, grandmamma,' she said, 'I am sure you will have whatever is good for you, for you fear the Lord.' I had often read the same verse in my Bible, but I had never felt it to be so full of comfort as I did then; and if ever I live to see my son's face again, and to go back to the home I love in France, I shall feel that I owe it to that dear child, for whom I thank God every day."

Madame L'Estrange always spoke in French, but I have translated what she said, that my readers may learn from Cecille's example that the youngest child may do good to the oldest and wisest. I would have them remark, too, how much wiser it is to cultivate cheerful feelings than to be fretful and dissatisfied. Do you not suppose that Cecille, though poor and alone in a strange country with her feeble old grandmother, was happier with her cheerful temper and her trust in the goodness of her kind heavenly Father, than those children who fret at being awake in the morning, though they are surrounded with every comfort and have the kindest people to attend upon them,—who sit down with dissatisfied faces to a breakfast-table covered with good things because they fancy something which is not there, and who thus go through the whole day complaining of what they have and wishing for what they cannot get?

But, interested as I was in Cecille, you must not suppose that my whole attention was given to her, or that I failed to make friends of Clara and Grace and the rest of Mrs. Wilmot's children.

November seemed to be quite a busy month with these young girls, and I was told by Mrs. Wilmot that they were preparing for an examination, which would take place early in December, when their friends came to take them home for the Christmas holidays. This explained to me their unusual attention to their studies, but I saw there was something more in their minds, of which Mrs. Wilmot knew nothing. Instead of sitting, when they were at work, with their kind mamma Wilmot and myself, as they had formerly loved to do, they now asked to sit together in the schoolroom; and if, while they were there, either of us entered unexpectedly, they would shuffle away their work, as if they did not wish it seen. Harriet was with them at these times, but though I could not help feeling a little curious about their movements, I would not ask her any questions, because I was sure, if not bound to secrecy, she would tell me without questioning. I was not kept many days in ignorance. Mrs. Wilmot and I were sitting at work one afternoon, when Harriet came into the parlor and said, "Aunt Kitty, the girls ask you to go into the schoolroom; they want you to show them something about their work."

"I will do it, my dear," said Mrs. Wilmot, rising before me.

"Oh no, Mrs. Wilmot," said Harriet in most earnest tones, "they do not want you to go, ma'am; that is," she continued in a confused manner, "they did not tell me to ask you."

"Oh, well, my dear child, do not look so agitated," said Mrs. Wilmot smiling, "I will not go. I suppose I shall hear the secret in time. I am quite sure there is nothing improper in it, or Aunt Kitty would not be chosen as their confidant."

I went with Harriet to the schoolroom, and found that my assistance was wanted in showing Kate Ormesby how to make up a work-bag which she had been embroidering in worsted.

"And why was this a secret?" I asked.

Clara undertook to explain. They were getting some presents ready for Mamma Wilmot, and they did not wish her to know any thing about them till the day of the examination, when they intended to put them on her table with a note which they would all sign. Then their work was exhibited. There was a needle-book from one—a pincushion from another—a pair of slippers embroidered on canvass from a third, and the work-bag which I have already named. These were the presents prepared by Lucy, Martha, Emma, and Kate.

"And now where are your presents?" I asked, turning to Clara and Grace.

"Mine is not done yet," said Clara.

"Well, what is it to be?"

"A locket, set with Grace's hair and mine, and with our names on the back of it."

"And yours, Grace?"

She colored and looked down.

"Show it to Aunt Kitty, Grace," said Harriet; "I am sure she will think it very pretty."

"I do not wonder you are ashamed of it, Grace," said Clara, quickly, "when you might have had such a handsome one, so cheaply too."

"It would not have been cheap for me, Clara."

"Well, I should think a handsome hair bracelet cheap for anybody at two dollars and a half, but some people never think they can get enough for their money."

I saw that these words were very painful to Grace, who turned away with her eyes full of tears; and as there is nothing more disagreeable to me than to hear little girls quarrel, I interrupted any farther remarks from Clara, by urging Grace to show me her present. With a timid manner she took out of her basket a bracelet of hair, very simply woven, which she had just commenced. It was pretty, and I said so; yet I acknowledge I thought, with Clara, it would scarce be handsome

enough for such a locket as she described. Again I asked myself, can Grace be selfish, that she would not spend her money on a present for her mother? That she had the money for the bracelet I could not doubt, for I knew that she had the same allowance for pocket-money that Clara had, and she was able to buy a locket, which I was sure, from the description, must cost more than two dollars and a half. Besides, if she had not the money, Clara could not have expected her to buy it, or have been angry with her, as she evidently was, for not doing so. These thoughts probably made me look grave, and, if I might judge from her sad countenance, poor Grace was little comforted by my praise of her work. I observed, after this, that there was a little coolness between Clara and Grace. They were not so constantly together as they had been, and sometimes Clara spoke to her friend in a very tart tone, while Grace always seemed gentle, and even humble, as if she was seeking forgiveness for some wrong she had done. This did not convince me that Clara was right and Grace was wrong, for I have often seen the person who was most to blame in a quarrel, the most angry—while the least faulty was conciliating and anxious for peace.

After this the girls admitted me into all the mysteries of their little plot. I assisted them in their work where assistance was needed, and was consulted on all their arrangements. There was a very interesting debate on the question whether the presents should be placed on Mrs. Wilmot's toilet table before she was awake in the morning, and so meet her eye when she first arose; or whether they should be laid on the library table, while she was at breakfast. I gave my opinion in favor of the last arrangement; and at length brought them all over to my way of thinking, by reminding them that we could not be quite sure Mrs. Wilmot would sleep on that morning until we were ready for her to awake.

About a week before the examination Clara's locket was sent home by the jeweller. She brought it to me, and I saw, by his mark on the paper around it, that its cost was four dollars. It was plainly but handsomely made, and the initial letters of her name and Grace's were very prettily engraved upon the back. When the bracelet was finished they were both to be sent to the jeweller, who would put them together with small gold rings. For this Grace would pay him. Clara continued to look, and even sometimes to speak, as if she thought it would be quite a disgrace to her locket to be seen in such company. Grace bore this in silence, though she was evidently much distressed at it.

CHAPTER X.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

The preparations for the examination had not interfered with Cecille's teaching. She came as regularly, stayed as long, and seemed as welcome to Clara and Grace as when they had only their usual employments. It was the last Wednesday in November, and just one week before the day fixed for the examination, that, knowing Cecille would be at Hazel Grove, I determined to walk over and spend the morning with her grandmother. On my way I met Cecille. She was walking very briskly, but stopped to shake hands with me.

"I am going to see your grandmother, Cecille," said I.

"I am very glad; I will not now have any thing to make me sorry to-day. This is one of my bright days. Do you know why?"

I shook my head.

"No?—Do you not know that this is my pay-day? Grandmamma will soon have her flannel, if you help me as you promised, and she wants it in this weather."

I congratulated Cecille on her coming pleasure, promised her my help, and we parted.

I spent my morning very agreeably with Madame L'Estrange, yet I listened to Mrs. Daly's clock, which stood on the mantelpiece, and watched its hands with as much impatience as if I had been weary and longed to get away. The truth was, I was impatient for Cecille's coming, which I had determined to await, that I might have the pleasure of seeing her happy looks when her wishes were accomplished and the money was actually in her hands. Did you ever observe how slowly the hands of a clock appear to move when they are watched? I thought this morning that the hour from ten to eleven was the longest I had ever passed. It did pass, however, and at length I saw the hour hand at eleven and the minute hand at twelve. Now I began to watch the windows, for I thought that Cecille must soon be in sight. But here again I was disappointed, and both her grandmother and myself had more than once expressed our surprise at her delay, before she appeared;—and then I could scarcely believe it was the same Cecille whom I had seen in the morning, bounding along as if her feet scarce touched the earth. She walked now slowly and pensively, and I even fancied once that I saw her wipe her eyes.

As she came near the house, however, she looked up and her step became more brisk. She entered the room where we sat. I looked at her anxiously, but she turned her face away as if she could not bear to meet my eye, and walking straight up to her grandmother, put a parcel into her hand and stood still by her side.

"You do not speak to your friend, my dear," said Madame L'Estrange without opening the parcel,

about which she seemed to feel no curiosity.

Cecille put her hand in mine without speaking—then looked again at her grandmother, who had by this time slowly unfolded the packet. She looked at its contents, and then lifting up her face with a smile to Cecille, said, "Ah, little pilferer! where is the rest?"

In a choked voice Cecille answered, "There is no more."

"There is no more!" exclaimed Madame L'Estrange; "why how is this, Cecille? This is but half of what you have always received for a month's teaching."

Cecille tried to answer, but in vain. Her throat swelled, her lip quivered, and throwing herself upon her grandmother's bosom, she burst into tears. Madame L'Estrange was, as you may easily suppose, greatly distressed. She stroked Cecille's hair, pressed her lips to her head, calling her at the same time by every endearing name which the French language furnishes, and repeatedly asking, "What is the matter? Has any one been harsh to my child? Cecille, what have they done to you, my darling?"

"Nothing, grandmamma," sobbed out Cecille; "I was only grieved because I had no more money to bring you to-day."

"My dear child! I am ashamed of you, Cecille. You should have been more thankful for this, which will pay Mrs. Daly, and we owe no one else."

"I know it, grandmamma. Besides, Clara will pay me next week when her father comes for her, and that is a very little while to wait."

"And what made you grieve so unreasonably, Cecille?"

Cecille looked at me with a half smile as she answered, "Because I wanted that money just to-day very much, grandmamma."

"And why just to-day, Cecille?"

"Ah, grandmamma! that is a secret," and Cecille now laughed with as much glee as if she had never cried in her life.

The old lady laughed too; but she said, "Take care, Cecille,—it is not well for little girls to have secrets from their grandmamas."

"This is a very harmless secret," said I.

Madame L'Estrange looked at me with some surprise as she said, "You know it then?"

"Yes," said I; "but you must not be jealous that Cecille chose me for her confidant, all little girls do. Mrs. Wilmot's children have just been consulting me on a very important secret."

"They told me about it to-day," said Cecille quickly, "and I asked them to let me tell grandmamma. They were quite willing I should, so you need not mind speaking of it."

The story of the examination and of the presents prepared for Mrs. Wilmot on that day, was soon told to Madame L'Estrange, who entered into the little plot of the children with great enjoyment. After we had talked of it a while, I said to Cecille that the bracelet Grace was preparing did not please Clara very much, and indeed I scarcely thought it handsome enough for the locket.

"I wish she had told me sooner," said Cecille, "I would have shown her how to weave a handsome one. I learned from a lady who came over from France with us. I have done several since I came here for Mr. Brenner the jeweller."

"Then perhaps you made the one which Clara wanted Grace to buy, and was half angry with her for not buying."

"I dare say it is one of mine; but if it is, Grace could not buy it, for it would cost two dollars and a half, and she had but little more than a dollar left after paying me to-day."

"How did you find that out, Cecille?" asked her grandmother.

"Because, grandmamma, Grace saw that I looked very sorry when Clara said she could not pay me, and she followed me out and begged me to take what she had left, and to pay her back when Clara paid me."

"You did not take it I hope, my dear."

"No, grandmamma, though I would have done it if I had not known that you would dislike it, and so I told Grace."

"You were right, Cecille, in not taking it. Better even weep as you have done to-day for an ungratified wish, than borrow money and perhaps be disappointed in your expectation of repaying it."

"I shall not be disappointed in that, grandmamma, for Clara says she will certainly pay me the next week."

"Clara no doubt once thought, my dear, that she would certainly pay you to-day. She may be mistaken again."

"Clara was very sorry, grandmamma," said Cecille kindly.

"I do not doubt it, my dear. She is, I dare say, a good little girl and means well, but she is thoughtless, or she would not have spent her money even on a present for Mrs. Wilmot before she had paid her debts. What she owed to you was in truth not her own, but yours."

"Grandmamma, don't be angry with Clara. You could not help loving her if you knew her, she is so generous."

"I am not angry with her, my dear. I do love her for her kindness to you, and from many things you have told me, I believe she is generous, but, Cecille, she is not just."

"That locket cost a great deal, I dare say, grandmamma, and then Clara gives something to everybody that asks for money. She is so generous."

"Generous but not just, Cecille, when she gives what she already owes to another."

I saw that Cecille was hardly satisfied with her grandmother's views of Clara, and yet they were so true that she could not oppose them.

For my part, I had been thinking of Grace. My readers will not have forgotten that Grace's having changed the bill she at first intended giving the blind man for a half dollar, and her contenting herself with giving her mother a bracelet of her own weaving, instead of spending money on her present, as the other girls had done, had made me fear that she might be a little selfish—that her money might be saved for some gratification that should be entirely her own. I now began to hope that Grace was not less generous, but that she was more just than Clara.

"Is not Grace generous too?" said I to Cecille.

"Is not Grace generous!" she repeated, as if surprised at my question.

"Have you ever thought that she was selfish?" I asked in yet stronger language.

"Grace selfish!" exclaimed, Cecille: "oh, no! I never saw her do a selfish thing."

"Do you think her as generous as Clara?"

"As generous as Clara," she again repeated, and then said doubtfully, "Clara is so generous."

"You do not think then that Grace takes as much pleasure in giving to another as Clara does?"

"Oh, yes! I think she does. Grace never seems so happy as when she happens to have what another person wants."

"In what then is she less generous than Clara?"

"Why"—Cecille stopped suddenly—thought a little, and then said, "I do not know what could have made me think so,—only that I never saw Grace give all that she had in her purse as I have seen Clara do."

"Perhaps that is because Grace remembers what Clara seems sometimes to forget, that she has no right to give away that which belongs to another."

"Clara does not give away what belongs to another."

"Does not Clara's father allow her as much money as Mrs. Wilmot allows Grace?"

"Yes—just the same."

"Then how is it that Grace could pay you and Clara could not? If Clara has given away what should have been paid to you, she has given away what did not belong to her. In her generosity she has forgotten justice, while Grace seems to have remembered, 'to be just before she was generous.'"

The clock striking twelve interrupted our conversation, by reminding me that it was time to return home.

CHAPTER XI.

PLEASURE AND PAIN.

The third of December had been fixed for the day of examination, and the children at Hazel Grove were so industrious that some days before that, both the presents and the studies were completed—except the bracelet, which went on very slowly indeed—but which Grace assured Clara should be ready in time. For the last few days, when the girls were out of school, time seemed to pass as slowly with them as it did with me on the morning I sat with Madame L'Estrange expecting Cecille. Now, as then, however, it did pass.

The first of December had been a stormy day, but the next morning was as clear and bright as if no cloud had ever been seen. But it was so cold that even the children preferred gathering

around the fire to running out, and for me, I could scarcely persuade myself to look out. Poor Dr. Willis! how he shivered, and how cold even his horse looked, as he drove up to the gate at Hazel Grove, where he had been sent for, to visit a servant who was sick. He came in, rubbing his hands, and declaring it was the coldest day he had felt this year. "Ah! young ladies," said he, "you none of you know the comfort of this warm fire as I do. You must ride three miles facing this northwest wind before you can really enjoy it. But even that," he added a moment after, "is better than to sit still in the house with little or no fire as some poor people must do. By the by," he continued, turning to Mrs. Wilmot, "I stopped to see Cecille and her grandmother on my way here, and very glad I was to see them enjoying a blazing fire."

"I have been thinking of them this morning, and fearing that they would not be prepared for this suddenly severe cold," said Mrs. Wilmot. "How do they get their fuel?"

"It was wanting to know that which made me call this morning. Poverty certainly sharpens the wit, for that little child"—Cecille was so small that everybody thought of her as a little child—"manages as well as any man could do. The widow Daly supplies them with fuel for a small additional charge to her month's rent. The old lady needs a warm fire, for her dress is not thick enough—she ought to have flannel."

"And has she not?"

"No—I asked Cecille about it and she colored up and looked as much distressed, poor child, as if it had been her fault that her grandmother was without it. She shall have it, she says, in a few days, as soon as she gets some money that she is expecting. I offered to lend her some till then, but her grandmother had forbidden her borrowing."

"In which I think she is very wise," said Mrs. Wilmot, "but I wish whoever owes her money, knew how much she needs it just now; they might pay her, even if it be a little before the time. No one I hope would be so cruelly unjust as to keep her out of her little earnings one day after they were due."

I could not see Clara's face as I tried to do at this time, for she was looking out of the windows, but Grace colored as violently and looked as confused as if she had been guilty of what her mother thought so wrong. Her confusion attracted Mrs. Wilmot's attention. "Grace," said she, "you do not owe Cecille any thing I hope."

"No, mamma, I paid her the last week."

Mrs. Wilmot turned to speak to Clara, but she had left the room. Dr. Willis, having warmed himself, now asked to see his patient. This withdrew Mrs. Wilmot's attention from Cecille, and she probably did not again think of what had passed,—at least she asked no more questions about it. She left the parlor with Dr. Willis, and soon after I rose to go to my room. In going there I had to pass through the library. There were heavy curtains to the windows of this room, and as I entered, I heard sobs which seemed to come from behind one of these curtains, and then Grace, who had left the parlor a little before me, saying, "Do not cry so, Clara, pray do not cry so. Let us carry Cecille what money we have—that will be some help, you know, and your father will be here this evening and give you the rest."

"How often must I tell you, Grace, that I have not any money? Did you not see me give all that I had to the jeweller?" asked Clara impatiently.

"Yes, dear Clara,—but I have some."

"But I will not take your money, I tell you, after your saving it up so carefully."

"Yes, Clara, you will take it, if you love me as you used to do; you know I did not save it up for myself, Clara,—you know I would have given it all to that poor blind man, if I had not promised you to buy a bracelet for your locket. How glad I am now that it was not enough for the bracelet, so that we can have it for Cecille."

"And if I take it for Cecille," said Clara, "I should like to know how the locket will get fastened to the bracelet."

"Oh, never mind that," said Grace, "we can sew it on now and have it fastened better by-and-by, mamma will not care how it is done. So come, Clara, I know you will feel a great deal better after you have seen Cecille and given her some money, and told her how soon you hope to have the rest for her."

I heard no more, but after I went to my room I saw the two girls, wrapped in their cloaks, set out for Cecille's; so I knew that Clara had been persuaded.

Early in the afternoon of this day the children began to gaze from the windows which looked towards the road for the carriages of their friends, who were expected to attend the examination of the next day and to take them home on the day after. In about two hours after their watch commenced, a carriage arrived with Mr. and Mrs. Ormesby, and shortly after Mrs. Williams came, but the evening passed away—it was bed-time—and nothing had been seen or heard of Mr. Devaux. Clara became so agitated that as Mrs. Wilmot bade her good-night, she said to her in an affectionate and soothing tone, "Do not look so distressed, dear child, your father will be here perhaps before you are up in the morning."

But Clara rose the next morning to fresh disappointment. Her father had not come. Knowing the

cause of her anxiety, I was much interested in her feelings and observed her closely. She ate but little breakfast, and every time the door opened she turned quickly towards it.

The other children were full of interest about their presents. They had been placed on the library table when Mrs. Wilmot went into the breakfast parlor. With them was the following note, sealed, and placed so that it must attract her attention the moment she entered the room:

"DEAR MAMMA—

Accept these keepsakes from your affectionate and grateful children, Clara, Martha, Kate, Emma, Grace, Lucy."

Clara was so much absorbed in her anxiety about her father's delay that she seemed to have little interest in these arrangements, and Grace was occupied with her. Thus to the younger children was left the management of an affair which had occupied all their minds so long. I had undertaken to get Mrs. Wilmot to the library, so, after breakfast, calling her out of the parlor, I led the way thither and walked directly up to the table. The children followed, and were in time to see her glistening eyes as she read the note, and to receive her caresses as she raised her head and saw them standing near the door. After the first emotion of receiving the presents had subsided, they were examined and admired. "This," said Mrs. Wilmot, as she clasped the locket on her arm, "is a joint present, I suppose, from Grace and Clara. It is too expensive to have been from one."

"The bracelet only is mine, mamma," said Grace in a low voice, as if again she felt a little ashamed of her present, "Clara bought the locket herself."

"My dear Clara, how long you must have been saving your money, and how much self-denial you must have practised before you could pay for so costly an ornament! It is paid for," she added inquiringly, as she saw the color mount to Clara's very temples on hearing her praise.

