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Joanna H. Mathews**

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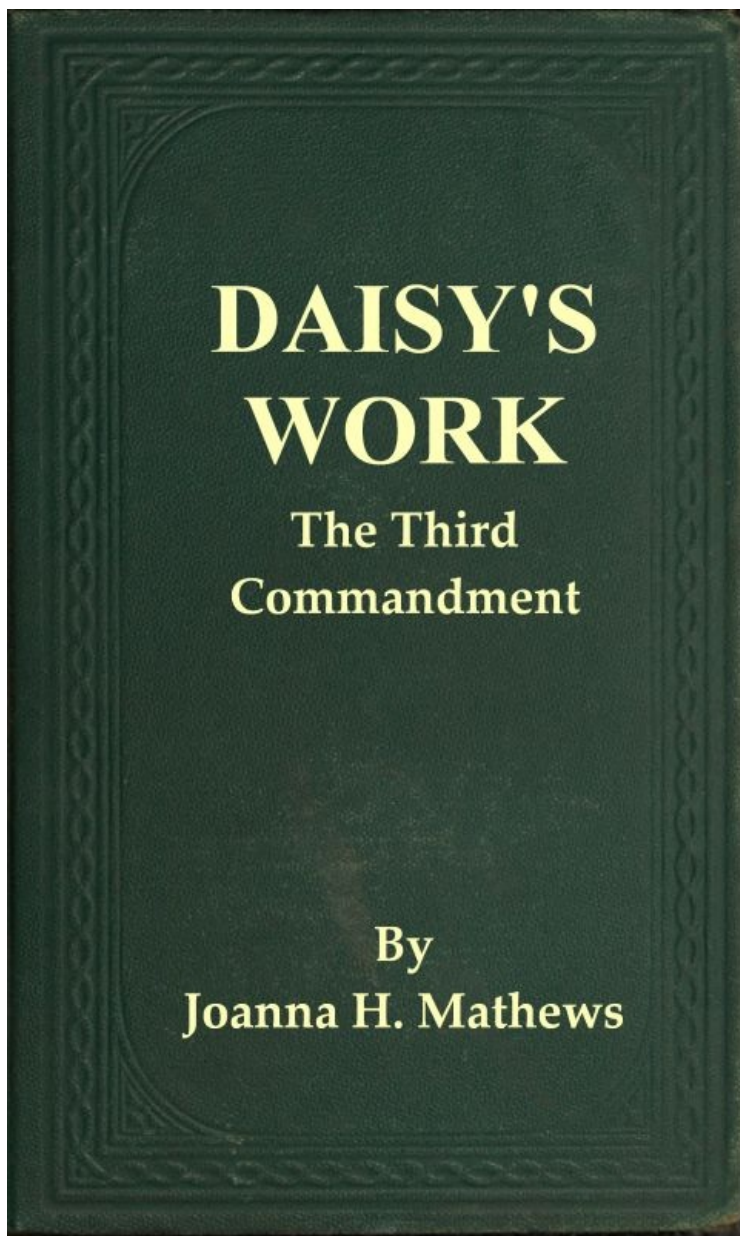
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DAISY'S WORK.

The Third Commandment.

BY
JOANNA H. MATHEWS,
AUTHOR OF THE "BESSIE BOOKS."

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

"Let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."



NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER AND BROTHERS,
530, BROADWAY.
1870.



TO

MY DEAR LITTLE COUSIN,

LULU CHAUNCEY.



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THE LITTLE FLOWER-GIRL.



DAISY'S WORK.

I.

THE LITTLE FLOWER-GIRL.

THERE stood our Daisy. What a Daisy it was too; what a fair, sweet floweret; pure and innocent-looking as the blossoms over which she bent. There she stood beside her basket of flowers, a little spot of brightness and beauty amidst all the dust and heat and turmoil of the

noisy street, on that warm summer afternoon.

It was a street which ran beside a great railroad depot. Porters, carmen, and hackmen were calling, shouting, and swearing; passengers were hurrying by to catch the trains which were starting every few minutes; carriages driving up with their loads of ladies and children; and farther down the street were great trucks laden with freight, and express-wagons filled with baggage, which the railroad porters were unloading with a great amount of noise and crash; and amongst it all was Daisy, standing opposite the door of the ladies' entrance.

[12]

But not one of all those passers-by knew that she was a "Daisy," or that those were her namesakes which she held so lovingly in her little hands. Now and then one stopped to buy one of the five or ten cent bouquets, so tastefully arranged, which lay in her basket; and almost all who did so had a kind word to give the child; for there was something in her look and air which pleaded for tenderness and sympathy. It did not seem that this was her proper place; for even in her homely dress she looked so dainty and delicate, and moved and spoke so like a little lady, that it was easy to see that she had been accustomed to a different kind of life. But all who noticed her, or stopped to buy her flowers, were in such haste that none had time for more than a passing interest in the child, and contented themselves with wondering and pitying.