"Yes, ma'am," said Clara, and Mrs. Wilmot again fastened the locket, which she had unclasped while asking her question.

"Is not this hair yours and Clara's, Grace?" asked Mrs. Wilmot, bending down her head to examine the bracelet.

"Yes, mamma."

"And who wove the bracelet for you?"

"I wove it. I know it is not handsome enough for the locket, mamma, but it was the best I could do, and I had not money enough to buy one."

"It is very neatly done, my dear, and if it were less pretty than it is, I should thank you for it far more than for a handsomer one which had cost more than you could properly give. But I thank all my children, and accept all their presents with pleasure, because I am sure they all know that they cannot be generous without first being just. You would none of you," she continued, looking tenderly round upon them, "you would none of you grieve me, by giving me that which was not really your own, and nothing is your own till it is paid for—not even the premiums you are to have to-day, and which you must now come to the schoolroom and win by well-said lessons." This was said gayly, as Mrs. Wilmot turned towards the schoolroom, whither she was followed by all the children—all light-hearted and happy, except Clara.

Poor Clara! how painfully she felt every word Mrs. Wilmot had said. Whatever were her faults, she had always been quite sure that she had one virtue—generosity, and now she began to feel that, in this instance at least, she had been very ungenerous, for she had gratified herself in making the most costly present to her mamma Wilmot at the expense of poor Cecille. And when she entered the schoolroom, there stood Cecille, whom the girls had invited. How she shrank from meeting her eye! How she dreaded to approach her, lest Cecille should ask if her father had come!

Some of Mrs. Wilmot's friends from the neighboring village arrived, and then the examination commenced. Examinations I doubt not you have all attended, but perhaps none conducted exactly as this was. The object here, was not to show which scholar was best, or how far one surpassed all others, but how good all were. Each little girl was encouraged to do her best, and they all rejoiced in the success of each one. After they had been examined in their various studies, some of their work was exhibited—among the rest, Clara's embroidery and Grace's painting. These were very highly extolled, and Cecille, being pointed out by Mrs. Wilmot as their teacher, received many compliments, and some persons from the village inquired her terms, and thought she might have several pupils there when the holidays were over. I was much pleased to hear this, as it promised greater gain for my little friend.

Clara had appeared well in all her studies, her work had been admired, her young companions had evinced their affection for her in a hundred different ways, and Mrs. Wilmot had spoken to her with more than her usual tenderness, because she saw that she was distressed by her father's delay. Yet, notwithstanding all this, Clara had never been so unhappy as on this day. All coldness, however, had vanished between her and Grace, who never passed her without a pressure of the hand, or some soothing word or action. As the day passed on and the afternoon wore away without any tidings of Mr. Devaux, the color deepened on Clara's face, and she grew so nervous and agitated, that I, who watched her closely, expected every moment to see her burst into tears.

All this distress must have appeared very unreasonable to those who supposed that it was caused only by anxiety about her father, whom Mrs. Wilmot had not very confidently expected. But there were three persons present—Cecille, Grace, and I—who better understood its cause. On her father's coming would depend Clara's power of keeping her promise with Cecille. Cecille's present want of the money, of which perhaps Clara would have thought little but for the remarks of Dr. Willis on the day before, was sufficient to make her earnestly desirous of paying her: but Clara had yet another reason; she dreaded lest Mrs. Wilmot should hear of this debt.

My young readers will have learned from the remarks made by Mrs. Wilmot in the morning to her children, even at the very moment of receiving their presents, how strict was her sense of justice. No principle had she endeavored to inculcate on her pupils more earnestly than this, and Clara could not forget that she had only the day before called the person cruelly unjust, who should keep Cecille's money from her for a day. It was the first time Clara had ever desired to keep secret from Mrs. Wilmot any thing she had done, and this, my dear young friends, is the worst of all unhappiness, to have done what we are ashamed or afraid to confess. Clara had been perhaps a little vain of her locket and of her generosity, as she thought it, in making such a present, but I have no doubt she would now gladly have changed places with Grace, and have been the giver of only the humble bracelet. I do not think Grace was now at all ashamed of her bracelet—indeed she seemed to love to look upon it; and well she might, since it was a proof that not even Clara's contempt or anger, or the desire to show her regard to her mother, could make her forget the principles of justice which that dear mother had taught her. She had proved her generosity by giving all she had—all that was her own—but she had refused, for any reason, to spend that which was not her own.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DISCLOSURE.

The day was past, the visitors from the village had left us, and we were gathered around the parlor fire to spend our last evening together, for the next morning our little party at Hazel Grove would separate. Mrs. Wilmot had promised to return home with me for the holidays. Grace had long ago promised to spend that time with Clara, and Mrs. Wilmot had been prevailed upon to consent that Lucy should accompany her friend Martha.

The sound of carriage wheels drew Clara and Grace to the window.

"Oh, Clara!" exclaimed Grace, "it is your father."

"Yes," said Clara, joyfully, "I know the white horses,—but why do they not drive to the door? What is papa going to the stables for?"

The question was soon answered. A servant entered with a note for Mrs. Wilmot; she glanced at it and then handed it to Clara, saying, "There, my dear Clara, you will find there is no further cause for anxiety. Your father has been detained by business, but he has sent the carriage for you and Grace."

Clara had seized the offered note, and was reading with such eagerness, that I do not think she heard what Mrs. Wilmot said. As she saw from the note that her father was not coming,—still more, that he would have left home before she could arrive there the next day, on business which might oblige him to be absent for some weeks—the thought that she must either keep Cecille waiting during all that time, or make the dreaded betrayal of her fault to Mrs. Wilmot, oppressed her so much that she burst into tears.

"Clara, my dear child, what is the matter?" said Mrs. Wilmot drawing to her side. "This is something more than sorrow at not seeing your father." She paused, but Clara did not speak. "Is there any thing you wished him to do for you, my dear? Surely, if there is, you will not hesitate to speak your wish to me." Clara was still silent. "I am grieved at this silence, Clara, I thought you loved me and confided in my affection; but perhaps you would rather speak to me alone. Come with me to the library."

Mrs. Wilmot then left us, leading Clara with her. She closed the library door after her, and we could then hear only the low murmur of her voice or Clara's heavy sobs. Grace seemed very anxious. She approached the library door at one time as if she was going in,—then went to the farthest part of the room from it. At length, her mother opened the door and called her. Grace sprang to the door and was admitted. There was something sad in the tone of Mrs. Wilmot's voice, which made me certain that Clara had told her all; but I did not hear how she had told it, till many days after, when Mrs. Wilmot related the scene to me as I am about to describe it to you.

As soon as they entered, Mrs. Wilmot seated herself on a sofa, and placing Clara by her side, strove to win her confidence by every soothing and affectionate word and action. At last with great effort Clara said, "You will be so angry with me, mamma Wilmot, if I tell you, that you will never love me again."

"Clara, I am angry only with those who are obstinate in doing wrong—never with those who

confess their faults and try to amend."

"But you will think me so cruel and unjust."

"Cruel I cannot believe you to have been, Clara, and if you have committed an act of injustice, and you may by confiding in me be assisted in making amends for it, it is a new reason, my child, why you should speak at once. What is it, Clara?" Mrs. Wilmot's eye rested just then on the locket which she wore on her wrist, and this prompted the question—"Clara, did you speak the whole truth to-day when you told me this locket was paid for? Do you owe nothing on it?"

"No, mamma Wilmot; nothing on that, but I owe—" she stopped.

"Not Cecille, Clara," said Mrs. Wilmot; "you could not be so thoughtless—so selfish—as to keep her hard earnings from her for a single day, for any purpose of your own. Speak, my child, and tell me it is not so."

Clara spoke not—moved not—except that her head sunk lower and lower, till it almost rested on her knees. "Tell me, Clara, if you have done this wrong, that I may make amends for it at once. Do you owe Cecille?"

"Yes," faltered Clara.

Mrs. Wilmot rose, and after calling Grace, seated herself at the library table and wrote a few lines to Cecille, in which she was about to enclose the price of a month's tuition, when Grace, who had seen her counting it out, said, "Mamma, Clara does not owe Cecille so much, she paid her some."

"Clara," asked Mrs. Wilmot, "how much do you owe Cecille?"

"I do not know exactly, ma'am."

"How much did you pay her?"

"All that Grace had. I do not know how much it was."

"How much was it, Grace?"

"One dollar and fifteen cents, mamma."

The money was enclosed, Mrs. Wilmot sealed the note and handed it to Grace, bidding her give it to a servant and tell him to take it immediately to Cecille. "But stay, Grace," she added, laying her hand on her arm and looking into her face, "you owe her nothing?"

"No, mamma—nothing," said Grace, meeting her mother's eye fully.

"God bless you, my child, for saving me that pain. I can wear your bracelet, Grace, with pleasure, for it has cost no one sorrow; but this locket, Clara,—you must receive it again, for I cannot wear it."

Mrs. Wilmot, while she was speaking, had taken the bracelet from her arm, and severing with a small penknife the silk which fastened the locket, replaced the bracelet on her wrist, confining it with a pin, and approaching Clara, laid the locket on her lap.

This was the deepest humiliation, the severest punishment that could have been inflicted on poor Clara.

She started up, flinging the now unvalued locket on the floor, and falling on her knees, clasped Mrs. Wilmot's hand, exclaiming, "Oh, mamma Wilmot! forgive me, and love me again."

Mrs. Wilmot seated herself, and raising Clara, said, "I do forgive you, my child, and it is because I love you, Clara, that I am so deeply pained by your doing wrong; but I must see some effort to amend—some proof that you have learned to regard what belongs to others, before I can again confide in you. I will give you an opportunity of recovering my confidence. You are now in my debt to the amount of one month's payment of Cecille, for I will return to Grace the money which she lent you. When, by *economy* and *self-denial*, you have paid this debt, I shall think that you have learned that you have no right to gratify even your amiable and generous feelings at the expense of another—that you have learned to be just before you are generous,—and then, Clara, I shall again confide in you as well as love you. But remember, it must be by *economy* and *self-denial*, not by any present from your father or any increase of your allowance. When this task is accomplished, give me back the locket, and I will wear it, with both pleasure and pride. Till then, you must wear it yourself, Clara. It may be useful to you by reminding you of your task and the reward of your success."

Clara wept—but more gently. There was now hope before her, and when Mrs. Wilmot kissed her and bade her good-night, though she was sad and humbled, she was more composed than she had been since telling Cecille that she could not pay her. Her fault had now been told—there was nothing to conceal, and this would have made her feel far happier than she had done, even had her punishment been much more severe than it was.

It must have been very mortifying to Clara to wear the locket herself before those who knew for what purpose she had bought it; but so anxious was she to regain her mamma Wilmot's good opinion by compliance with her wishes, that she appeared at breakfast the next morning with it on her wrist sewed to a piece of riband. She looked very unlike the lively and high-spirited Clara,

for she was silent, and if others spoke to her, while answering them, she colored and seemed abashed.

Mrs. Wilmot had prepared a parting present for each of the children—for the four youngest, books, for Grace a very handsome paint-box, and for Clara, a work-box with many colored silks for her embroidery. After breakfast, calling them to her own room, she delivered these presents to them, commencing with the youngest. To all except Clara she said, that they were premiums or rewards for their good conduct. To Clara she said, the box was a mark of her affection and her approval of her *as a scholar*. Clara felt this distinction, and stood still without attempting to take her box.

"Why do you not take it, Clara?" asked Mrs. Wilmot.

She burst into tears as she replied, "I do not want it, mamma Wilmot, till you can love me just as well as you used to do."

"I do love you, my dear Clara, just as well as ever," said Mrs. Wilmot, kissing her; "but I will keep the box, since you wish it, until I can restore to you my full esteem and confidence, and then we will exchange gifts," touching the locket with her finger.

In an hour after this scene, we had said "good-by" to each other, and were travelling on our different roads.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REWARD.

Mrs. Wilmot was with me three weeks, and then returned home to prepare for receiving her children again. It was from a letter of hers that I learned what I am now going to tell you.

Clara returned wearing the locket. Did you ever read a fairy tale in which a young prince is said to have been presented with a ring that pricked his finger whenever he was in danger of doing wrong? Clara's locket was to her what this ring was to the young prince. Whenever she was about to spend money either on her own fancies or the fancies of others, it would remind her that till her debt was paid, the money in her purse was not hers, and that to be truly generous, she must first be just. A month passed, and she took to Mrs. Wilmot nearly two dollars, which was all that remained of her pocket-money after paying Cecille. Mrs. Wilmot praised her for the effort she had made to do rightly, and Clara was almost happy. Another month went by.

Cecille came to give her morning lesson, and immediately after it, Clara and Grace appeared at the door of the room in which Mrs. Wilmot was seated.

"Come in, my children," she said very pleasantly, for she thought she knew their errand.

They walked up to her. Clara paid her debt even to the last penny.

"Now, mamma Wilmot," said she, when it had been received, "can you confide in me again?"

"Yes, Clara, fully, entirely, far more than before you had ever made it necessary that I should try you as I have done. Before that trial I *hoped* that you would persevere in doing right at the expense of some pain to yourself, *I am now sure* that you will. I always knew that you had right feelings, Clara, and I loved you for them; I now know that you have right principles, and honor you for them. Why do you smile, Grace?"

"Because it seems so strange, mamma, that you should talk of honoring a little girl like Clara."

"A little girl, Grace, who resists the temptation to do wrong and steadily perseveres in doing right, is as deserving of honor as any one, and I repeat that I honor Clara."

Tears stood in Clara's eyes, and her cheeks were flushed with emotion.

"Then, mamma Wilmot, you will not be ashamed to wear the locket?"

"No, my love, I shall be proud to wear it."

Clara took something from Grace, saying, "You must let me put it on, Grace."

"But you must first sew it to my bracelet," said Mrs. Wilmot, taking off that which Grace had woven and which she wore tied with a piece of riband.

"No," said Clara, "here is the bracelet as well as the locket," and she produced a very handsome hair bracelet, fastened to the locket with small gold rings, and clasped it with a most triumphant air on Mrs. Wilmot's wrist.

"You did not weave this, Grace."

"No, mamma, Cecille wove it, and I paid her for it just what the jeweller pays her, and then I got Mr. Brenner to put it on the locket, and yet I have some of the money left that I have saved up these two months."

"Why, have you been saving too?"

"Yes, mamma, Clara would not let me spend my money on her, because she said you told her she must practise self-denial, and it would not be self-denial if I gave her what she wanted."

"That was being a little extravagant in your understanding of what I meant, Clara; I only intended that you should be self-denying in the use of your own money."

"Was I wrong to refuse Grace?" asked Clara anxiously.

"No, my dear—not wrong. It was more than I demanded of you, but with your understanding of my words, it was quite right."

"But, mamma," said Grace, a little impatiently, "I was going to tell you that Clara and I both have some money left, and now that we see how much we can save, we thought—that is, we wanted to ask you whether we could not do some good with it."

Mrs. Wilmot smiled.

"Don't laugh at us, mamma: it is not very foolish—is it?"

"Foolish, my child!—it is very wise; and if I smiled, it was with pleasure that my children should have had such a thought. This is being truly generous. Older people than you sometimes make the mistake of calling those generous who value money so little that they throw it away without thought or care; but the truly generous value it much, because they know that it can buy clothing for the naked, and food for the starving. What they so value, they can neither keep from those to whom it is due, nor throw away on foolish trifles. So, you see, the truly generous are just and economical. But what *good* have you thought of doing first with your money?"

Clara now spoke: "We thought first we would try to get some good clothes for the Sandfords, that they may go to Sunday School."

The Sandfords were the three little girls whom Clara and Grace taught. I cannot repeat to you all that Mrs. Wilmot said in reply to this proposal, but I can tell you what she did. She went with the girls to make their purchases, showed them how to lay out their money most advantageously for their little pupils, cut out the garments for them when the cloth was brought home, and directed them how to make them. In this work Martha and Lucy, Kate and Emma assisted—so that their kindly and generous feelings were awakened, and they too began to save from their own selfish gratifications to give to those who were in want.

Mrs. Wilmot now takes the children with her when she goes to visit the sick and the poor around her, and in these visits they often find some object for their charity. Sometimes it is an old woman who needs a flannel wrapper—sometimes, a child who is walking on snow and ice without shoes. These they would once, perhaps, have passed without notice; but now they do, what we all should do—they look out for opportunities to do good.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RETURN.

In the commencement of this book, I told you that I was again at Hazel Grove. Again Harriet and I arrived in October, when the woods were bright with many colors. We were received with even more joy than on our first visit, and though some weeks have passed since I began to tell you of my young acquaintances here, they seem quite as unwilling to hear of my return home as I then told you they were.

And I have seen Cecille too, and her good grandmother. They are still at the widow Daly's cottage, but times are greatly changed with them since we parted. Cecille is no longer a teacher for money—though she is never so well pleased as when she can gratify her companions by imparting to them some of her own accomplishments. She assists too in all their works of charity, and seems to think the poor have double claims on her because she knows what their trials are. She will leave us ere long, for Mr. L'Estrange having regained his estate, is preparing his home in France for the return of his mother and daughter, and will come for them in the Spring. Cecille will, I am sure, part with us with pain; yet she will soon forget her pain in her grandmother's pleasure—and in the midst of our sorrow, we shall none of us, I hope, be too selfish to rejoice in her prosperity.

Mrs. Wilmot's children will all spend their holidays at Hazel Grove this year. I have promised to remain with them during that time, and Madame L'Estrange and Cecille are to be with us on Christmas day. We are anticipating great enjoyment on that day. I should like to be able to tell you how it passes; but that I must do in another book,—for if I keep this till then, it will be too late to bring you Aunt Kitty's Merry Christmas.

THE END.

ELLEN LESLIE:

OR,

THE REWARD OF SELF-CONTROL.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH-DAY PARTY.

"Who will be invited to your party?" asked Harriet of Anna Melville, the eldest daughter of my old friends, Col. and Mrs. Melville, who resided in the town of H., and to whom I had been making a visit of some weeks.

Anna was a lively good-tempered girl, who wanted only two days of being twelve years old. For the last week, she had scarcely been able to speak of any thing but the party which was to be given on her birth-day, and to which Harriet's question referred.

"Who?" said Anna in reply; "oh, all the girls I know. Let me see—there are Helen Lamar, and Lucy Liston, and Mary and Ellen Leslie—"

"Ellen Leslie," exclaimed Emma, a younger sister of Anna who stood near her listening, "Ellen Leslie—why, Anna, you surely will not ask her. You know she will get into a passion with somebody before the evening is over; or even if she should not, we shall all be so much afraid of offending her that there will be no fun."

"But, Emma, if we do not ask Ellen, Mary will not come, and you know none of us would enjoy ourselves half so much if Mary were not here."

"No, we should not; but at any rate I will take care not to bring out my handsome doll and my best teacups, for if Miss Ellen gets angry, she will not mind breaking them."

Having overheard this dialogue, I felt no little curiosity to see the two sisters who were so differently regarded by their young friends.

The two days passed away slowly enough to the expecting children; but they did pass, and the birth-day arrived. All was bustle and preparation at Col. Melville's. Anna superintended and directed and hurried every one, and was dressed herself an hour before the time appointed for her visitors. At length, just as she had become weary of watching for them, and was beginning to express her opinion that no one was coming, a group was seen approaching. Then came another and another, till twenty young girls, neatly dressed, and with smiling, happy faces, were collected. Among the latest arrivals were Mary and Ellen Leslie. I had seen them from the windows before they entered the house, and was much pleased with their appearance. They wore very simple white dresses, and their hair fell in natural ringlets over their shoulders, unconfined and without ornament of any kind. As they entered the parlor, all the girls went forward to welcome them; but it was easy to see that the gladness which all expressed was more for Mary than for Ellen—their greetings being made something in this way:

"Oh, Mary! I am so delighted to see you—and Ellen too!"

But for the conversation between Anna and Emma Melville which I had overheard, I should not have known how to account for this difference, for Ellen was not at all less pleasing in appearance than Mary. Indeed she would have impressed many persons more agreeably, for Mary's countenance, though very gentle, was very serious, while Ellen's was gay and animated.

All was pleasantness in the little party for about an hour, when the children were called to tea. I did not go to the table till they were seated. When I did, I saw that there was a cloud on Ellen Leslie's face, but what had caused it I could not discover. When tea was over, the various entertainments of the evening commenced. On one side of the parlor, around a table, was seated a group of girls playing what they called an historical game—that is, amusing themselves with cards containing questions and answers on historical subjects. In this game, the questions were held by one person, and the cards containing the answers were distributed equally among the rest of the players. As a question was asked, any girl who found among her cards an answer which seemed to her the correct one, read it. Sometimes two or three would begin to read together, and so long as they could bear to be laughed at without losing their tempers, those who made the greatest mistakes, perhaps contributed most to the merriment of the party. At this game about eight or ten girls were engaged. A few others amused themselves with dissected maps, and the rest gathered together in one corner of the room with Emma's cups and saucers, baby-house and doll.

From the brightening up of Ellen Leslie's countenance when the historical cards were produced, and her evident desire to make one in that game, I had felt quite sure that she was well acquainted with its subjects, and so it proved. For some time her answers were ready and correct, while her laugh was first and loudest at the blunders made by others. At length, the

questions seemed to relate to a portion of history on which Ellen was not so much at home, and once and again her answer was followed by a laugh. In the first laugh which she thus excited Ellen made a feeble effort to join, but it was very feeble. At the second, her face flushed, she looked gloomily down, and from that time, though she sat with the cards in her hands, she did not answer a question or take any part in the game. After a while some wonder was expressed that no answers could be found to several of the questions. All around the table carefully examined their cards and declared they did not have them, except Ellen—she remained silent, and held her cards without looking at them.

"Ellen, perhaps you have them," said Anna Melville.

"You can see," said Ellen, laying her cards down before Anna.

"Oh no!" said Anna quickly, "you look at them yourself."

"I do not suppose I should know the answers if I saw them," said Ellen sulkily; "and besides, I am tired playing," and she rose from the table. As she moved off to a distant part of the room and seated herself alone, I glanced at Mary and saw her eyes fixed on her sister with such an expression of sorrowing tenderness, that for her sake I determined to try whether I could not restore Ellen to a happier mood. I approached her with a book of prints, and seating myself near her, drew a stand towards us and invited her to look at them with me. She looked as if she would like to refuse, but ashamed probably to do this to one so much older than herself, she contented herself with remaining sulkily silent, scarcely glancing at first at the pictures as I turned the leaves and announced the different subjects. At length, however, some anecdote I told attracted her attention. She asked a question—she smiled—she laughed aloud. Again I turned my eyes upon Mary Leslie. She was looking at me with a countenance so full of thankfulness and lit up with so sweet a smile, that I no longer wondered at her young companions loving her so tenderly.

CHAPTER II.

THE SISTERS.

The next day an old gentleman, a Mr. Villars, dined at Mr. Melville's. Mr. Villars was a widower. His wife had been a sister of Mrs. Leslie, the mother of Mary and Ellen. She had been long dead, but having never married again, he had remained much attached to her family, and having had no children of his own, he had always taken a deep interest in Mary and Ellen, petting them quite as much and perhaps scolding them a little more than their father. He was a favorite with children generally, for he interested himself in their amusements and pursuits.

"And so, Miss Anna," said he, as he entered the parlor in which we were sitting after dinner, "you had a party last night. Pray, why was not I invited? Mary Leslie made me quite envious, I assure you, by telling me of the enjoyment you had."

"And what did Ellen say?" asked the talkative and thoughtless Emma Melville.

"Oh, Ellen! I never mind her reports, for if they are not agreeable, I always suppose something has happened to put her out of temper. Poor child! poor child!"

This exclamation was made with deep feeling, and we were all grave and silent till Mr. Villars, turning to me, said, "I must not let you, ma'am, who are a stranger to her, suppose that our little Ellen has no good in her. She is, I assure you, a very affectionate child, and though she is so ready to fancy herself neglected or ill treated, and so quick to resent it, she is very grateful for kindness, and you have quite won her heart by your efforts to amuse her last evening."

"I am pleased," I replied, "to have made so agreeable an impression, but I was repaid for my efforts by the interest she excited. I believe what you say, sir, that she is affectionate and grateful—indeed, that her feelings are as quick as her temper. Forgive me if I add, that it seems to me it must be in some degree the fault of those to whom her education has been confided, that, with such qualities, she is not more pleasing and amiable."

"You are right, ma'am, it is their fault. I have done my best to correct it, but all in vain. She has been spoiled from her very birth, for her mother's health had even then begun to fail, and she was quite unequal to the management of so spirited a child. Ellen was but four years old when that gentle mother died, Mary was seven—"

"Is it possible," said I, interrupting him in my surprise, "that there is so much difference in their ages?"

"Yes," he answered, "three years. Mary is now thirteen, though she does not look like it, and Ellen is only ten. Well, as I was about to tell you, Mary at seven was a sedate, quiet, thoughtful child, and Mrs. Leslie, when she became sensible that she could not live long, used to talk much to her of Ellen's claims on her kindness, and dependence upon her tenderness, when she should be gone from them. She taught her to pray morning and evening that God would make her gentle and kind to her little sister, as her mother had been to them both. Mary, I am sure, has never forgotten or omitted that prayer."

"Poor Mary!" said I, "these were very sad thoughts and heavy cares for one so young."

"So they were, ma'am, and so I once ventured to tell Mrs. Leslie. Never shall I forget her reply. 'Ah, brother!' said she—she had always called me brother from the time of my marriage with her sister—'ah, brother! a mother, and a mother near death, sees far more clearly the dangers of her children than any other can do. My gentle Mary has a strength of character you little dream of, and though never very gay, she will not long remain unreasonably sad; but my poor Ellen,—with a nature so affectionate that she cannot be happy unless she is loved, and a temper so passionate that she will often try the forbearance of her best friends almost beyond endurance,—how much suffering is before her! Do not blame me, if before I go from her, I strive to make Mary's love for her such as her mother's would have been—such as not even her faults shall be able to overcome. Mary's path through life will be smooth, she must support Ellen through her rough and thorny way.' I did not feel that all this was right," continued Mr. Villars, "for I think that every one should bear the consequences of their own faults; but I could not argue with a dying woman, and I comforted myself that all would come right,—that Mary would forget all this, and scold and cross her sister, just as other elder sisters do," tapping Anna Melville playfully on the head as he spoke, "or that Mr. Leslie would control her. But I was mistaken, it has never come right. Mary, I verily believe, has never crossed Ellen's wishes in her life; and if Mr. Leslie has ever attempted to do so, she has almost always stormed or coaxed him out of his design,—more frequently stormed, for she has not patience for coaxing."

"And how does she get what she wishes from you?" asked Col. Melville with a smile, for he knew that Mr. Villars was very indulgent to both the children.

"Why, the cunning jade," said Mr. Villars laughing, "I will tell you how. A long time ago I repeated to her Aesop's fable of the sun and the wind, and told her, Mary was the sun and she was the wind. Then, Uncle Villars, said she, whenever I want to make you do any thing, I will send Mary to you; and she has been true to her word,—she always sends Mary."

"And what was the fable, Mr. Villars?" asked Emma Melville.

"Why, that the sun and the wind had a great quarrel once about which was the strongest, and a traveller passing by while the quarrel was at its height, they agreed that it should be decided in favor of the one which should soonest get his cloak from him. So the wind rose in its might, and blew and blew upon the poor traveller: but all in vain; he only wrapped his cloak more closely round him. Then the sun came out and beamed right down upon the man brighter and brighter, and warmer and warmer: but not long; for the traveller was very soon glad to throw off his thick, heavy cloak. So the sun conquered, as kindness and gentleness, Miss Emma, always will, sooner than blustering and storming."

I saw little more of Mary and Ellen Leslie during this visit to H., and it was more than two years before I returned there again. When I did, I found that great changes had taken place in the situation of these young girls. Their father had been dead for more than a year. Mr. Leslie was a merchant, and was thought quite rich even by his most intimate friends; yet when he died, and his affairs were examined, it was found that he was poor—so poor, that, after his debts were paid, his children would have nothing. But Mr. Villars it was thought would provide for them. He did take them to his house for a few months, till Mary, whose health had become enfeebled by her close attention to her father during his long illness, grew well and strong again;—but then reports began to be whispered about that Mr. Villars had lost much of his property through Mr. Leslie—that he was in debt, and could no longer afford to live as he had done. Then it was said that he must give up his servants, that he must let or sell his house and go to board in some cheap country place. Mary and Ellen would not go with him—he would leave them in H., for he could only pay their board—they must do something for their own support, and that could best be done among their old friends. Accordingly when I came to H., I found Mr. Villars gone, his house occupied by another family, and Mary and Ellen boarding with a widow who lived in a very plain, small house, in one of the humblest streets of H. Mary, I was told, gave lessons in music to two or three pupils, and gratefully accepted any employment offered her, either of plain sewing, embroidery, or fancy work. At first, she had some day scholars, and she would probably have soon obtained a large school, for the children were attached to her and the parents pleased with her success as a teacher, but Ellen had undertaken to assist her, and her passionate temper so often evinced itself, that both parents and children were displeased, and the school was soon broken up.

"And what does Ellen do?" I asked.

"Assist her sister in the work when she can," replied Mrs. Melville, from whom I had heard these things. "But I fear," she added, "that she much more frequently hinders than assists her. Indeed, Mary would scarce have to contend with any difficulty but for Ellen, for many would be glad to have her in their families, could she be persuaded to leave that little termagant."

"Poor Ellen!" said I, "the bad name which she contracted in childhood cleaves to her, when perhaps she may be greatly changed."

"Not if we are to trust the report of Mrs. Maclean, with whom they board. She tells sad tales of Ellen's irritability and Mary's long-suffering. To be sure, we are likely to hear the worst of the case from her, for, though an upright woman, she is irritable herself and very positive, and I dare say she and Ellen have had many quarrels."

My first visit in H. was to these children, for children they still were, though thus thrown on the

world to provide for themselves, Mary being little more than fifteen and Ellen not yet thirteen. The room in which I found them was small, but Mr. Villars had seen it comfortably furnished before he left them, and it was neatly kept. Their clothing too was comfortable and neat, though very plain. But there was on Ellen's countenance an expression of sullen gloom, and on Mary's, of sweet, yet sad resignation, which was more distressing to me than even an appearance of want would have been, because it was a stronger evidence of unhappiness. Poverty cheerfully borne is but a slight evil in comparison with a repining temper. But I have learned, since that time, much more of Mary and Ellen than was then known to Mrs. Melville or any other person, and I will now tell their story from the time of their father's death, without interrupting the narrative to explain to you how I heard this or that particular.

CHAPTER III.

ORPHANS.

Mary, I have already said, had nursed her father through his long, tedious illness. She had seen him grow weaker and weaker, and she was therefore in some degree prepared to see him die. But with Ellen it was very different. Mary always tried to save her pain. She would not let her spend much time in the sick-room; and indeed, though Mr. Leslie was a very fond father, and was always glad to see Ellen, he never wished her to remain long,—for, if she thought him very ill, she would weep so passionately that it agitated him, and if she thought him better, she would be very noisy in her gladness. Then, if she attempted to do any thing for him, she would move in such a hurried manner, that it was awkwardly done, if she succeeded in doing it at all. All this proceeded from Ellen's never having learned in any way to control her feelings. It was love for her father which made Ellen weep or laugh, and caused her to move in haste when she was told to hand him any thing; but Mary loved her father quite as well as Ellen, and when she saw him suffering, tears would often stream down her cheeks, yet she would keep down every sound which could call his attention to her sorrows. If he was more comfortable, you might tell it as soon as you entered the room by the bright smile upon her face, yet she never disturbed his repose by loud talking and laughing, and though delighted when called on to serve him, she knew, that really to *serve* him, she must move very quietly. This was what is called self-control, and without it let me tell you, my young friends, that however kind your feelings may be, however good your intentions, you will never make yourselves either useful or agreeable to others. Poor Ellen! she had it not—she had never learned to control either her temper or her feelings, and you will see how sadly she suffered in consequence.

I have told you that Mary, from being much with her father, was in some degree prepared for his death, while to Ellen it was quite unexpected. I need not tell you that to both of them it was a very sad event,—the youngest of you can feel how very sorrowful it would be to part with the father who has played with and patted you, who has nursed you in sickness, and taken care of you in health, and been kind and loving to you always,—to part with him, not for a day, or a week, or a month, or a year,—but for as long as you live,—not to have him go where, though you cannot see him, you may hear from him and know that he is well and happy, and still cares for you, but to have him lie down in the grave, the still grave, from which no voice of love can come to you. But perhaps, if you were obliged to part with your father, you would have a tender mother left to sooth you and take care of you; but Mary and Ellen Leslie had not this comfort, and when they saw their father carried out in his coffin, they might have felt that, except their kind Uncle Villars, there was no one who would care very much if they were laid alongside of him. As you grow older you will discover that persons who grieve together, who sorrow for the same things, love each other far more dearly than those who are only glad together. I cannot very well explain to you why this is, but we all feel it,—and Mary and Ellen Leslie felt it, as they lay the night after the funeral folded in each other's arms, helpless, and but for one kind heart, friendless orphans.

Yet even then poor Ellen had a grief which was all her own. "Oh, Mary! you were never in a passion with poor papa, and said angry words to him and grieved him. Oh, dear Mary! do you think he remembers them now?"

Dear children who read this little book, hear me and forget not my words,—this is the bitterest grief of all, to feel that you have given pain to that kind heart which is gone from you, which never can come back to hear your repentance or forgive your injustice. Save yourself from such sorrow by kindness and gentleness to your friends, and obedience to your parents while they are with you.

Mr. Villars soon removed these children from their now sad home to his smaller and humbler, but more cheerful residence. Mr. Villars had never been engaged in any business. His property was small, and while his wealthier friend and brother-in-law, Mr. Leslie, had surrounded his family with elegancies and luxuries, he had been obliged to content himself with comforts. I say *obliged to content himself*, but I do not know that Mr. Villars ever desired more. Indeed, I should have thought him an unreasonable man if he had,—every thing around him was so neat, so perfectly comfortable, and all was kept in order so quietly by the very best old housekeeper in the country, who had lived with him ever since his wife's death, and who thoroughly understood his ways. It was no slight praise to good old Mrs. Merrill, his housekeeper, to say that she understood Mr. Villars' ways, for I assure you they were by no means so easy to understand as those of most

people. Mr. Villars had lived so long alone, with nobody's tastes to consult but his own, that he had acquired all the set habits which people generally suppose to belong only to an old bachelor. He was thought very whimsical, and certainly often did things which to the rest of the world seemed very odd; and though, when he gave his reasons, every one was compelled to acknowledge them to be very good, they were often such as would have been thought of by few but himself. Mrs. Merrill was a very kind woman, and received Mary and Ellen with great tenderness, but she too had her oddities as well as Mr. Villars. Like most persons who have had little to do with children, she was constantly afraid of their getting into some trouble or mischief, and she watched these girls, the youngest of whom was then twelve years old, with as much care as if they were only four or five. Even Mary felt this unusual degree of attention to be an unpleasant restraint, but to poor Ellen, who had all her life done just as she pleased, it was perfectly intolerable, and she could not restrain the expression of her impatience under it.

"Be very careful of the light, Miss Mary, and do not put it so near the curtains, my dear," said Mrs. Merrill, on the second evening that Mary and Ellen Leslie had passed in their new home, as she was giving them their night lamp, after they had said good-night to their uncle.

"I will be very careful, Mrs. Merrill," said Mary with a smile.

"And Miss Ellen, I am busy just now and cannot go with you to your room, but your sister will untie your clothes, I dare say, if you ask her kindly, and I will come by-and-by, and see that they are nicely folded and put away."

"I always fold my clothes myself," was the somewhat ungracious reply to the good woman's well-meant offer.

As the sisters entered their room Ellen shot the bolt of her door, exclaiming, "There, we are safe from that teasing Mrs. Merrill!"

"Oh, Ellen! she is very kind, and we must not forget, my dear sister, that there are not many in the world now, who take interest enough in us to care what we do." Ellen was softened and went tearfully to bed. Mary soon followed her, and they were just comfortably arranged when some one tried to enter, and finding the door bolted, tapped.

"Who *is* that?" exclaimed Ellen impatiently.

"It is only I, Miss Ellen," answered Mrs. Merrill, "I have come to put the light out and cover you up nicely."

"The light *is* out and we *are* covered," was the peevish reply which arose above Mary's "Thank you, Mrs. Merrill, we are in bed already."

"Oh, Ellen! how could you speak so angrily, and hurt the kind old woman's feelings." Ellen could not bear to hurt anybody's feelings, and the next moment she was out of bed, had unbolted the door, and was running barefooted through the hall, calling to Mrs. Merrill. Mrs. Merrill was half way down stairs, but she came back, hurried and alarmed, exclaiming breathlessly, "What is the matter, my dear, what is the matter?"

"Nothing, ma'am," said Ellen very respectfully and penitently, "except that Mary said that I had hurt your feelings, and I am very sorry for it. I only meant to say we were in bed already."

"Hurt my feelings—oh dear, no! poor child! and did she make you get up for that," putting her hand kindly on Ellen's head as she spoke—"oh no! you did not hurt my feelings—I never mind what children say."

Ellen flirted off and jumped into bed more angry than ever, that Mrs. Merrill should have thought Mary had made her get up to speak to her, and that she should think her of so little consequence as not to mind what she said.

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNRULY SPIRIT.

We cannot give an account of half the disputes between Mrs. Merrill and Ellen which were generally reported to Mr. Villars by both parties, until he was ready to go anywhere from his hitherto quiet home, in search of peace. And yet, when the difficulties in which he had become involved through Mr. Leslie began first to be perceived, and Mr. Villars to fear that he must leave his home, it seemed dearer to him than ever. Besides, he would say to himself, as he sat thinking over the threatened changes—What is to become of these poor children—and my old servants—and Mrs. Merrill—good Mrs. Merrill—who, I am sure, never expected to leave me, and is now too old to look out new friends? Distressed by such thoughts, it is no wonder if Mr. Villars looked sad, and sat silent for hours together, sometimes looking out of a window sometimes turning his eyes upon a book which he generally held in his hand, as an excuse for not talking; though it was easy to see that he was not reading,—or if he was, it must be the same page, over and over again, as he never turned a leaf. Mary had noticed all this, and it grieved her greatly, for except Ellen, there was no one now in the world whom she loved half so well as her Uncle Villars. She tried at

first to amuse him by talking to him; but finding that, though he always answered her kindly, he would at such times soon leave the parlor where they were seated, and go, either to his own room or to the library, she determined not again to disturb him when he seemed so thoughtful. But though Mary ceased to talk to her Uncle Villars, she could not cease to observe him and to wish that she knew the cause of his sadness. This cause she at last thought she had discovered in the differences of Ellen and Mrs. Merrill. Vainly did poor Mary try to accommodate these differences, her efforts generally ended in making both of the disputants displeased with her. It must not be thought that Mrs. Merrill was cross and ill-tempered. On the contrary, all her difficulties with Ellen arose from her desire to do what was kind and right by an orphan girl placed in her charge, for Mr. Villars before he brought his nieces home had said, "There will of course, Mrs. Merrill, be many things in which these girls will require the attention of a woman to their conduct and their comforts. In these things I know I may trust to your goodness,"—and Mrs. Merrill was determined his trust should not be disappointed.

Mary and Ellen had walked out together one afternoon, and when they returned, laid their bonnets carelessly upon the table in the parlor. There they remained, till Mrs. Merrill came in to see the table prepared for tea. "Miss Mary, Miss Ellen, why, here are your new crape bonnets. You should always put them away as soon as you come in; crape is very expensive, my dears, and very easily injured."

Mary rose and removed the bonnets from the table. Ellen remained seated with her head bent over a piece of paper, on which she seemed to be drawing.

"Miss Ellen," said Mrs. Merrill, "did you hear what I said?"

"Yes, Mrs. Merrill, I heard you."

"I will put both bonnets away, Mrs. Merrill," said Mary; "I always put Ellen's away for her."

"Well, my dear Miss Mary, that may be very kindly meant in you, but it would be far better that your sister should learn to do without you."