[13]

[14]

Down the street came a lady with a little girl, the latter skipping and jumping as she held her mother's hand. No wonder the little one was happy, and as full of play and merry pranks as any kitten; for she had been spending such a pleasant day with mamma in the city, and was now going back with "such lots to tell about and heaps of pretty things" to her own lovely country home.

"Oh, see, mamma!" she said, as her eye fell upon the other child, "see those pretty flowers that dear little girl is selling. She is just about as large as Lola Swan, and *don't* she look nice and sweet. Won't you buy some flowers from her, mamma?"

[15]

"You have plenty of flowers at home, dear Lily, and we have about as much as we can carry now," answered her mother.

"Oh, dear mamma, but those little brenkays" (bouquets, Lily meant) "would take up such a tiny mite of room, and I want you to buy some for kindness to the little girl. She looks so sorry out of her eyes, mamma."

Moved by the pleadings of her little daughter, Mrs. Ward turned toward the flower-girl, whom in her hurry she had nearly passed without a look, and asked the price of her bouquets.

"What a pretty pot of daisies! Can't I have that, mamma?" asked Lily.

[16]

But at this the flower-girl drew back and put one hand over the pot of daisies she held in the other, as if she feared it was to be taken from her by force.

"I'll ask papa to carry them for me, mamma," said Lily.

"Ho! ho!" said a cheery voice behind her, "so you think papa has nothing better to do than turn expressman and carry all your traps, do you? I wonder how many bundles are already waiting in the depot for me to put safely in the cars;" and turning about Lily saw her father, who had overtaken his wife and little girl.

"Oh! lots and lots!" said Lily, jumping about with new glee as she saw him. "We bought something for everybody, papa; and I bought a present for your birthday to-morrow; but it is a secret. Mamma is going to fill it with ink and I'll put it on your writing-table 'fore you come down in the morning; but you won't ask what it is, will you?"

[17]

"Not on any account," said Mr. Ward. "But you must make haste and buy your flowers, or we shall not find good seats in the cars. So you want these daisies, do you? How much are they, my child?"

But again the flower-girl drew back.

"I couldn't sell them, sir," she said; "at least not now, not if,—"

"Oh! they are for some favorite customer, hey? You see, Lily, you can't have them. Well, pick out your bouquets; we'll hang them about our necks if we can't carry them any other way," said Mr. Ward. "This is the little girl I told you about, my dear," turning to his wife, who had been looking at the sweet, sad face of the young flower vender.

[18]

"What is your name, my child?" asked the lady.

"My name is—they call me Margaret," said the child, with hesitation in her voice and manner, and a sudden flush breaking over her face.

"There," said Mr. Ward, when, having paid for the flowers which Lily had chosen, he hurried his wife and daughter away; "there, my dear, I did not say too much about that child, did I?"

[19]

"Why no," said Mrs. Ward, looking back to the small figure beside its basket of flowers, "there is certainly something very interesting about her. Her speech and manner, as well as her looks, are strangely refined and lady-like for one in her position. I wish we had time to talk more to her."

The flower-girl looked after them and sighed,—a long, weary sigh, as she watched the frolicsome Lily.

"Most all little girls have their fathers and mothers," she said softly to herself; "but I don't have either. I wonder why God did take both of mine away; if He didn't know how lonesome I would be, or why He didn't take me too. I don't see what good I can be to Him all alone by myself, except Betty and Jack. But then He knows, and maybe He only wants me to be patient till He's ready to take me."

[20]



But the wistful eyes brightened again, as, having watched Lily and her friends disappear within the door of the depot, she turned them the other way to see if new customers were coming.

"There he comes," she said, as her eye fell upon a tall, broad-shouldered gentleman coming down the street, "soldier" written in every line and motion of his figure, from the erect, stately head, down to the ringing, military tread of his firm foot.

[21]

"Good afternoon, little woman," he said, returning with a pleasant smile her welcoming look; "is my wife's bouquet all ready?"

Taking from the corner of her basket a bouquet somewhat larger than the rest, and of rather choicer flowers, she held it up to him.

"Thank you, sir," she said, as she received the price; and then, with rising color, added, "would it be too much trouble to carry this to the lady?"

"Too much trouble? No! How much is it?" he said, putting his hand again into his pocket.

"Oh! sir, I didn't mean that. I didn't want to sell it, but to give it to you, if you would take it to the lady you buy flowers for every day. I want to send it to her because you are so kind to me, and because—because you put me in mind of—of somebody."

[22]

"That is it, is it?" said the gentleman. "Well, I can't refuse such a pretty gift, so prettily offered. And who do I put you in mind of, pray?"

"Of my papa, sir. You do look like him."

"Humph!" said the gentleman, not much pleased at the idea that he was like the father of this little poor child, above her station though she looked. "And these are daisies, hey? My wife will like them."