Ellen did not even look up—Mary moved towards the door, with the hope that if the bonnet was once out of sight all would be quiet, but Mrs. Merrill saw the movement, and irritated by Ellen's disregard of what she said, she exclaimed, "Stop, Miss Mary; I am sorry to find fault with you, who are generally so good, but I do not think it right in you to interfere, when I would have your sister learn to wait on herself. I am sure it is for her own good. I am sure it is not for my sake I take the trouble."

Mary looked earnestly at Ellen, but the head was perseveringly bent down, and except that her face had become quite red and her pencil moved very fast, any one might have supposed that she had not heard a word of what was passing. There stood Mary, with a bonnet in each hand, perfectly irresolute, afraid to speak to Ellen lest she should cause her to say something saucy—afraid to oppose Mrs. Merrill, who it was evident was now very determined. At length she ventured to say, "Ellen is busy drawing, Mrs. Merrill—"

Before she could add another word, Ellen, who scorned to offer any apology for her inattention to Mrs. Merrill's wishes, threw aside the paper and pencil, saying, "I am not busy at all—I was only making marks on the paper, Mary."

"I knew it—knew it," said Mrs. Merrill; "you were only making marks to show me that you did not care for me."

"Give me that bonnet, Miss Mary," taking Ellen's from her as she spoke, and laying it again on the table, on which in the mean time she had arranged every thing for tea. "There—let it lie there till Mr. Villars comes in. I will see if he thinks that a proper place for a young lady's bonnet."

Ellen smiled scornfully.

"Oh, Mrs. Merrill," said Mary, with tears in her eyes, "do not plague poor Uncle Villars about it."

"I assure you, Miss Mary Leslie, I am not the one to plague your Uncle Villars. Many a year I have lived with him, and a quiet home we have both had of it till now, and the same will he say, I will be bound!"

"Ellen, dear Ellen, I am sure you would not do any thing to worry our good, kind Uncle Villars; come, dear Ellen, and take your bonnet up stairs."

"Mary, I wish you would let me and my bonnet alone. I did not ask you to take it up."

"Well—but, Ellen, poor Uncle Villars looks so sad already. Do not be obstinate, dear Ellen."

"I am not going to say or do any thing to Uncle Villars, Mary, and I think it's very hard if I am to be blamed for every thing—even for his looking sad; but nobody ever finds fault with me that you do not take their part."

"Oh, Ellen"—but Ellen turned away, and Mary with a heavy heart walked off with her own bonnet as she saw her Uncle Villars entering. Now, any one who has read this scene will perceive that Mrs. Merrill, although she was right in the thing itself which she would have had Ellen do, was very wrong in her manner of enforcing it. The only right way to govern any one is by giving them confidence in your kindly feelings towards them—by love. Now, Ellen was a spoiled child, and could not have confidence in the kindly feelings of any one who thwarted her. Mr. Villars saw all

this, and therefore he had great patience with Ellen, and generally soothed her into some concession to Mrs. Merrill; very little would satisfy her kind spirit; and so the storm would for the time pass over. But these storms so frequently returned, that Mr. Villars felt, unless something could be done to arouse Ellen's own mind to a conviction of the evil of her temper and a determined effort to subdue it, she must always be unhappy herself, and the cause of unhappiness to others. As Mr. Villars became more interested in Ellen, as it was natural he should do from feeling that she was now wholly dependent on him, his anxiety on this subject increased, and he often found himself imagining different methods for correcting her faults.

One of Ellen's bad habits, and that which perhaps most materially interfered with Mrs. Merrill's comfort, was late sleeping, or rather lying in bed, for Ellen was in reality not asleep for an hour before Mary could induce her to rise,—but Ellen said if she was not asleep, neither was she wide awake. You may wonder that this practice should have interfered with Mrs. Merrill's comfort, as by keeping Ellen out of the way it would seem rather to promote her quiet; but Mrs. Merrill prided herself on her orderly housekeeping, and while she was too kind to let Ellen go without her breakfast, she was greatly annoyed at having to keep the table waiting for her. Mary would have taken some breakfast to her sister in their room, and so have obviated the difficulty; but this Mrs. Merrill would on no account permit, lest the carpet or the bedclothes should be slopped with tea or greased with butter. A few mornings after the scene with the bonnet, Mary having risen as usual and dressed herself, began her efforts to arouse Ellen.

"Ellen—wake, Ellen—I hear Uncle Villars moving about in his room."

Ellen, without speaking or opening her eyes, turned over and covered herself up more closely.

Mary spoke again, "Ellen—Uncle Villars has gone down stairs—he will ring the bell for breakfast presently."

Ellen did not stir.

Mary touched her,—put her arm around her and tried to raise her; Ellen flounced off to the other side of the bed, exclaiming, "Mary, let me alone."

"Oh, Ellen, jump up—there's the breakfast bell—you know nothing puts Mrs. Merrill so much out of sorts as our being too late to breakfast with Uncle Villars."

"I do not care for Mrs. Merrill's being out of sorts—cross old woman; she might just as well let me have my breakfast up here as not. I will lie half an hour longer just to spite her."

"But, Ellen, Uncle Villars—"

"Uncle Villars does not care a pin about my getting up, if he only has you to sit by him; you know that as well as I do."

"Well, I care, Ellen—"

"Oh do, Mary—go, and eat your breakfast, and let me alone."

Another ring of the breakfast bell hurried Mary off, exclaiming, "Make haste, Ellen, and you may get down yet before we are done—I will eat very slowly."

The affectionate kiss with which Mr. Villars saluted Mary was followed by the question, "Where is Ellen?"

"Miss Ellen is not awake yet, I suppose, Miss Mary."

Mary at that moment heard Ellen's step on the floor above, and answered quickly, "Oh, yes, Mrs. Merrill, she is awake and up."

"Well," said Mr. Villars with a good-humored smile, "if she is up, we may hope she will soon be down."

Mary did hope so, and she seated herself cheerfully by her Uncle Villars, while Mrs. Merrill poured out coffee. The nice hot cakes and Uncle Villars' pleasant chat made Mary quite forget her promise to eat slowly, until just as she was concluding her breakfast, Mrs. Merrill, approaching the door, said, "Your sister stays so long, Miss Mary, I will go and see if she wants any thing."

"I will go, Mrs. Merrill," said Mary, starting up; but it was too late, and she seated herself again, exclaiming, "Oh! I am so sorry."

"Poor child," said Mr. Villars, "you look as much frightened as if you were afraid that Ellen would be beaten. Mrs. Merrill may scold a little, but cheer up, I am sure she would not hurt Ellen for the world."

"Oh no, Uncle Villars, I know she would not; it was not that which made me feel sorry."

"What was it then, child?"

Mary looked down and colored as she said, "Ellen is not used to being crossed at all, you know, Uncle Villars, and Mrs. Merrill is not used to Ellen's ways, and so they do not understand each other; and—and—I am sure when they come to you, Uncle Villars, it must worry you who always lived so quietly before we came."

Mr. Villars did not see exactly what Mary was coming to, but he answered, "It has disturbed me, my dear, very much, I acknowledge, but more for Ellen's sake than my own."

"I have seen, Uncle Villars, how very badly you felt about it; and I have been thinking—perhaps—you had better send us away."

Mary gave this advice slowly and hesitatingly, and as she looked up upon concluding it, her eyes were full of tears; for Mary loved her Uncle Villars dearly, and she was old enough to know something of her own and Ellen's situation, and to feel how sad it would be for them to be sent away from the house of their best friend to live among strangers. Mr. Villars saw the tears in Mary's eyes, and he understood all her tender and generous thoughts, and drawing her to him he laid her head on his shoulder, and putting her hair aside, kissed her forehead, calling her, "Dear child—dear child." He was silent a moment, and any one who had looked closely at him would have seen that his own eyes glistened; then he added, "It is one of my chief sorrows, Mary, that we shall be obliged to part; but not for the reason you think—not on poor Ellen's account—though I sometimes hope it may be the cause of good to her."

At this moment the parlor door was thrown open, and Ellen entered hastily. She was followed by Mrs. Merrill, neither of them wearing very placid faces. Mr. Villars, not desiring to hear the complaints on either side, rose from table, and still holding Mary's hand, said, as he gave Ellen his morning kiss, "Eat your breakfast, my dear, and then come to the library; you will find Mary there, and I have something to tell you."

CHAPTER V.

A SURPRISE.

When Ellen came into the library, she was surprised to see how very grave her uncle Villars looked. She turned her eyes on Mary, and saw that she had been weeping. Ellen would have asked what was the matter, but she was afraid that it was something connected with her and her wrong doings, and she thought it the safest course to be silent. Mr. Villars did not leave her long in doubt. Drawing her to him, he said, "I see, Ellen, that you are anxious to know what has distressed Mary so much; it is the thought of parting with her old uncle—for, Ellen, my dear child, I shall have to part with you both."

Before we attempt to describe Ellen's emotions, we must, to make them understood, tell our readers that Mrs. Merrill had more than once, when very much provoked by Ellen, hinted her conviction that Mr. Villars would not long be able to endure such an unquiet house—that he would certainly be obliged to send his nieces out to board, and that she doubted not people might be found able to curb the most unruly spirit. On such occasions, Ellen, being angry too, had very valorously declared, that she was ready and willing to go anywhere to get rid of Mrs. Merrill. But we regard things very differently when they are only talked about or threatened, and when they actually come. Ellen felt now that she was neither ready nor willing to go. This, however, she was too proud to acknowledge. Tears rushed to her eyes, but she kept them back, and would have answered boldly, perhaps saucily; but as she raised her head, she again saw Mary's sad face, and the thought that her sister was to suffer for her fault, subdued her spirit. Bursting into tears, she wept for a minute without speaking. Mr. Villars passed his hand kindly over her head, saying gently, "Poor little girl!—poor little girl!" Encouraged by this kindness, she at length exclaimed, though sobs still impeded her utterance, "Please, Uncle Villars, let Mary stay—don't send Mary away—I'm sure she is good—I can't help my bad temper—I try to do right—and if Mrs. Merrill would only let me alone, I am sure I would not trouble her; but send me away—I don't mind going—I shall be very glad to go,"—here Ellen's pride and anger were again conquering her better feelings,—"yes, I shall be very glad to go—I don't want to stay anywhere with people that don't like me"—again Ellen raised her head stiffly, and again she saw Mary, whose tears were now streaming—"but oh! Uncle Villars, let Mary stay—I know you love Mary, and she will always be good."

Mr. Villars had not interrupted Ellen. At first he was too much surprised at the feelings she expressed to do so, and then he continued silent, because he desired to hear all she had to say. When she stopped speaking, he said, "Ellen, do you suppose that I would send either of you away if I could help it? You are my children, now," and putting out his hand for Mary, he clasped both the weeping girls in his arms,—"both my children, and I love you both; but some of my property, as well as all your father's, has gone to pay his debts. They were honest debts, my dear children, and the people to whom they were owed wanted their money, and we must not regret that they have got it; but we are poor now, and we cannot continue to live as we have done. I must soon leave you to go on a journey to a distant place, with the hope of recovering some money which is due to your father's estate. I know not how long I may be gone; and even when I return I may not be able to come back to my old home, but may be obliged to look out some cheap country place where I can board for little money. To this place I shall not take you with me. I have good reasons for not doing so. Listen to me, and I will try to make you understand these reasons. I am now an old man, and it is very probable that I may not live many years. I once hoped that when I died I should be able to leave you sufficient property to support you in the way in which you have been accustomed to live; but this, I now fear, cannot be. You will be obliged to do something by which

you may make money to assist in supporting yourselves. Many women, you know, support themselves entirely by their own work. Do you remember the young girl who came to make your mourning? She not only supplies her own wants, but those of an infirm mother, by her work."

"And must we go and hire ourselves out to people to sew for them as she does?" asked Ellen, with a heightened color and a curling lip.

"No, my dear Ellen, you could not do that, even if I wished it. Miss Fenner has been taught to make dresses,—she learned it as a trade, just as a shoemaker learns to make shoes or a carpenter to build houses. You have never learned it, and I fear nobody would hire you."

Ellen colored now from shame as much as she had just done from pride.

"But," Mr. Villars proceeded, "there are some things you can do. You can embroider and paint, and do many fancy works for which the rich are ready to pay money. Mary understands music well. She may give lessons in music, and you can both of you teach a few small children. In this way, that is, by doing whatever you can, you may make enough to clothe yourselves. This is all I shall expect you to do at present,—I will pay all your other expenses; and also I will continue to pay for your French, Italian, and music lessons, till you have become so perfectly acquainted with them as to be able to teach them yourselves. You will then be always able to support yourselves respectably, even when you have no Uncle Villars to help you."

I cannot attempt to describe to you the feelings with which Mary and Ellen had listened to their uncle. They scarcely understood him, and what they did understand seemed like a strange dream. That they, who had always been waited on and surrounded with every luxury, should be obliged to work for money to buy their clothes—just like those whom they had been accustomed to call the poor—it seemed impossible; and they looked at Mr. Villars steadily, with the hope that they should discover something like a smile—something which would make them believe that it was a jest, or, as Ellen said to herself, "just done to frighten me." But on Uncle Villars' face there was no smile—all was graver, sadder than usual. He read their thoughts, and, as if to assure them of the truth of what he had said, told them to put on their bonnets and he would show them their future home. They obeyed him, and he took them to that small plain house in which I found them living, and introduced them to Mrs. Maclean as her future lodgers.

The next day Mr. Villars called at Colonel Melville's, and having related to him and Mrs. Melville his arrangements for Mary and Ellen, asked what they thought of them. They both exclaimed together, "They will never do—they will never do!"

"Why," proceeded Colonel Melville, "here are two children, Villars—two mere children—the eldest is only fifteen, I believe;" he paused, and Mr. Villars nodded. "Well, these children, hardly out of the nursery, you are going to—"

Mr. Villars interrupted him somewhat impatiently, "Going to place them in a comfortable room, with a kind and honest woman—going to demand of them that they shall do just as much as they can to help themselves, and no more; for all which they cannot do without injury to their health, I will. My children shall not want—at least while I live," and the old man's voice trembled. "From you, my friends, I ask that while I am absent you will watch over them. Do not let them want any thing necessary for comfort. I have told them to come to you, Mrs. Melville, for advice in their outlay of money. I would wish their wardrobe to be suited to their circumstances—plain, but neat, respectable, and comfortable. If it be necessary at any time, Melville, advance money for them, and I will repay you."

"Mr. Villars," said Mrs. Melville, earnestly, "I will do all you wish, if you persist in this plan, but I pray you think better of it. I do not doubt that Mrs. Brown would take Mary into her school as a sub-governess, and her services in this capacity would pay for Ellen's board and tuition, till she could do something for herself."

"My dear Mrs. Melville, I have not told you all the reasons which make me prefer my plan to yours—fair as yours seems. Poor Ellen's ungoverned temper must be subdued; but before Mrs. Brown could reduce her into a proper behaved boarding-school Miss, she must inflict and Ellen endure a course of discipline which would break Mary's heart to witness. Now I would give Ellen a discipline which she cannot escape from—which she will feel it is vain to fret against—which will be steady and unyielding, but never cruel and tyrannical,—the discipline which was God's own appointment for man—labor and privation. Do you think me right now?" he asked.

"I think that you may be. I hope that you are," said Mrs. Melville.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE BEE.

In a fortnight Mary and Ellen had taken possession of their neat plain room at Mrs. Maclean's, and Mr. Villars had set out on his journey to some place in Carolina. It was autumn, but the weather had not yet become at all cold. Mrs. Maclean was a lover of flowers, and the little courtyard before her house was really gay with its golden marigolds, its pink and white artemisias, and

its purple dahlias. We have said that Mrs. Maclean was a widow. She had no children of her own, and it was with real pleasure that she prepared for the reception of these young girls. Mr. Villars had sent over the furniture for their room, and she had begged that they would come over themselves and direct its arrangement. And how patiently did she obey their directions! Now the bedstead was put behind the door, because Mary thought that the right place for it; and now wheeled into the corner near the fireplace, because Ellen thought it would look best there. The looking-glass was hung first in one pier and then in the other, and then moved back again to the first. In short, every piece of furniture made a journey around the room before it found an abiding place, and yet Mrs. Maclean showed no weariness or impatience,—a fact on which Ellen dilated with great emphasis to her uncle in Mrs. Merrill's presence—declaring that "Mrs. Maclean was so good-natured, she was sure she should love her dearly."

When Mr. Villars took the sisters to their home on the evening before he left H., Ellen carried him up to their room—explained to him all the advantages of its present arrangement—and especially challenged his admiration for the mantelpiece, on which Mrs. Maclean had placed two china mugs filled with her brightest flowers. More pleasant than all to Mr. Villars, was her satisfaction. While his children smiled so cheerfully and appeared so animated, he felt that there was little to regret in their change of circumstances. It was noon the next day before Mr. Villars was at leisure to make his farewell visit at Mrs. Maclean's. As soon as he came within view of the parlor windows, he saw Ellen standing at one of them, looking out. She saw him too, and running out opened the little gate for him.

"Oh, Uncle Villars, I thought you were never coming, I have been looking for you so long."

"That was very unprofitable labor, Ellen, for it could not bring me here any sooner. Where is Mary?"

"Up stairs in our room—come softly, Uncle Villars," here Ellen lowered her voice to a whisper, "come softly, and I do believe you may get close up to her without her knowing it—she is so busy sewing."

Ellen tripped lightly on herself, and Mr. Villars with a smile followed with as quiet a step as possible. They ascended the staircase, the door was opened without the least noise, and Ellen, motioning to her uncle to stand still, stole on towards her sister. Mary sat near the window, but though her face was towards it, she was not looking out. Her head was bent down over a piece of embroidery, and her fingers were moving quickly while she sang in a low suppressed voice to a cheerful tune an old song, the words of which ran thus—

1.

I will not be a butterfly,
To sport beneath the summer sky,
Idly o'er ev'ry flower to roam,
And droop when winter storms have come.

2.

I will not be an ant, to soil
Myself with low, debasing toil,
To crawl on earth—to yon bright heaven
No wing upraised, no effort given.

3.

But I will be a bee, to sup
Pure honey from each flow'ry cup;
Busy and pleased around I'll fly,
And treasure win from earth and sky

As she finished her song, Ellen, who now stood close beside her, though unperceived, took up the strain and warbled,

Busy and pleased around I'll fly,
And treasure win from earth and sky.

"Ah truant!" said Mary, with a smile, "you will not win much treasure, I am afraid. See how much I have done while you have been looking out for Uncle Villars, and all your looking has not brought him."

"No—but if I could only persuade you to take your eyes from your work and just give one glance over your shoulder, he would be here I know; try it, Mary."

"No, butterfly, I mean to be a bee, and you shall not tempt me to lose time."

"There, Miss Bee, is that losing time?" asked Ellen, as, putting a hand on each side of Mary's head, she turned it suddenly round to where Mr. Villars stood, amused by the scene.

"Why, Uncle Villars!" exclaimed Mary, dropping her work in her surprise and pleasure, and hastening to meet him, "how long have you been there?"

"Long enough to hear most of your song, Mary. But what pretty work is this?" asked Mr. Villars, as he picked it up and handed it to her.

"A cape which Mrs. Melville sent me this morning to embroider for her; and see, she has sent Ellen some cambric handkerchiefs to hem."

"And how much have you done to them, Ellen?"

"I have done half a side to one of them."

Mr. Villars shook his head, and Ellen coloring, said, "Well, Uncle Villars, I do hate so to hem handkerchiefs; it is all the same thing over and over again. Now there is some pleasure in embroidering."

"But my little girl must learn to take pleasure in winning treasure," said Mr. Villars, pleasantly.

"I should like very well to have the treasure, Uncle Villars, if you mean money, but I do not see much pleasure in winning it."

"But I do not mean money only, Ellen, that is the treasure of earth; but you remember the bee won that of the sky too, and I would have you, my dear child, win the best of all treasures, a disciplined, well-regulated mind and heart; and the surest way to do this, is by steady perseverance in what you know to be right, however disagreeable it may be to you; and to encourage you, let me tell you that the things you like least will become pleasant to you as soon as you have made up your mind to do them, because they are right."

This was Mr. Villars' parting lesson to Ellen, for it was soon time for him to be on board the steamboat which was to take him to New York, on his way south. He left them, with many charges that they should write to him at least once a fortnight; and that they should apply, if any difficulty occurred, to Colonel and Mrs. Melville for advice, and, if necessary, for assistance.

CHAPTER VII.

A HOLIDAY.

"Poor things," said Mrs. Maclean the next morning at the breakfast table, when she saw Ellen's eyes fill with tears at some mention of her Uncle Villars, "Poor things! it is no wonder you feel bad to part with such a good friend; but you must cheer up, he will soon be back again; and now I will tell you what—instead of setting down to mope in your room to-day we will just make a holiday of it. I will put my ironing off for once, and we will borrow Deacon Foster's horse and shay—the shay will carry us all three easy enough—and I will drive you out to my brother-in-law's farm. Were you ever there?"

"No—never."

"Well—I can tell you there ain't many such farms as Tom Maclean's, and you'll get some of the finest peaches there that you've seen this year. So now I'll go for the horse and shay, and you can put these cups and saucers in the cupboard for me, and get your bonnets on by the time I come for you."

Ellen's face brightened with the anticipated delights of the day—a ride of three miles, and then the privilege of sauntering at will through gardens and orchards, of a sunny day in October—who can wonder at her enjoyment of the thought? Even Mary felt that she might take a holiday "for once," as Mrs. Maclean said, without being a butterfly. So the cups were soon put away, and the bonnets tied on, and soon came Deacon Foster's horse and shay, and Mrs. Maclean driving. Mary and Ellen jumped in, and found, as Mrs. Maclean had told them there would be, plenty of room; and Mrs. Maclean chattered to the horse, and away they went—not very fast, yet fast enough to get over the three miles in much less time than Mary and Ellen wished. And yet they could scarcely be sorry when they reached the low, but large stone farmhouse, with its field of clover on one side, in which three or four cows were grazing, and its orchard on the other, where among pear and apple trees they could catch glimpses of the red and yellow peaches which Mrs. Maclean had praised so highly. And Mrs. Tom Maclean, and Susy and Martha Maclean, came to welcome them with such pleasant looks and words, that nothing seemed wanting to their gratification. All the morning they walked about with Susy and Martha for their guides—had fruit from the orchard, milk from the dairy, and more flowers from the garden than they could carry home. When called in to dinner they found Mr. Maclean there. He too received them very kindly, and talked of their Uncle Villars, regretting that he had met with any troubles, as he heard he had, and that he should have been obliged to leave his own pleasant home.

"Mrs. Merrill seems almost broken down about it," continued Mr. Maclean; "and she told me that you was agoing to keep a school for young children: now I'm a thinking of sending our Susy and Martha to you for a while. A little more schooling won't do 'em any harm, and they can go in with the market-cart every morning, and come back home in it when market is over. You can help them, I dare say, and then what they pay will help you—and that's what I call right."

Mary thanked Mr. Maclean, and said she would do her best to "help" his daughters, who smiled

at each other, and looked much pleased with the arrangement.

"Well now," said Mr. Maclean, "I should like to know what you're going to charge?"

To this Mary could only answer, whatever he thought right.

"That won't do—that won't do," said Mr. Maclean; "you sell the schooling, and I buy it: it is the one that sells that always ought to fix the price."

"Tom, how you talk," said his wife; "you might as well tell a baby about fixing prices, I dare say. Don't you know what you've paid before for schooling?"

"Yes, I paid a dollar a month apiece; but that wouldn't be fair now—for then they went to a man, and only learnt books; but I guess now they'll find out how to be handy with the needle too, and that's worth as much as book learning to a woman—so I think double the old price would be fair now. I'll tell you what, miss," he added, turning to Mary, "to encourage you, I'll make it a dollar a week for the two, and I'll send it in to you every Saturday; how will that do?"

Mary thought it would do very well. Knowing nothing of the labor of teaching, and as little of the value of money, she thought a dollar a week a great sum to be given her. It was really a generous offer in Mr. Maclean, who, being uneducated himself, could not estimate very truly the value of her services in educating his daughters, and who knew, besides, that he could have them taught at some common day-schools for less.

The happiest day must have an end, and the western sky was still bright with the sun's last beams, when Mary and Ellen alighted at their own door, leaving Mrs. Maclean to drive home the borrowed chaise.

The next morning Mary awoke very early—much earlier than usual, and try as much as she would, she could not sleep again. I have told you that even in her early childhood Mary had been thoughtful, but now you must remember she was over fifteen years old, and had already experienced such changes as might have made a person of much gayer temper grave. But not even these changes had tended to sadden Mary so much as Ellen's waywardness had done. The charge which she had received from her dying mother Mary never had forgotten, and it had been recently and forcibly repeated by her father. Though Mr. Leslie did not know himself the extent of those losses through which his children had been left so very destitute, he knew enough to make him suffer much anxiety about them in his last illness. Especially had he feared for Ellen,—so young, so thoughtless, and so arrogant in temper. To Mary, who was ever at his side, and who showed so much of a woman's care and thoughtfulness that he often forgot she was but a child, these anxious feelings were expressed; and again did she promise to her father, as under like circumstances she had done to her mother, that she would never part from Ellen—that she would love her—and bear with her—take care of her, and if it were necessary, work for her support, even as her mother would have done had she lived. And faithfully did Mary fulfil her promise of loving Ellen and bearing with her, and pleasant did she feel it would be to take care of her, and even to labor for her. And Ellen loved her sister Mary too, and for her sake would have done almost any thing except control her temper, or restrain the expression of any angry or dissatisfied feeling. But it was just this temper and these feelings which gave Mary most pain, and were likely to make her task most difficult. In all which these sisters had to do, they must depend greatly on the kindness and good-will of others. Mary knew this, and she knew too that kindness and good-will were not to be gained by a display of passionate, wilful tempers. Especially did Mary dread any thing of this kind in the school they were about to begin, and her morning thoughts—the thoughts which would not let her sleep again when once she had awoke—were all of how she might most gently, and with the least danger of displeasing Ellen, impress upon her how much patience and self-control would be needed in teaching a set of rude, ignorant children. Before she had come to any decision on this important point, Ellen awoke, and with more animation than she usually evinced at such an early hour, exclaimed, "Why, Mary, not up yet—and our school to begin to-day!"

"But not for three hours yet, Ellen—it is only six o'clock."

"But I thought you were always up at half-past five."

"So I am; but I have been thinking so much about this school this morning that I have forgotten every thing else."

"What about it, Mary—about what you should teach?"

"No, Ellen—not just that; but I have been thinking how unpleasant and difficult it will be."

"Do you think so? I think I shall like it."

"So should I, Ellen, if I were sure that the children would all be smart, and pleasant tempered; but it must be very hard to teach dull children; and if they are obstinate and ill-tempered we shall be so apt to become impatient with them, and then, you know, all comfort will be at an end."

"But I don't see why you should think they will be dull; I am sure Susy and Martha Maclean seemed to be very pleasant children."

"So they did, but there are four other children, you know, whom Mrs. Maclean has engaged for us, and of whom we know nothing."

"Well, I dare say they are clever children. For my part I don't think children are ever ill-tempered unless people are cross to them, and if you are afraid that I shall be cross to *your* scholars, Mary —"

Mary interrupted Ellen's hasty speech, saying in a gentle tone, "I am afraid, dear Ellen, that *our* scholars will often tire us and try our patience very much; but Uncle Villars says that whatever we do, we should do cheerfully, so I will not talk of my fears any more."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCHOOL.

A week passed away, and nothing occurred in the little school to make Mary think again of her fears. Ellen seemed to like being a teacher; and if she laughed and talked and played with her pupils a little more than was quite consistent with her new dignity, they liked her all the better for it, and learned, from a wish to please her, more than they would perhaps have done if more constrained. As for Mary, Mrs. Maclean said, "It was just a wonder to see how that young bit of a thing, that was nothing but a child herself, would sit sewing so steady like, and never seem to be thinking of any thing but her work; and yet if any of the young ones got in a snarl, and Miss Ellen's voice only sounded quick like, she was up in a minute, and helped them so quietly along that they hardly knowed that she was a helping till they got through."

Ellen had even exerted herself to rise early, that she might be ready for her scholars; but the second Monday morning after the commencement of her labors she seemed to find this an unusually difficult task, and when Mary, who had been some time below stairs, came back to tell her that it was eight o'clock and breakfast was ready, and unless she dressed herself quickly the children would be there before their room was in order, she exclaimed, "Those children! I am sure I wish I had never seen them or heard of them. It is bad enough to have to teach the stupid things, without being obliged to get up at daybreak for them."

"Daybreak, Ellen!" said Mary, moving the window-curtain and letting in a stream of sunshine.

"Well, I don't care what time it is, Mary, it is earlier than I choose to get up, and earlier than I would get up, if it was not for them; and there would be some comfort in it if one thought they would ever learn any thing: but for such a stupid set!"

"Stupid, Ellen!—why Mrs. Maclean and I have just been saying what bright intelligent children they were."

"Well," said Ellen, who had now talked herself into a really angry mood, "I suppose they do not learn because they have such a stupid teacher in me. I dare say if you will hear their lessons, they will do better."

"No, Ellen, I think they do learn—learn more with you than they would do with a grave, quiet person like me."

"I do think, Mary, you are the most contradictory person I ever saw in my life. When I hoped the children might be clever, you were sure they would be stupid; and now that I think them stupid, you have found out that they are wonderfully intelligent."

Mary finding that whatever she said tended only to increase Ellen's displeasure, did not remind her that the fears she had expressed had been quite as much of the impatience of the teacher as of the stupidity of the scholars.

Mrs. Maclean's call to breakfast on this morning was quickly and gladly obeyed by Mary, for she thought Ellen's irritation would subside sooner if she was alone. At any rate, thought Mary, when Ellen comes to say her prayers, her ill-humor will pass away. With this hope she went to the breakfast table, and when Ellen followed, received her so cheerfully, that her frowns soon began to wear away and the tones of her voice to grow more pleasant. They had not yet risen from the table when Anna Melville rushed in, sparkling with joyous expectation.

"Mary and Ellen, papa is going to carry us to see the caravan of animals at N., and if you were not going to have school to-day, he would carry you with us. Must you have school? Can't you manage so as to go?"

Mary was delighted at the prospect of such a pleasure for Ellen, and she answered quickly, "We cannot both go, Anna—but Ellen can."

"I am sure, Mary, I don't see how I can go any more than you. Any one would think, to hear you, that I did nothing at all in the school."

"You know, Ellen, that I cannot mean that, for you do a great deal more than I, but I can take your place and give you a holiday for one day."

"Yes, and have Uncle Villars think when he comes back again that I have done nothing but amuse myself while you were at work. I thank you, Anna—but I cannot go to see caravans. I must stay and keep school."

Anna stood irresolute.

"Mary, cannot you go?" said she at last.

"Thank you, Anna," said Mary, "but I should not enjoy it unless Ellen could go too."

"Mary, I beg you will not stay at home on my account."

Anna saw that neither of the sisters was going, and she bade them good morning, and left the house with a much more serious face and more sedate step than that with which she entered it, for ill-humor has the property of making all unhappy who come within its reach. As Anna opened the door, Mr. Maclean's market-cart drove up with Susy and Martha. The children stood for a moment, after leaving the cart, to look at her, and before she was out of hearing Ellen was calling from the house, "Susy, Martha, if you stand all day staring there I might as well have pleased myself by going with Anna Melville, as have stayed at home to teach you."

"Did you want to go, Miss Ellen?"

"That is of no consequence," said Ellen, "for if I wanted to go ever so much I could not."

"Oh yes—but you could," said the kind-hearted girls; "now do go, and we'll get our lessons just the same, and say them all to you to-morrow."

"That may suit you just as well, but your father would hardly be willing to pay his money if you were left to get your lessons by yourselves."

"Oh, I'm sure my papa wouldn't mind about it."

Ellen impatiently pushed the child nearest to her into the room, saying, "I do wish you would go to your lessons, and hush talking about what does not concern you!"

It will readily be believed that Mary had to help Ellen and the children through many a "snarl," to borrow Mrs. Maclean's significant, though not very elegant expression, on this day. But the evil did not stop there. Three of the girls were sent home weeping and indignant, to complain that Ellen Leslie had called them by some unkind or disgraceful epithet. These girls brought back the next morning messages from their parents, intimating that they were sent to school to Mary Leslie, and that it was hoped she would teach them herself. Poor Mary! she scarce knew how to meet this difficulty. To comply with the request would grievously wound and displease Ellen, who had really, till this unlucky day, given no just cause of complaint; not to comply with it would as certainly displease several of those on whose support her school depended. But better lose their support—better lose any thing, Mary said to herself, than create unkind feelings between Ellen and myself. So she tried to pacify the children and satisfy the parents without making any change in the arrangements of the school.—Perhaps, had Ellen seconded her efforts, she would have succeeded, but Ellen could not forget the mortification she had received from this affair, and scarce a day passed that she did not by some petulant word or action increase the dissatisfaction of her pupils or their parents, till one by one they were withdrawn. With them went the most certain profits of the sisters; yet it was with real satisfaction that Mary saw the door close upon the last scholar who left them, for she hoped now to see Ellen again cheerful and pleased as when they first came to Mrs. Maclean's. She turned smilingly towards her from the window at which she was standing, to express her satisfaction, and was surprised to find her weeping bitterly.

"Ellen, my own dear little sister, what is the matter? Surely you are not sorry that those children are gone who have plagued you so."

"No, Mary, I am not sorry they are gone, but I am sorry that I made them go. I know they all hate me, Mary, and their fathers and mothers hate me."

"Ellen—my dear Ellen—people don't *hate* each other for such little things."

"Oh yes, Mary—I heard the children say they hated me. Nobody will ever love me, and I can't help it—I am sure I can't help it; for I try to be good like you—but I can't, Mary—I can't. I wish I was dead, and buried with poor papa and mamma."

"Ellen—my dear Ellen! this is very wicked and very cruel, Ellen. You know that I love you, Ellen—that I love you dearly—better than I love any thing else in the world, and yet you want to die and leave me here by myself: what would I do without my own little sister!" Mary's voice became choked, and she too sobbed aloud. Ellen felt then that she had indeed been wicked and cruel to desire any thing which might grieve this loving sister. From this time she did try, and try successfully, to control her temper towards Mary herself, rarely being betrayed into any petulance towards her; or, if she were, endeavoring the next moment to atone for it, by double tenderness of manner and speech. But, impressed with the conviction that she was disliked by all others, she became daily more and more irritable towards them, more and more careless and defying in her manner, till she created the very dislike she had at first only fancied. Naturally affectionate, Ellen could not but suffer under a consciousness of this dislike, and hence the gloomy dissatisfaction which I noticed in her countenance on my first visit to Mary and herself after my return to H—.

CHAPTER IX.

GREAT TRIALS.

Mr. Villars had now been gone six months, and the business which had taken him south, and which he had not supposed would detain him half so long, was not yet completed. Colonel Melville heard from him frequently, for to him he expressed all his wishes respecting his children, as he always called Mary and Ellen. Soon after the school was given up, he wrote to ask that Colonel Melville would let him know all he could learn about it, as Mary's account of her reasons for discontinuing her teaching was so confused and imperfect, that he was afraid there was something which she had not liked to tell. Before Colonel Melville had found time to reply to this letter, he received another from Mr. Villars to say that he had already learned all which he had requested him to ascertain, from Ellen, who had of her own accord written a full statement of the whole business, for fear, as she wrote, that he might blame Mary if he did not know all. "Poor child," Mr. Villars wrote to his friend, "her letter is a very sad one. Few things can be more sad than to see childhood, the brightest and most joyous period, the holiday of our lives, made miserable by evil passions. And yet, with all its sadness, Ellen's letter gave me pleasure, for it shows that she is beginning to feel the influence of that discipline from which, you know, I hope so much for her. She is beginning to learn the secrets of her own heart—to see that from the evil there, arises much of the suffering she endures. She must yet see more of this—feel more hopeless, more despondent—learn that there is no rest for her on earth—no rest for her anywhere except in making it the most earnest desire of her heart and effort of her life to do right—in a perfect willingness, when she has done this, to leave every thing which concerns her to the care of her Heavenly Father, and in such entire trust in that Heavenly Father's goodness, that even when she suffers she shall feel that it is his love which corrects her faults."

Perhaps you would like to see something of the letter which made Mr. Villars feel at once so much grieved and so hopeful for poor Ellen. I have it with me, and will extract a few sentences from it for your perusal. After giving a very fair account of the school, of the pleasure she at first felt in it, of the pains she took to please and improve the children, she relates very truly all which took place on that unlucky Monday morning—how reluctant she was to rise—how fretted with Mary for trying to persuade her that things were not so bad as she felt them to be—how disappointed that she could not go with Anna Melville, yet how unwilling to let it appear by her going that she was of no consequence at all, but that Mary could do just as well without her—how dissatisfied with herself for all these things—how that dissatisfaction made her impatient with the children—and how that morning's impatience was deepened into dislike by their resentment—their readiness, as she said, to give her up just for one cross word—their thinking so much more of Mary, who had never done any thing for them, than of her who had taken so much trouble with them. After this account Ellen adds, "And so it is always, Uncle Villars—everybody loves Mary without her caring for it or trying to make them love her; and I want them to love me, and do every thing I can to make them love me, and yet they never do,—nobody but Mary. Even you, Uncle Villars, though you were always very kind to me, did not love me as you loved Mary. I know it is because she is so good, and I have such a wicked, bad temper. But, Uncle Villars, I cannot help my temper—indeed I cannot, for I have tried very often, very often indeed. Many a time I have said to myself, when I got up in the morning—I will be good and kind to everybody to-day, and I will not say a cross word, or give an angry look, let them serve me ever so badly, but when people tease and worry me I forget it all. And so now, Uncle Villars, since I cannot help it, I mean to try not to care about it at all—not to love anybody except Mary, who loves me so much that I never get angry with her now, and you who were always so kind to me."

The letter here broke off abruptly, and was continued again several days after in these words: "What I was writing to you the other day, Uncle Villars, made me feel so bad that I had to put down my pen and cry. Since that, I have hardly thought of any thing else, and I am more and more convinced that it all comes from my bad temper; but that is no comfort, since I cannot help it. I am afraid you will think me very wicked, but I cannot help wishing I was dead. I think, then, when people saw me lying so pale and still, and knew that I could never say an angry word again, they would feel sorry for having been so hard upon me, and they would look kindly at me and speak kindly of me. I think of these things a great deal, but do not tell Mary so, for it would distress her. I am almost sorry for having written all about these feelings to you, Uncle Villars; but my letter must go now, for it has taken me a great deal of time to write so long a one, and I want you to know all about the school, for fear, as I said before, you should blame Mary."

About a month after Colonel Melville had received the letters of which I have spoken from Mr. Villars, I met Mrs. Maclean in one of my morning walks.

"And how are Mary and Ellen Leslie this morning, Mrs. Maclean?" asked I.

"Middling, ma'am, middling," replied Mrs. Maclean; "Miss Mary's looking a little pale, but I think it's trouble more than sickness."

"Trouble! why, I hope nothing has happened to disturb her."

"Nothing more than usual, ma'am; but that sister of hers is enough to worry out a saint; and I'm sure that's Miss Mary, if there ever was one."

"I fear Ellen is no favorite with you, Mrs. Maclean."

"Indeed, ma'am, and she was a very great favorite when first she came to me, for she was a lively, sprightly thing as ever I seed, but when she gets in her tantrums, she's more than mortal flesh can bear."

"But what do you mean by her tantrums, for I acknowledge I have never seen any thing in her which did not appear to me very excusable in a spoiled child."

"Well, ma'am, it may be so; that spoiled child may excuse it all; but, as I said, it's very hard for them to bear that didn't spoil her. Now, only this morning she asked me quite civil like for some more sugar in her tea; and I, to be just as civil as she, said, 'Come, help yourself, for I am afraid I won't suit you.'—Says she, 'I'm sure I'm not so very hard to be suited, and if you don't choose to help me I can go without.' And then I was mad at her perverse ways, and I said, 'Well, and if you can't put out your hand and help yourself, you can go without.' 'Yes,' says she, 'that's a very good excuse to save your sugar.' And then she keeps a-throwing out her insinuations of my stinginess, and how sorry her Uncle Villars would be for boarding them where they couldn't get enough to eat and drink; till I answered her, and says, 'Well, I'm sure he can't be no sorrier than I, for I would rather eat but one meal a-day in peace and quiet, than to take my good, hearty, three meals a-day with you quarrelling over them.' With that, up she gets, and says, 'I won't take my meals at anybody's table that don't wish me to, and I will never eat another meal at your table if I starve to death;' and sure enough, off she went up stairs without her breakfast. I shouldn't have minded that much, but poor Miss Mary went without her breakfast too, and had a good cry besides."

CHAPTER X.

THE INVITATION.

When I repeated to Mrs. Melville the conversation I had had with Mrs. Maclean, we were just passing in to dinner, and she bade Anna, as soon as we had dined, go over and invite the Leslies to pass the afternoon and evening with her; adding, in a lower tone, to me, that such was Ellen's wilfulness, she would not be at all surprised to hear that she had held her purpose for all day, or even for several days. Anna did not need to be reminded of her errand, but went over to Mrs. Maclean's quite early, and quickly returned, bringing Mary and Ellen along with her. It was now May, and Emma Melville having reported the spring roses to be in bud, the children soon left the parlor, where Col. and Mrs. Melville and I were seated, and from the windows of which, a few minutes after, we could see them walking around the flower-beds in the garden, and occasionally stopping to search for, or to communicate some new token of the advancing season. Our observations on them were interrupted by the sound of the door-bell and the entrance of a servant, who, handing Col. Melville a card and a letter, announced that the gentleman who brought them was waiting to see him in the next room. Col. Melville only glanced at the card, ran his eye hastily over the letter, and handing them both to Mrs. Melville, went to meet his visitor. "The Rev. Mr. Wallace," said Mrs. Melville, as she looked at the card, in a tone which indicated that to her at least he was a stranger. "And the letter," she added, as opening it she looked at once at the name of the writer, "is from Mrs. Herbert."

"And who is Mrs. Herbert?" I asked.

"Did you never hear of her? She is a sister of Mr. Leslie. I have not seen her since her marriage, fifteen years ago; but if her maturer years have fulfilled the promise of her early life, she must be excellent indeed."

"You say you have not seen her in fifteen years; has she never visited her brother in all that time?"

"No—she removed on her marriage to the western part of the State of New York; and as Mr. Herbert was not wealthy, the expense of travelling so far has perhaps had something to do with keeping her away."

"But Mr. Leslie was long thought a very wealthy man; did he not assist his sister?"

"I have heard that he offered to do so; but as he had disapproved her marriage with one who had so few worldly advantages to offer as Mr. Herbert, it was probably regard for her husband's feelings which made Mrs. Herbert decline his aid, replying, as I was told she did, with every expression of grateful affection for her brother, but adding the assurance that they had enough for happiness." After a few minutes' silence Mrs. Melville added: "I doubt not they were very happy, for he seemed worthy of her, and that is, I assure you, high praise. What a blow his death must have been!"

"His death!" I exclaimed—"is he dead?"

"Yes; I thought I had mentioned that she was now a widow: he died about the same time with Mr. Leslie. His death was sudden, and I fear he left her and her three children but illy provided for. Had it been otherwise, she would, I am sure, before this time have endeavored to do something for Mary and Ellen; for I know that Mr. Villars wrote soon after their father's death, informing her of their entire destitution, and of those embarrassments on his part which would prevent his

doing all he wished for them."

Mrs. Melville had scarcely ceased speaking, when the door between the two parlors was opened, and Mr. Melville entered, accompanied by a very benevolent-looking old gentleman, whom he introduced as Mr. Wallace, saying, as he presented him to Mrs. Melville, that he was a near neighbor of her old friend Mrs. Herbert, of whom he could give her very late intelligence, as he had been only about a fortnight from home.

"I have just been speaking of Mrs. Herbert," said Mrs. Melville, addressing herself to Mr. Wallace, "and though it has been fifteen years since we met, there are few of whom I retain a more admiring and pleasant remembrance. I was indeed grieved when I heard of Mr. Herbert's death."

"It was a terrible blow," said Mr. Wallace, "the more terrible from being so sudden; but Mrs. Herbert is a mourner from a yet more recent affliction—the death of her eldest child and only daughter."

"Indeed! such repeated and heavy strokes—how has she borne up under them?"

"As one who, though a devoted wife and mother, is likewise a devoted Christian. The strokes have been indeed as you say, heavy, but she has bowed to them, and kissed the rod which she knew was in a Father's hand. You who remember her, madam, will not be surprised to learn that no selfish sorrow has made her forgetful of her remaining duties."

"She has yet two children, I believe," said Mrs. Melville.

"Yes—two fine boys, whose education is scarcely commenced yet, as the eldest is but thirteen years old. Her orphan and destitute nieces, too, who, I understood, were with you this afternoon, she feels to have strong claims upon her, almost as strong as those of her own children. To these claims she had not hitherto been able to attend, for she had scarce recovered from the first bewildering effect of her husband's death, when the symptoms which had already alarmed her in her daughter's health, deepened into decided consumption, and her whole time was necessarily given to her till death released her from her cares."

"And will she now be able to give a home to these poor girls?"

"Only to one of them," said Mr. Melville,—"to Ellen."

"And separate them!" exclaimed Mrs. Melville; "that will never do."

"So Mrs. Herbert thought at first," said Mr. Wallace, smiling, "but she has been in correspondence with Mr. Villars on the subject, and she has yielded to his arguments, on the one condition, that the children themselves consent to the arrangement."

"That I am sure they will never do," said Mrs. Melville.

"In that case, Mrs. Herbert's power of being useful to them ceases, since Mr. Villars has decided that the eldest must on no account relinquish the advantages of her position here, as neither he nor Mrs. Herbert are in circumstances to ensure them future support independently of their own exertions."

"Mr. Villars is certainly a very eccentric man," said Mrs. Melville; "does he suppose that a few years could make any difference in Mary's claims upon the people of H., or their willingness to give her their support, if she were then compelled to teach."

"Mr. Villars is eccentric," said Mr. Melville; "yet for what seemed to us strange, he has always had some good reason to give, as I doubt not he has now."

"Well, here come the children," said Mrs. Melville; "we shall soon hear their decision, and I suspect you will find that Mr. Villars' limitation is a complete hinderance to Mrs. Herbert's kind intentions."

The door was thrown open as Mrs. Melville spoke, and the children, unconscious of a stranger's presence, came laughing and talking in. Even Ellen looked pleased, which I was especially glad to see, as her usual gloomy countenance would have impressed a stranger unfavorably. Mrs. Melville led Mary and Ellen to Mr. Wallace, and introduced him to them as a friend of their Aunt Herbert. To their inquiries respecting their aunt and her family Mr. Wallace replied very fully. The children having said that they had never seen her, he described her appearance, her manners, her character—spoke of their cousins George and Charles Herbert, whom he represented as spirited, manly, but kind and affectionate tempered boys.

"And my cousin Lucy?" said Mary.

"Was one of the loveliest and most engaging young persons I ever saw, when she was on earth," said Mr. Wallace; "she is now, I hope, an angel in heaven."

"Is my cousin Lucy dead?" said Ellen, who had hitherto been a silent listener.

"Yes, my child, she has now been dead for more than two months, after enduring for almost two years very great suffering. During all that time, though I saw her very often, I never heard a complaining word from her. All her grief was for her mother. Even when she was dying she thought of her, and the last words we could distinguish from her were, 'Our good heavenly Father

will comfort you, mother."

"Poor Aunt Herbert!" exclaimed Mary, touched with sympathy for such a loss.

"Yes, my dear child," said Mr. Wallace, "you may well pity her for losing such a daughter, her only daughter; your Aunt Herbert hopes that you will do more than pity her, that you will send her by me another daughter in your sister Ellen, to whom she will be just such a mother as she was to Lucy Herbert. She wished to have you both come to her as her daughters, but your Uncle Villars does not think it wise that you should leave H. just at present; he consents, however, that Ellen should go to her aunt, if you are both willing."

From the moment Ellen's name was mentioned, the sisters had sat looking earnestly into each other's eyes.

"Ellen," said Mr. Wallace, "will you not go with me, and be another Lucy to this good aunt?"

"I could not be like Lucy—I am not good enough; and I cannot leave Mary—I cannot leave Mary for anybody."

Mary threw her arm around Ellen, and drew her closely to her side, answering all Mr. Wallace's arguments only with her tears, or a silent shake of the head. Colonel Melville attempted to influence her, and then she spoke: "Oh! Colonel Melville, I cannot let Ellen go: I promised my mother, when I was a very little girl, and then I promised my father when he was on his death-bed, that I never would part with Ellen, and I cannot do it."

"Mary," said Colonel Melville, "I do not wish you to do it; none wish you to do it, unless you feel it to be not only right but desirable, and all I would ask of you now is that you and Ellen too would think before you decide on a question of so much importance. As respects your promise, you could not have promised that she should not leave you, because about that, you know, she will one of these days have a will of her own, and you cannot prevent her going from you if she chooses it. Now Ellen's home with you is not, I fear, a very happy one,"—Ellen colored and looked down at these words,—"and you have it not in your power to make it so; and here your kind aunt sends and asks her to come to her and be her daughter, promising to cherish her as her own dear child. Mrs. Herbert will educate Ellen as few are capable of doing, and so enable her to be of use to herself and to you too, if the necessity for your labors continue. And there will be no force exercised over Ellen's wishes there, more than here. I doubt not if, after six months or a year's trial of her home there, she should be dissatisfied, and wish to return to you, she will be permitted to do so."

"Will she, sir?—May she come back if she should wish to?" asked Mary quickly, turning to Mr. Wallace.

"Certainly, my dear; your aunt's desire is to make Ellen happy, and that could not be done by keeping her against her will. But I would not have you make up your minds in a hurry—take to-night to think about it. You have, I hope, been taught to pray; ask your heavenly Father to direct you to what is best for you. I intended to set off to-morrow afternoon on my way home, but I will wait till the next morning for Ellen, if you will give me your answer in the course of the day, or to-morrow."

And so it was determined. The children consented to defer their decision till the next day, and Colonel Melville advised that nothing more should then be said on the subject. I saw, however, that though they did not speak of it, Mary and Ellen both thought of it; for more than once I saw Mary's eyes fill with tears as they rested on her sister, and Ellen herself perceiving it at one time, shook her head, and said with a smile, "You need not be afraid, Mary; I shall not leave you." These thoughts, however, did not interfere with Ellen's enjoyment of her supper, which, from the appetite with which it was eaten, was, I doubt not, the only regular meal she had made that day.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DECISION.

Mr. Wallace stayed that night at Colonel Melville's. We had the next morning just assembled around the breakfast-table, when there was a ring at the door-bell, so loud and so hurried, that, surprised and startled, each one turned towards the door to watch for the entrance of the ringer. The servant had probably been as much startled as we, for she moved with unusual quickness, and scarce a minute passed from the ring to the entrance into the breakfast parlor of Ellen Leslie, flushed, breathless, and evidently agitated. Without speaking to, almost without looking at any one else, she walked up to Mr. Wallace, and holding out her hand, said, "I have come to tell you, sir, that I will go with you."

"I am very glad to hear it, my dear; but sit down, get your breath, and then we will talk about it."

"I don't want to talk about it," said Ellen, in an impatient tone; "I want to go. How soon can we go, sir?"

"This afternoon at five o'clock, if you can be ready so soon."

"I am ready now," Ellen began, but Mrs. Melville, who had risen from the table on her coming in, now approached her, and taking off her bonnet, insisted that she should sit down, and take some breakfast before she said any thing more about going. Ellen looked at the breakfast-table, and seemed to find some attraction in it, for she drew nearer to it, then suddenly turning to Mrs. Melville, said, "But Mary does not know. I must go and tell Mary."

"I will send for Mary. Anna, go over to Mrs. Maclean's, and tell Mary she must come and take her breakfast with us."

"Thank you, Mrs. Melville," said Ellen; "I am sure I am much obliged to you, for Mrs. Maclean would not give me any breakfast this morning, and poor Mary felt so badly about it, that I dare say she has not eaten any."

In a moment, I saw the whole reason of Ellen's unexpected resolve, of her hurry and agitation. She had doubtless refused to go down to breakfast—Mrs. Maclean had refused to let her breakfast go up to her—angry words had probably ensued—Ellen had declared she would go away—Mrs. Maclean, instead of expressing sorrow or apprehension at such a threat, had hoped she would, and Ellen, too proud to retract, too wilful to hesitate, had started off at once; and thus, the decision about which she had been advised to think so carefully and prayerfully, was made in a fit of anger, and carried through for the gratification of proud and resentful feeling.

Anna Melville was gone a longer time than was usually found necessary for a message to Mrs. Maclean's. Mary returned with her, and her eyes showed that her tears had been just hastily wiped away as she entered the parlor. Neither of the sisters ate much breakfast, for Ellen was still too angry and Mary too sorrowful to feel hungry. Mrs. Melville placed Mary by her at table—Ellen was at the other end—and was careful that nothing should be said in relation to Ellen's departure till breakfast was over. She then took Mary's hand, and leading her into the next room, closed the door after her. They were gone almost an hour, and when they came back, though Mary's eyes were red and swollen, her countenance was much more composed. Ellen looked anxiously at her as she entered, and going up to her, took her hand and said, "Are you sorry I am going, Mary?"

"I am sorry and glad too, Ellen," said Mary, pressing her lips to her sister's forehead; "sorry to part with you, but glad, very glad that you are going to such a good, kind aunt as Mrs. Melville says our Aunt Herbert is."

"I do not care so much about that, for I am sure she cannot be more good and kind than you are, Mary," and Ellen passed her arm around her sister's waist, and laid her head affectionately on her shoulder; "but I am very glad that I shall not have to go back to that hateful Mrs. Maclean."

"Hush—hush, Ellen. Mrs. Maclean is quick in her temper, but she has been often very kind to us, and you should not call her hateful."

"She may be very kind to you," said Ellen, "I do not know any thing about that; but I do not call it kindness to tell me that she would rather go without her meals than eat them with me, and then to refuse to give me my breakfast. I told her I would never darken her door again, and I never will. I will not go back even to pack my trunk or get my things."

Mary looked as if she were about to remonstrate with her sister, but Mrs. Melville interposed, saying, "It will not be at all necessary, Ellen, that you should; I will go over with Mary and assist her in packing your trunk, and get such things as may be necessary for you on your journey, of which I shall be a better judge than either of you, as I am an older traveller. In the mean time, you had better go around and say good-by to some of your old friends in H. Anna will go with you."

While Mrs. Melville was speaking, Colonel Melville and Mr. Wallace, who had walked out together after breakfast, entered.

"Well, my little fellow-traveller," said Mr. Wallace cheerfully, "will you be ready at five o'clock?"

"Yes, sir," said Ellen; then after hesitating a moment she added, "You say, sir, that if I want to come back to Mary I can."

"Yes, my dear, if you want to come back after you have been six months with your Aunt. In a shorter time than that you could form no judgment of what your life there would be; but if then you wish to return, I am sure that nothing will be done to detain you."

"There, Mary, you hear that," said Ellen with great animation; "by that time Uncle Villars will have come back, and then you can leave that"—Ellen looked as if she wanted to say hateful again—"Mrs. Maclean, and we will all, I dare say, live together just as we used to do."

"Mrs. Merrill and all," said Colonel Melville slyly, for he had heard from Mr. Villars something of Ellen's disagreements with Mrs. Merrill.

Ellen colored very much, but after a minute's hesitation, she said, "Well, even Mrs. Merrill was not so bad as Mrs. Maclean."

Our party now separated; Mary and Mrs. Melville went to Mrs. Maclean's, and Ellen and Anna set out to make their visits. Three o'clock brought us all together again for dinner. The flush had now faded from Ellen's cheeks, and it was easy to see that being no longer sustained by anger or resentment, her heart had begun to fail her at the thought of the approaching separation from

her sister. But there was now no time for the indulgence of feeling. Immediately after dinner Ellen's baggage was brought over; then she had to change her dress for that in which she was to travel—then to have all the arrangements which Mrs. Melville and Mary had made of those things that would be necessary to her comfort on the journey explained to her; and before this was completed the carriage was at the door, and her adieu must be made. Ellen started as she heard this announcement, and flung herself into Mary's arms, exclaiming amidst sobs and tears, "Oh Mary, if you could only go with me! if you could only go with me, Mary!"

Mary said not a word, but she folded Ellen closely to her heart, as if to part with her were impossible, and wept over her as if that heart were breaking. Anna and Emma Melville sobbed from sympathy, and the rest of us stood around, silent and tearful spectators of the scene.

"My dear children," said Mr. Wallace at last, "you are needlessly distressing yourselves; remember it is but a visit Ellen is going on. She shall come back, I again promise you, in six months, if she desire to do so."

"And Mary," said Colonel Melville, going up to her and taking her hand, "it will not do to keep Mr. Wallace waiting. For Ellen's sake, my dear girl, control yourself."

Mary unclasped her arms from her sister, and as Mr. Wallace approached to lead Ellen away she looked imploringly in his face, and exclaimed in the most earnest tones, "Oh! be good to her, sir, be very good to her."

"I will, my dear child, I will," was all that the kind old gentleman could say.

A silent kiss to Ellen from each of the party, and Mr. Wallace led her out to the carriage. The next moment the sound of wheels told that they were off. Mary had stood listening for that sound. As it fell upon her ear she turned from us into an adjoining room, and her quick, heavy sobs reached us where we stood, showing that she had gone there to weep alone. We left her undisturbed for some minutes, and then Mrs. Melville went in and talked soothingly and cheerfully to her. Mary had learned early to control her feelings for the sake of others, and she soon came out with Mrs. Melville, looking and speaking calmly, though often, in the course of the evening, I saw a tear steal down her cheek without her seeming to notice it. Just before night, Mary rose and took her bonnet to return home. "Stay, Mary," said Mrs. Melville, "you are not going to leave us so soon. I will send over to let Mrs. Maclean know that you will not return to-night, and the messenger can bring any thing you may want."

And so Mary stayed that night, and the next day, and a week; and still, as she talked of going home, new reasons were found for delay. Her obliging temper and gentle manners rendered her so pleasing an inmate, that all found it painful to part with her; and at last it was arranged that she should remain at Colonel Melville's till Mr. Villars returned, continuing there to employ herself with her needle or pencil, and giving lessons in music, as she had hitherto done, to a few pupils. Leaving her to be loved and cherished by this kind family, we will follow Ellen to her new home.

CHAPTER XII.

NEW FRIENDS.

Little can be told of Ellen's journey. In ten minutes after leaving Colonel Melville's she found herself on board a steamboat, surrounded by a crowd of strangers. Unaccustomed to such scenes, she was bewildered by the confusion and bustle around her, and clung to Mr. Wallace as if he had been a friend of long years, instead of an acquaintance of a day. But so kind and good was Mr. Wallace, so thoughtful of Ellen's comfort, so considerate of her feelings, and so indulgent to her wishes, that under any circumstances he could not long have seemed a stranger to her. Ellen had travelled very little, and she soon began to feel an interest in what was passing around her. Mr. Wallace exerted himself to amuse her, pointing out to her the places they passed, or describing those through which their route lay. Thus engaged, Ellen's griefs were forgotten till she retired to her berth for the night, and then the remembrance of the sister, without whose good-night kiss she had never before slept since she could remember, came so vividly upon her, that bursting into tears, she sobbed herself to sleep. She was awakened early the next morning by the chambermaid, who came, at the request of Mr. Wallace, to assist her in dressing. From her Ellen learned that they had arrived in New York. Here Mr. Wallace remained a day and a night, that he might show Ellen something of the largest city in which she had ever been, and give her one good night's rest before they set out on the most fatiguing part of their journey. The next day they went by a steamboat to Albany, and from thence travelled on the railroad or the canal for three or four days and nights, passing through several large towns, of which Ellen saw nothing except the one street that formed part of their road. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when they entered the village of G—, situated on a small but beautiful lake. There Mr. Wallace resided, and here was the church in which he preached. He took her to his own house and introduced her to his wife, a lady with manners as kind and countenance as pleasing as his own. She placed some raspberry jam with bread and butter, both of her own making, on the table, and while Ellen partook of it, Mr. Wallace had his own little carriage prepared, and having placed her baggage in it, called to her to take her seat beside him. They were soon on the way to Mrs.

Herbert's farm, which, though also on the borders of the lake, was three miles distant from G——. Ellen did not talk much on the way, for she could think of no more questions to ask about her Aunt Herbert or her cousins, and she could not talk of any thing else. It was a lovely afternoon. Though still early in May, the season was unusually forward, and the air was soft and balmy as June. As they approached Mrs. Herbert's place, the road descended to the very edge of the lake. There was not a ripple on the water, and its smooth surface glittered like gold beneath the beams of the almost setting sun. Orchards and gardens were full of bloom, and the long low farmhouse, which was so surrounded with trees that you scarce saw it till you had reached the very door, looked like the abode of peace and gentleness. Two boys who were fishing in the lake from its bank, about fifty yards from the house, were the only persons in sight. When they first saw the carriage, they stood looking steadily at it for a few minutes, as if to ascertain whose it was, then dropping their fishing rods, ran towards the house.

"There they go to give notice of our coming. Poor Charley, George has left him far behind. How hard he tries to get up with his brother! Suppose we stop and take him up," said the good-natured Mr. Wallace, at the same time checking his horse and standing up in the carriage to beckon to Charles.

The tired boy gladly obeyed the summons, having only one narrow field and a fence between him and the road.

"There, Charley," said Mr. Wallace as he helped him up the side of the carriage and placed him by Ellen, "you have been the first to see cousin Ellen, if George has carried the news of her coming to mamma."

"Oh! cousin Ellen," said Charles, "how glad I am you have come, it will make mamma so happy!"

Ellen looked with surprise upon her cousin Charles, he was so much younger and more delicate than she had expected to see him. Mr. Wallace had said that the eldest of Mrs. Herbert's sons was thirteen years old, and Ellen had forgotten to ask the age of the other, but she had supposed him to be nearly if not quite twelve. He had said too that they were manly, and Ellen had concluded that they must be very large for their age, and very strong and robust. But Charles, though really ten years old, looked scarcely eight, he was so small, fair, and delicate, having always had very feeble health. Yet he was manly in his feelings, and so ambitious to equal his brother George's exploits, that he would do many things that some older and stronger-looking boys would not have attempted.

Ellen had just recovered her surprise, and decided that she liked Charles better as he was, with his light brown curls, his fair childish face, and bright laughing blue eyes, than she would have done if he had been a great, blustering boy, when the carriage stopped at the door of the house, where already stood George, flushed and panting with his race, and Mrs. Herbert. Ellen was never very slow in determining the feelings with which she would regard any one, and she often afterwards said, that she loved her Aunt Herbert as soon as she looked upon her. Few faces were so well calculated to produce such an impression as was Mrs. Herbert's. She was in deep mourning, and wore one of those close plain caps commonly called widow's caps, under which her brown hair, being parted in the middle of the forehead, was put smoothly back behind the ears. The upper part of her face was serious in its expression, but the mouth, if it did not actually smile always, looked so gentle and pleasant, that you thought it was going to smile. When Ellen first saw her, however, she was actually smiling, though tears were in her eyes, as again and again she pressed her niece to her heart, and kissing her tenderly, thanked her for coming to her, and called her her daughter Ellen.

"Cousin Ellen," said George, who looked just as Ellen had expected, tall, and stout, and sun-burned, "Cousin Ellen, we are very glad to see you."

"Not cousin Ellen—sister Ellen, my son; you are all my children now," said Mrs. Herbert, as again she folded Ellen in her arms.

"You must always live with us then," said Charles; "we shall not let you go away again."

Ellen, half bewildered among so many new claimants of her affection, had scarce spoken a word in reply to their greetings. She now looked around for Mr. Wallace. He saw the look, and understood it.

"Stay, stay, Charles, it takes two, you know, to make a bargain, and I have already promised that if Ellen wish it she shall go back in six months to her sister Mary—from whom, I assure you, it was no easy matter to get her away. So if you would keep her, you must make her love you so much in six months that she will not choose to leave you."

"So we will," said Charles, "so we will; and we'll bring sister Mary here too, mamma—won't we?"

"I hope so, my son; for Mary, too, I consider as my daughter, and would gladly have had her come now, if Mr. Villars had consented."

Ellen looked gratefully at her aunt, and began to doubt whether she ever should wish to leave her.

Ellen seemed so much fatigued after the first excitement of her arrival was over, that Mrs. Herbert had tea prepared immediately, and directly after it she led Ellen to her chamber. This was a small room opening into her own. It was furnished very plainly, as was indeed every room

in Mrs. Herbert's house; but nothing could be more neat than its appearance, with its clean white window-curtains and coverlet. Mrs. Herbert assisted Ellen to undress herself, and when she was ready to lie down she kissed her tenderly, saying, "Good-night, my love: you will not forget before you sleep to thank our kind heavenly Father for bringing you in safety to us. We are early risers here, but I shall not wake you to-morrow, for you want rest."

Ellen lay down with very pleasant thoughts of her new home, but all thoughts were soon forgotten in a sound sleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW THOUGHTS.

Ellen slept so soundly that for a long time she did not even dream, or at least she did not remember any dreams; but at last she thought she was back again at H., sitting with Mary in their own room, and Mary was sewing and singing as she sewed,

But I will be a bee, to sup
Pure honey from each flow'ry cup;
Busy and pleased around I'll fly,
And treasure win from earth and sky.

And Ellen tried to sing with Mary, but in spite of all her efforts she could not make a sound, and she woke with her fruitless exertions. The sun was shining brightly on her window curtains, and she soon saw she was not at Mrs. Maclean's; yet still she heard singing, and it was the very same tune which she had fancied in her dream, but there were several voices, and Mary's was not among them. The music ceased very soon after she awoke, and Ellen lay wondering who had been singing so early, and whether they sang the words as well as the tune of Mary's song. She had been awake fifteen, or perhaps twenty minutes, when her door was cautiously opened, and Mrs. Herbert entered very softly.

"Oh—you are awake, Ellen," she said, as Ellen raised her head from her pillow to see who was entering: "I have looked in upon you once or twice this morning, but you were asleep, and I would not awake you."

"But I have been awake some time now, Aunt Herbert, and I want to know who it is that has been singing, 'I will not be a butterfly;' I was dreaming about Mary's singing it, and when I first awoke and heard it, I thought she was here."

"You did not hear those words, my dear, but only the tune, which the boys and I were singing to our morning hymn."

"Morning hymn?" repeated Ellen, looking inquiringly at her aunt, as she slowly proceeded in dressing herself.

"Is that a strange thing to you, Ellen?" asked Mrs. Herbert with a smile; "I hope you will be up to-morrow in time to join us in singing it: but now your breakfast is ready," and Mrs. Herbert led the way to the room in which they had taken tea the evening before, where Ellen found George and Charles. They greeted her very affectionately, begged permission to call her Ellen, because they should then feel more at home with her, than if they were obliged to say cousin or even sister Ellen, and before they had risen from breakfast had made many plans for her amusement. Charles would have carried her off at once to see his puppy, but Mrs. Herbert stopped them.

"I must have Ellen," she said, "a little while to myself this morning. This afternoon she shall go with you, if she like."

After the boys had gone out Mrs. Herbert went with Ellen to her room, and assisted her to put it in neat order. When this was done, Ellen in turn assisted her aunt in setting the breakfast things away and arranging the parlor.

As Ellen was rather of an indolent nature, and Mary had ever been ready to do for her what she did not like to do for herself, she had scarcely ever been actively employed for so long a time; yet she did not feel at all tired, but found herself more than once, when her aunt Herbert was silent, humming,

Busy and pleased around I'll fly,
And treasure win from earth and sky.

When Mrs. Herbert's domestic arrangements were completed, she said, "Now, my love, you have been of great service to me, and I must try to be of some service to you. I cannot expect you to study to-day, but we will unpack your books, and arrange some plan for your studies, which you will then be able to commence to-morrow."

When this had been done, it still wanted two hours to the dinner time, and Mrs. Herbert proposed that Ellen should sit by her and assist her with some needle-work. "And then," she added, "we shall be able to talk more quietly than we could do while moving about. There are

many things that you can tell me, of which I am anxious to hear."

Ellen was much more willing to tell than she was to sew, but she was not yet sufficiently at ease with her aunt Herbert to object to any thing she proposed, and she accordingly found her thimble and scissors, and seating herself by her aunt's side, took the work she gave her without any expression of dissatisfaction.

"And now, Ellen," said Mrs. Herbert, when the work had all been so explained that there were no more questions to ask about it, "I want you to tell me something about Mary—is she like you?"

"Mary like me!" exclaimed Ellen; "oh no, Aunt Herbert, Mary is more like you than she is like me."

"Indeed! does she look like me?"

"Well, I do not mean exactly that she looks like you, but she looks pleased like you, and moves about quietly, and never seems to be out of patience: everybody loves Mary."

There was something in the tone in which these last words were said that made Mrs. Herbert raise her eyes from her work and look at her niece. Ellen caught the glance, colored, and hung her head.

"And everybody loves Ellen too, I hope," said Mrs. Herbert, with a smile.

Ellen's head drooped yet lower, and she did not answer.

"Speak, my love; you were not jealous I hope of the love which was given to Mary?"

"Oh no, Aunt Herbert, I was not jealous of Mary; that is, I did not want people not to love Mary, but I did wish that they would love me too, and not to be so cross to me."

"Poor child," said Mrs. Herbert, feelingly, "was every one cross to you?"

"No, not every one. Mary never was cross to me—nor poor papa—nor Uncle Villars; though Uncle Villars did not love me as much as he did Mary."

"And why was this, Ellen? Did you think there was any reason for it?"

Mrs. Herbert spoke very gently, but again Ellen hung her head and looked abashed.

"Do not be ashamed to tell me, my love, what you thought was the cause. I love you, Ellen, very much, and all the more for telling me so freely what you think and feel. I think it a sad thing—a very great evil, not to be loved; and perhaps the cause of this in your own case may be one which, if I knew it, I could help you to remove."

"Oh no, Aunt Herbert, nobody can help me, for it is just my own bad temper."—Ellen was now weeping, and it was amidst sobs that she continued—"I cannot help it; I am sure I try to be good, and to please people and to make them love me. I do think I try a great deal harder than Mary does, and that makes me feel so much worse when they say unkind things to me; and then I cannot be still like Mary, but I get angry and talk back to them, and that makes them dislike me more and more, and I am sure it is not my fault, for I cannot help it."

Mrs. Herbert laid aside her work, put her arm around Ellen and drew her to her side, and laying her head upon her shoulder, spoke soothingly and tenderly to her, till she ceased to weep. When Ellen's sobs were hushed, she said, "My dear child, Aunt Herbert knows how you feel and how to feel for you, for she has suffered just as you do, from just such a bad temper."

"You, aunt Herbert!" exclaimed Ellen, raising her head and looking at her aunt with surprise, "did you ever have a bad temper?"

"I had just such a temper, Ellen, as you describe; wishing to be loved, anxious to please, so anxious that I was willing to do any thing for it, except control my hasty feelings or keep back my rash words."

"And how did you get over it, aunt Herbert?"

"The first step towards my deliverance from the evil, Ellen, was feeling that it was my own fault."

Ellen's face turned very red, and she answered quickly, "How can it be my fault when I try so hard to help it?"

"My child, the fault must lie somewhere; whose is it if it is not yours?"

"I didn't make myself," said Ellen, sullenly.

"And would you say, my dear Ellen, that the fault is His who made you?"

Ellen was silent—she dared not say this with her lips—yet it was the language of her heart.

"Ellen, since you began to notice your bad temper has it not become worse?—are you not more easily made angry now than you were formerly?"

Mrs. Herbert paused, but Ellen did not answer.

"Speak, my dear Ellen, you must place confidence in me, if you would have my help in getting rid

of this evil. Is it not as I say, Ellen?"

"Yes," whispered Ellen, again hiding her face on her aunt's shoulder.

"Whose fault has this been, Ellen?—has God, do you think, continued to make your temper worse and worse?"

"I have lived with such cross, ill-natured people," murmured Ellen.

"Mary has lived with the same people; has it had the same effect on her?"

Ellen was silent.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Herbert, "I have not asked these questions to give you pain. It is not to mortify you, but to give you hope, that I would have you feel the fault to be yours, for your own fault you may correct; not so with the faults of others. And now, having convinced you, I hope, that the fault is your own, the next question is, what has been your fault—shall I tell you this, my love?"

Mrs. Herbert spoke so gently—so affectionately, that Ellen could not be angry. She answered very softly, "If you please."—"What this fault was, Ellen, your own words have shown. You say you have loved others and tried to please them, but you said nothing of loving God, and trying to please Him. You do not seem to have thought that the angry feelings and hasty words which displeased your friends were an offence to Him. You have thought of your temper as an unhappiness for which you were to be pitied, rather than as a great wrong for which you were to be blamed. You have even had hard thoughts of God, as if he had caused this unhappiness. Think of His kindness and love to you, Ellen, and be ashamed of such thoughts. Who but He gave you so tender a father—so kind a sister as Mary—and so generous a friend as your Uncle Villars? Look up at the sky and see the sun which He has placed there to give light and warmth—look around you on the earth, and see the flowers which clothe it with beauty and the fruits which it produces for your gratification—and be humbled, Ellen, that you should have thought this good God unkind?" Mrs. Herbert paused, for she was overcome for a moment by her own emotions.—"Do you not feel His love, Ellen?" she asked at length.

"But he did not make all these good and beautiful things for me," said Ellen, speaking in a whisper, as if she were ashamed of her own cavils.

"If not made for your gratification, Ellen, why were you created with senses to enjoy them—why have you eyes to see, the sense of smell for this delicious perfume which the breeze is bringing to us, and taste to find pleasure in your food?—But the half of His love I have not yet told you. Do you not remember, Ellen, that knowing you to be weak—seeing that you would meet trials and temptations in the world—that you would commit great faults and endure great sufferings in consequence of those faults—He sent His son into the world to show you how these trials might be borne and these temptations resisted, to teach you that He loved you even when you were sinning and suffering, and if you would but love Him in return and strive to please Him, He would aid your weak efforts, would pardon your sins, and give you peace here and heaven hereafter? And it is in this way, dear Ellen, that you can alone hope to get rid of that bad, sinful temper which has caused you so much pain. Think much of the goodness and love of your kind heavenly Father, that you may love and strive to please Him. This will make you watchful over the first beginnings of evil, the first rising up of angry feelings in your heart, and you will strive then to overcome them before they have become strong by indulgence. Yet with all your efforts, Ellen, I do not promise you that you will not often fail; but as you learn to trust in the love of God, you will acknowledge your faults to Him even as you would to an earthly father, and humbly ask Him to pardon and help you: and He will, Ellen,—He will help you, and through His help you shall conquer all evil."

Mrs. Herbert was silent, and Ellen remained for some time with her face concealed, neither speaking nor moving; at length she whispered, "And you will try to love me, Aunt Herbert, though I have told you how bad I am."

"I love you, dear child, a thousand times better for having told me, and I will never love you less for faults which you honestly acknowledge and earnestly strive to correct."

"And you will not tell George and Charles."

"Never: but now go to your room, and wash your face, lest that should tell them that you have been grieving."

Ellen obeyed, and she removed the redness from her face, but the thoughts and feelings which her Aunt had awakened, did not depart from her mind. Ellen had heard of God's goodness and love before, but never had they been so urged upon her—never had she been made so to think about them and to feel them; and the impression was abiding, for her Aunt was ever ready to awaken her observation to new proofs of that goodness and love. She had now a new reason to endeavor to conquer her faults,—the desire to do right—to obey God and please Him.

It must not be supposed, however, that any lesson, however well remembered and deeply impressed, could overcome in a day or a week, or even a month, the habits of Ellen's whole life. On the contrary, she had yet often to exclaim, with bitter sorrow, "Oh, Aunt Herbert! do you think I ever shall do right?" But she never now thought it was the fault of others when she did wrong; and although on such occasions she was grieved, more grieved than formerly, she never long felt

hopeless, for she remembered that her Aunt Herbert had once been like her, and that the same heavenly Father who had aided her aunt to overcome the evil of her nature, loved her, and would hear her prayers. Yet she still had many terrible sufferings to endure from the evil which she had so long indulged, and some of these I will relate to you.

CHAPTER XIV.

PASSION, AND ITS FRUITS.

I have said that Charles Herbert's health had never been very strong. He had in consequence been a petted child, and though Mrs. Herbert never failed to rebuke any improper temper ever manifested by him, she never checked his mirth or playfulness, even when something of the spirit of mischief entered into it. Thus, while Charles was one of the most amiable and affectionate boys in the world, he was often, to a person as irritable as Ellen, one of the most provoking.

"What shall be done to the owner of this?" exclaimed Charles, as, running up the steps to the piazza in which Ellen was standing, about ten days after her arrival, he held up a letter addressed in very legible characters to "Miss Ellen Leslie," and what was more, in characters which Ellen knew to be Mary's. "What shall be done to the owner of this?" Then answering his own interrogatory, "She shall speak a speech, sing a song, or tell a riddle."

"Charles, give me my letter," said Ellen, trying to get it from him; but he eluded her grasp, and springing on the bannister surrounding the piazza, held it far beyond her reach, while he continued to answer her demands with, "The speech, the song, or the riddle, Ellen. Surely, a letter is worth one of them, and such a long letter too, the lines are so close."

While he ran on thus, Ellen, who had commenced with entreaties, proceeded to commands, angry threatenings, and bitter accusations.

"I'll tell your mother, sir, that you took my letter from me; stole it, for it is stealing to take other people's things. I would not be so mean; but I will see what she will say to you, sir; I will see if she will let you take every thing away from me, and ill treat me, just because I have not anybody to take my part," and overcome by passion, Ellen burst into tears.

In an instant Charles was at her side. "Oh, Ellen, don't cry; here is your letter. I am sure, Ellen, I did not mean to make you feel so bad by my foolish play; take your letter, Ellen."

"I won't take it," said Ellen, passionately, "I won't take it. I know why you give it to me now; you think your mother is coming, and you don't want me to tell her; but I will, sir."

Ellen had not time to say more, for Mrs. Herbert stood before them.

"Ellen—Charles, what is the matter?"

"Charles took my letter, and would not give it to me, though I begged him, till he thought you were coming, and then he wanted me to take it, that I might not tell you; but I would not take it from him, for I think it is very hard if he is just to take my things, and keep them as long as he likes, and then give them back to me, and never get even a scolding for it," was Ellen's passionate reply.

"Mother, you know that I was only playing with Ellen," was the explanation of Charles.

"It is not a kind spirit that finds sport in another's suffering, Charles."—Charles hung his head, pained and abashed by his mother's rebuke.—"There is your letter, Ellen. I think I may promise for Charles that he will never again pain you and displease his mother by such thoughtless conduct, and we will forgive him now."

But Ellen's anger had been too thoroughly aroused to be so easily appeased, and many hours had passed before her face lost its resentful expression, or her manners their cold reserve towards Charles.

Not far from Mrs. Herbert's house the lake set up into the land, forming a deep but narrow bay, and dividing her farm into two almost equal parts. Across this bay was laid a rude bridge only two planks in width, and with no defence but a slender hand-rail on the sides. It was of course never used by horsemen, but was sufficiently safe for foot-passengers. On the farther side of this bay lived the man who attended to Mrs. Herbert's farming business. The dairy had also been built near his house, for the convenience of his wife, who attended to it. To this dairy was a favorite walk with the children, the good-natured Mrs. Smith never failing to treat them to some of its products.

Ellen had been about five weeks with her aunt when she and Charles set out together on this walk. The sun was only an hour high, yet it was still warm, and she sauntered slowly along. Charles had lately become very expert in walking on stilts. As this was a very recent accomplishment, he was still very vain of it, and might generally be seen looking over the heads of people taller than himself. Especially did Charles pride himself on his ability to go on stilts over the bridge, which was in reality as safe for him as the dry ground, so long as he kept steadily

on. On the afternoon of which we are speaking, he was elevated as usual, and would at one time stride rapidly on before Ellen, and then turn and come slowly back to her, and then wheel around and around her, ever, as he went and came, discoursing, not of what he could do, but of what his brother George could, for proud as he might be of his own powers, Charles was always ready to acknowledge that George excelled him. Ellen's temper was perhaps a little influenced by the sultry weather. However this may be, she certainly did not feel very pleasantly, and had more than once during their walk evinced considerable impatience. Several times she begged that Charles would not wheel around her so, as it made her dizzy—that he would keep farther off, as she was afraid of his stilts striking her—and at length she exclaimed, "Do, Charles, talk about something else besides what George can do. I am sick of hearing of it. I wonder if there is any thing that you think he cannot do."

Charles was vexed at this disrespect to George, and there was a little malice in the reply, "Yes, I don't think George can write poetry, as some other people I know can. I found some poetry this morning," he added, looking archly at Ellen, "and I am sure you will like it when you see it published in the G— Mirror."

Ellen's face became crimson. Did any of my young readers ever attempt to write poetry? If so, they have only to remember how carefully they concealed their first effort, how much abashed they were at the idea of its being seen, how sensitive to the least appearance of ridicule, to understand the cause of Ellen's blush. Ellen had made more than one effort, but there was only one of her productions which she had ever thought of sufficient importance to preserve. This was a piece addressed to Mary, which she had kept with the hope that she might one day gather courage to send it to her. She had supposed it safe at the very bottom of the black silk bag which she carried on her arm, but she now began to fear, from the manner of Charles, that he had in some way got it. In this she was right. Ellen had not been so careful as she supposed in putting the paper into her bag, and afterwards, in drawing her handkerchief out, it had fallen unperceived upon the floor. Here Charles had found it. He read it, and saw by the handwriting it was Ellen's. Remembering the letter scene, he faithfully resolved not to tease her about it, but after he should have shown it to George, to give it to her without saying a word of his acquaintance with the contents. Ellen had vexed him now, however, and it was impossible to avoid making use of such an excellent mode of punishment. Charles saw Ellen's blush, but this proof of his power only stimulated him to fresh mischief. He stopped, and taking off his cap drew the paper from the inner side of the crown lining, where it had been carefully placed to secure it from the observation of others. Ellen, in the mean time, desirous of appearing quite unconcerned, passed on to the bridge, and was already upon it when Charles overtook her, exclaiming, "Stop, Ellen: what are you running off for? stop and hear it," which only made Ellen walk the faster.

"Well," said Charles, "you have no idea what you are losing," and he commenced repeating a piece of doggerel which had been manufactured by some boy he had known in G—

"The gardens were full of bright young greens,
The patches were full of corn and beans."

The artifice was successful. Ellen, relieved from her fears, turned round with a smile to listen, and Charles, planting his stilts in such a manner that she could not pass him in either direction without approaching nearer to the edge of the narrow bridge than she would like to do, held a paper in his hand high above her reach, and read from it in a loud voice, and with much flourish and parade—

"TO MARY.

Companion of my early years,
Who shared my joys, who soothed my tears."

"Let me go, Charles," exclaimed Ellen, endeavoring in vain to pass.

"Who smiled when others' looks grew dark?"

"Let me pass," almost shrieked Ellen, mad with anger, and losing all control of herself. "I will not stay to be laughed at," and she began with all her strength to push against one of the stilts.

"Oh! Ellen, just hear this line—'Whose patient love—'Stop, stop, Ellen, you'll throw me into the water," cried Charles hurriedly, as he felt the stilt yielding to the efforts of Ellen, to whom increasing anger lent new vigor. Ellen pushed on, either not hearing or not heeding. Perhaps she had not time to stay her hand, for it was but a moment and the stilt had passed off the bridge. Then came a crashing sound, as the hand-rail yielded beneath the weight of Charles—then a sharp cry of terror—a sudden splash—and Ellen stood alone upon the bridge, gazing in wild dismay upon the waters which had closed silently over the just now gay and animated boy.

But Ellen had not been the only spectator of this scene. The cry of Charles had been echoed from the bank. There had been a quick rush of some one to the spot where Ellen stood. She was conscious of a plunge into the water, on which her eyes were riveted with a stupifying, bewildering horror. How long it was she knew not—it seemed to her very, very long—ere George, for it was he who made the rush and the plunge, was seen swimming to the shore, bearing with him a body, which appeared to have no power to support itself, but rested a lifeless weight on his supporting arm. Ellen followed his every movement with a fixed, wild stare—she saw him land, still clasping one arm around that body—then her Aunt Herbert met him, and helped him to carry

it. Ellen had not seen her before, but she now remembered that echoing cry, and knew that it had been hers. In all this time Ellen had uttered no sound—made no movement; but now Mrs. Herbert called her. Ellen drew near—near enough to see that still, pale face, with the bright eyes closed and the dripping hair hanging around it—to see the clinched hand, in which a remnant yet remained of the worthless paper for which she had done this. Ellen covered her face with her hands and shuddered. "Ellen," said Mrs. Herbert, and her voice was gentle as ever, though melancholy and full of pity, "he may live yet; at least let us not think of ourselves till we have done all we can for him. Run, Ellen, to Mr. Smith's—send him for the doctor—quick, quick, Ellen—then home—have a fire made—blankets got ready—send the first person you meet to help George and me in bearing—God grant," she exclaimed, suddenly interrupting herself and letting her head drop for a moment on the cold face which rested on her bosom, "God grant we may not be bearing the dead!"

Ellen flew rather than ran to Mr. Smith's, repeating to herself on the way the words which had put new life into her, "He may live—he may live." On the way she met a laborer, whom she sent forward to join her aunt and George. Her message to Mr. Smith delivered, she waited not to answer one of the many questions urged upon her, she did not seem to hear them, but rushing back, passed the sad, slow procession about half way, and had the fire made, the bed and blankets prepared, before they arrived. Then came the agony for her. To see that lifeless body, as she was called upon to help her aunt—to touch those cold limbs—to watch and wait in vain for some token of returning life—some mark that she was not henceforward to regard herself as a murderer—this was agony indeed.

Under Mrs. Herbert's direction all the usual restoratives for persons rescued from drowning were resorted to, and even before the physician who had been sent for appeared, some warmth was restored to the limbs, and a faint tinge of color to the cheeks. Oh the joy of that first hope of success—the yet greater joy, when those lips, which they had feared were sealed forever, unclosed, and a feeble voice proceeded from them murmuring "Mother."

"He is safe enough now," said the physician. Up to this moment Ellen had not made a sound expressive of her feelings. She was deadly pale, and had any one touched her, they would have found that she was scarcely less cold than the limbs she was chafing; but she was perfectly still. Now, however, as the physician's welcome words reached her ear, she clasped her hands together, uttered one cry, and would have fallen, had not George caught her. She was taken to her own apartment, and the doctor having given her a composing draught, ordered her to be put immediately to bed. Notwithstanding this, fever came on, and before morning Mrs. Herbert was called from her now quietly sleeping boy to the delirious Ellen. Ellen's constant cry during this delirium was, "I have killed him—I have killed him," repeated in every variety of tone, now low and plaintive, now wild and phrensied. At length, towards morning, she fell asleep.

Mrs. Herbert having seen that Charles was still quiet, and having obtained George's promise to call her if he awoke and inquired for her, returned to Ellen's room, and lay down beside her. Ellen continued to sleep for several hours, at first uttering low moans, and muttering to herself, as if disturbed by unpleasant dreams, but afterwards becoming quite still, and sleeping easily and naturally. Mrs. Herbert had arisen, and was seated beside her when she awoke, which she did with a start. She gazed for a moment at her aunt with some wildness in her countenance, but as Mrs. Herbert smiled upon her, this expression passed away, and putting out her hand to her, she said, "Aunt Herbert, I have had such a dreadful dream. I dreamed that I killed Charles. It is not true," she exclaimed quickly, "is it?" and Ellen raised herself on her elbow, and looked searchingly into her Aunt's face.

"No, my dear Ellen—Charles is almost well again."

"*Almost* well again," she repeated, and then was silent for some minutes, during which she lay with her eyes closed. At length tears began to steal down her cheeks, and in a low, tremulous voice, Ellen said, "I remember all now, Aunt Herbert: I hoped it was a dream; but I remember it all now, and I know that if you and George had not been walking that way just then, Charles would have been drowned, and I should have killed him—have killed your child—my own dear cousin Charles. Aunt Herbert, do you not wish I had never come to you?"

"So far from it, dear Ellen, that the more proof I have of the strength of this evil in your nature, the more rejoiced I am that by coming to me you have given me the power of helping you to subdue it. You were the occasion of very bitter suffering to me yesterday evening, Ellen; and yet, now that God in His mercy has restored my child, I can be thankful even for this lesson to you, if it influence you as I hope and believe it will—if you learn from it to dread anger as the beginning of murder. Human passion, Ellen, is like a raging sea, to which only the infinite God can say, 'hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther, and here shall thy waves be stayed.'"

Ellen remained quite still. Tears slowly trickled down her cheeks; but she did not, as was usual with her when agitated, weep violently. She seemed softened, subdued, humbled.

After some minutes had passed thus, she said, "Aunt Herbert, it seems as if I never could forget yesterday evening; and as if, so long as I remembered it, I never could be angry again. But I have so often thought I was cured, that I am afraid; do pray for me, Aunt Herbert—pray to God that I may never forget."

Mrs. Herbert was accustomed to pray with her children morning and evening, and she now knelt by Ellen's bed, and in the simple language of a child revealing its feelings to a father, poured out

before God all those feelings of which Ellen's heart and hers were full. Fervently did she thank Him for having given them back, as if from the very grave, her beloved boy; for having saved the dear child beside her from the wretchedness of having taken away the life of another; and earnestly, solemnly did she pray that he would cast out from her that evil spirit, which, if it were indulged, would destroy her soul's life—would take from her that eternal life which the blessed Saviour had come into the world to reveal as the portion of all those who loved God and obeyed His commands.

Mrs. Herbert did not suffer either Ellen or Charles to rise on this day. When they met the next morning, nothing could be more touching than the humility with which Ellen entreated the forgiveness of Charles, and the generosity with which he declared that it was all his own fault, and that he never would tease her again.

CHAPTER XV.

A PLEASANT CONCLUSION.

I Fear my story has seemed hitherto sad and gloomy to my young readers; but this could not be avoided, for over the fairest scenes and happiest circumstances, one such uncontrolled temper as Ellen's will spread sorrow and gloom. This temper was no longer uncontrolled, and what has since passed of her life is in beautiful and delightful contrast with its earlier portion. I say her temper was no longer *uncontrolled*. Her nature was as sensitive as ever—as quick to feel joy or pain, pleasure or displeasure; but Ellen had learned to rule these feelings, and not to be ruled by them—not to speak or act as they dictated, till satisfied that the speech or the action was right.

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of relating one or two scenes, which may illustrate the effect of this change upon the happiness of Ellen's future life.

The bloom of spring and the sultriness of summer had given place to the varied foliage and cool bracing breeze of November. It was a bright but cool day, and a cheerful fire blazed in the open fireplace of Mrs. Herbert's parlor. Around it were seated all her own family, and Mr. and Mrs. Wallace, who were spending the day with her. All the ladies of the party had some employment for the fingers. Mrs. Wallace had brought her knitting, Mrs. Herbert was sewing on a shirt, and on Ellen's lap lay a half-stitched wristband, which had just been put down at the request of Charles, that she might sew a ball for him. Mr. Wallace loved children, and was very observant of them. For some minutes he had silently watched Ellen, interested by the patience with which she had listened to the manifold directions of both her cousins, and once, when her work seemed nearly completed, had taken it all out, to make some alterations which had occurred to George as desirable. As she gave Charles the ball and resumed her wristband, Mr. Wallace said, "Ellen, do you remember at what time you came here?"

"Yes, sir; in May last."

"But what time in May?"

"I do not know what day of the month, sir," said Ellen, looking up with some surprise at her friend.

"It was the tenth of May," said Mr. Wallace; "and now do you know what day of the month this is?"

"The tenth of November, sir, I believe."

"You are right, it is the tenth, and your six months of trial are finished. You can now fairly judge between your home here and in H—; and as I shall be obliged to return to H— in a week or two, on the same business which caused my visit there in the spring, if you desire to return, we can again be fellow-travellers. What say you to it, Ellen?"

Ellen glanced rapidly at her Aunt Herbert, and meeting her eyes fixed on her earnestly, tenderly, turned hers as quickly to the floor. She remained silent, but her cheek, now red, now pale, and the quivering motion of her lips, showed her agitation.

"Speak, my love," said Mrs. Herbert, laying her hand on Ellen's, "speak just as you feel. You have a perfect right to choose your home, and whatever the choice may be, none can complain."

"Oh, Ellen," began Charles, who did not altogether approve of his mother's neutrality, but a look from Mrs. Herbert silenced him.

Ellen opened her lips more than once as if to speak, but seemed unable to utter a word. Suddenly she turned again to her aunt, and passing her arms around her neck, hid her face upon her bosom. Mrs. Herbert folded her arms around her, and in a voice which in spite of herself faltered, asked, "Do you stay with us, Ellen?"

"Yes," said Ellen, looking up with a face on which there were both smiles and tears.

George seized her hand and shook it warmly, while Charles shouted for joy; and in the exuberance of his delight, threw his ball first to the ceiling and then across the room, making it

pass in its second transit so near Mrs. Wallace's head that the old lady started and dropped her knitting.

"And what shall I tell Mary, Ellen?" asked Mr. Wallace.

"That she must come to me, sir."

"I shall say that you have not forgotten her."

"Forgotten Mary!" exclaimed Ellen; "oh no—tell her I never thought so much of her goodness to me or loved her so dearly as I do now. Oh, how happy I shall be when she comes!—but I cannot leave Aunt Herbert," and Ellen again put her arm around her aunt's neck.

"You are my daughter now, and daughters, you know, do not leave their mothers willingly even for their sisters," said Mrs. Herbert, with an affectionate smile.

Ellen returned the smile as she answered, "Yes, and that is not all."

"What more is there, Ellen?" asked Mr. Wallace.

"Why, I first learned to be happy here, sir; and I am afraid if I went away, that—that—"

"That you would forget the lesson?" inquired Mr. Wallace.

"Yes, sir."

"There is no danger of that, I think, Ellen—it is a lesson you have learned very thoroughly," said Mrs. Herbert; "and it is one," she added, "not easily forgotten."

Something more than a year had now elapsed since Mr. Villars' departure for the South, and still his return was delayed. He now wrote that he hoped by the next spring to bring the business which had taken him there to a prosperous conclusion. The property which he was endeavoring to recover had risen in value of late, and should he be successful, Mary and Ellen would possess fortune sufficient for all their reasonable wants. But as Mr. Villars, though hopeful, was not certain of success, he was still unwilling that Mary should leave H. for her Aunt Herbert's, thus relinquishing the employment she had already received there, while for the same reason he rejoiced that Ellen was under the care of one so capable of giving to her a thoroughly accomplished education as was Mrs. Herbert.

Winter passed away; spring again brought flowers and perfume and balmy airs to all—and to Ellen bright hopes. Mr. Villars had written lately more sanguinely than ever of his success, at any rate, when he wrote last, in a week the lawsuit on which all depended would be decided. He would then return, and then Mary and Ellen would meet. You have seen that during the year of their separation a great change had taken place in Ellen's character, and you will readily believe that there had also been some alteration in her personal appearance. She was now fourteen, and she had grown tall and womanly in figure, while there was far more of the glad-heartedness of early childhood shining in her face, than could have been seen there a year before. Her heavy indolent movements, too, were replaced by a springy, elastic step. In a word, Ellen was happy, and that happiness showed itself in words, and looks, and tones. No sullen resentment clouded her brow, no angry passion made her voice harsh, no bitter self-reproach for unjust thoughts and unkind speeches lay heavy upon her heart; all looked kindly on her, and Ellen no longer feared that she was not loved.

It was about three weeks after the reception of that letter from Mr. Villars to which we have alluded, that returning from an afternoon's ramble with her cousin, Ellen, on entering the piazza, saw through the open parlor window a gentleman's head. Her heart beat quickly—it might be her Uncle Villars; she approached nearer the window, and looked anxiously in—there was a lady, but too tall for Mary. Ellen forgot that Mary was seventeen, and had had a year in which to grow, since she saw her. The lady turned her head—the next moment the sisters were in each other's arms. "My own dear Mary!" "My darling Ellen!" were their only words—their feelings, who shall describe?

"And, Uncle Villars, you can live in your own house again, now, and have poor Mrs. Merrill back—can you not?" asked Ellen, after Mr. Villars had announced that he had gained the object of his southern journey.

"Yes, Ellen, for it is no longer necessary for me to be so careful of my expenditures, since you and Mary no longer want any assistance from me. The house has been unoccupied for some months, and Mrs. Merrill is already there getting every thing in readiness for us against we return."

Ellen seemed lost in thought for a moment, then looking up with a merry smile, she said, "Uncle Villars, I have a puzzle that is more difficult than the fox and the goose, and nobody can help me with it but you and Aunt Herbert."

"Well, what is it, Ellen?"

"Why, how am I to stay with Aunt Herbert and George and Charles, and yet go with you and Mary?—One thing is certain, I cannot part with any of you."

"I have thought of this myself, Ellen, and I have a plan for the accomplishment of your wishes, if you can win your Aunt Herbert's consent to it."

"What is it?" exclaimed Ellen, eagerly.

"That she should remove to H., which was her own early home, and which offers much greater advantages for the education of her sons and their entrance into life, than their present situation."

"That would be delightful," said Ellen.

The day after this conversation, Mrs. Herbert was walking with Mr. Villars over to the Dairy Farm, as the residence of Farmer Smith was called. In passing the bridge she related to him the circumstances attending the fall and rescue of Charles—the great distress of Ellen, and the unremitting and successful efforts she had since made to overcome that evil nature which had so nearly produced such fatal consequences.

"Since that time," continued Mrs. Herbert, "though I have seen Ellen's temper tried, and her anger excited, I have only known that it was so by the sudden sparkle of the eye, or the quick flush of the cheek. She knows the danger of yielding for a moment, and you can see on such occasions that her whole nature is aroused to resist the evil, to subdue the passion. Of late these conflicts with herself are very rare, for she grows every day more gentle and forbearing. I cannot express to you, Mr. Villars, how dear she has become to me. To her cousins she is a patient, affectionate sister, to me a tender and devoted daughter; our home will long be darkened by her departure. How can I let her go from us—yet how can I ask you and her sister to give her up!"

Mrs. Herbert spoke with deep emotion, and Mr. Villars felt that there could not be a more fortunate moment for his proposal. When Mrs. Herbert first heard it, she shook her head, and looking around her said, "I cannot part with this place, Mr. Villars, it has too many endearing associations."

"If by parting with it you mean selling it, there is no necessity for your doing so; let Mr. Smith, whom you know to be an honest man, continue to farm it as he now does: you can even spend part or the whole of every summer here, for travelling costs little now. The board which, as the guardian of Mary and Ellen, I should feel bound to pay you, would meet any difference in the expense of your establishment here and in H—; and the advantages which your care would ensure to them, I would endeavor to repay to your boys in the direction of their education and the advancement of their objects in life."

And Mrs. Herbert consented, and Ellen's puzzle was solved.

It was decided that Mrs. Herbert should remove in the following October. In the mean time Mary and Ellen would both remain with her, while Mr. Villars would return to H—, to make the necessary arrangements for her reception there. Mrs. Merrill had been delighted at being recalled as Mr. Villars' housekeeper; her happiness was complete when she learned that he was again to live alone. Mr. Villars took care, however, that Mrs. Herbert's house should be so near his own that no weather should prevent daily intercourse between her family and himself. In this house, when I next visited H—, I found my young friends established.

Ellen I soon discovered was as great a favorite with her young companions, and as welcome a guest at their gatherings, as her sister Mary. Calling at Mrs. Herbert's one morning, I found Ellen and Mary dressed for a walk, which I insisted they should not give up on account of my visit; so after chatting a while with me, they went out. After they reached the door Ellen turned around, saying earnestly, "Remember, Uncle Villars."

"Yes, gipsy," said Mr. Villars playfully; "and do you remember that I mean to say no to your very next request, just to prove that I have a will of my own."

Ellen did not seem much disturbed by this threat, for she laughed gayly as she closed the door.

"I suspect, sir," said I, "that it is difficult to tell which has most influence now, the sun or the wind," alluding to the names which he had formerly given the sisters.

"No—no," replied he, "the truth is, they are both suns now, and the consequence is, that they make me do just what they please."

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AUNT KITTY'S TALES ***

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