"General, do you mean to miss the train?" said an acquaintance, as he passed.

[23]

"Not with my own consent, certainly," said the gentleman. "I shall thank you for the lady tomorrow, my little girl."

But as he turned to go, his foot slipped upon a piece of orange-peel, thrown down by some careless person, and he had nearly fallen. He would have been down altogether but for his little companion; but as he involuntarily put out his hand, she caught it; and that support, frail and slight as it was, was sufficient to steady him.

Kind of heart, noble and generous though he was, the soldier was hasty-tempered and quick, and an oath—a fearful oath—burst from his lips.

[24]

"Ah, you were my good angel. You have saved me from a bad fall," he said almost in the same breath, but in a very different tone and manner, as he turned to the child.

His good angel! Ah, yes! More than he knew, his good angel. Those little hands should from this time hold him from falling into the sin of which he had just been guilty.

Years ago General Forster would have been shocked at the thought of letting such words escape his lips, though even then he was none too reverent or careful in speaking of sacred persons or things; but in the bustle and excitement of war he had, alas! like many another brave man, allowed himself to fall into the habit of taking God's holy name in vain. But careless though he might be before men in moments of forgetfulness, or when his hasty temper got the better of him, he seldom or never suffered himself to use such words before women or children; why, you shall learn.

[25]

"Why, have I hurt you?" he asked, seeing with surprise her startled and troubled face.

"No, sir, oh! no," she answered, catching her breath, "but, but"—

"Well, but what?"

"But I am so sorry;" and that she was so was proved, as she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears.

"Sorry for what?" he asked.

[26]

She gave him no answer, but shrank a little away.

"Sorry for what?" he repeated, as if determined to know; and the tone of command, which seemed to say he was used to instant obedience, forced her to speak, whether she would or no.

"Sorry for those words you said, sir," she sobbed.

"Those words? What words?" But his question answered itself as it was spoken; for his wicked words, which but for this would have been forgotten the next instant, came back to him, and he stood rebuked before this poor little flower-girl. He repented already; but repented only because he had distressed this simple child, in whom he took so much interest, not yet because he had grieved and offended the Holy One whose name he had profaned.

[27]

Still he was vexed too.

"Why, you don't mean to say," he said rather impatiently, "that you never hear such words as those, standing here as you do, half the day, with those rough men and boys about you?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" she said, plaintively. "I do hear such words, often, often. I try not to; but I can't help it, you see; and it makes me so sorry. But I thought those poor men and boys could not know how to read, and had never been taught better, or perhaps they did not know what God had said in His commandments. But I did not think gentlemen said such things; and I liked you *so* much."

[28]

And did she like him less now? He, the *gentleman*, the rich man, felt that he could not wish to lose the respect and liking of this little child whom he thought so far beneath him, and he was ashamed and sorry. He knew that it was not impertinence, but only her innocent simplicity and truthfulness, which had caused her to say what she did. But to know that he was in the wrong and to acknowledge it, were one and the same thing with this true-hearted man.

"You are right, Margaret," he said, forgetting how fast the moments were flying. "*Gentlemen* should not say such things, especially before ladies and children. It is bad manners; but I forgot myself just then."

[29]

She took her hands from her face and looked up at him. There was an unspoken question in the clear, earnest eyes, and it was plain that she was not yet satisfied.

"Well," he said smiling at her, "what troubles you still? Let me have it all."

"I was only thinking what difference could it make, sir."

"What difference could what make?"

"Whether it was ladies and children who heard it, sir," she answered timidly. "God hears it all the same, doesn't He? And it can't make any difference to Him who else hears it."

[30]

She looked up as she spoke at the blue sky overhead, and the look and the words brought to him a sudden sense of God's constant presence and nearness. He had known it well enough before,—that the Almighty Eye saw him always; that the Almighty Ear heard him always; but he had never felt it as he did now. The gentle, timid reproof had gone far deeper than the little giver had intended, and her hearer felt ashamed that he had confessed to her that he would pay a respect to a woman or child which he did not feel it needful to pay to his Maker. He could make her no answer.

"*You* behind time, General?" said the voice of another friend as he hurried past; and the scream of the warning whistle told the gentleman that he had no time to lose.

[31]

"I'll see you to-morrow. Good-by, my child. God bless you," he said hurriedly, and rushed away.

But just in time; he was the last passenger, and stepped upon the platform of a car as the train was put in motion. The jar threw him once more a little off his balance, and he caught by the rail to save himself, while again hasty, profane words rose to his lips.

But they did not pass them. What though no human ear should hear; "God heard them all the same," and they were checked before even the summer wind could catch them; and in their place the angels carried up the heart-breathed prayer, "God keep me from them in time to come." [32]

His next neighbor in the cars thought General Forster remarkably silent and unsociable that afternoon. He would not talk, but buried himself behind his newspaper. If the neighbor had looked closer he would have seen that the General's eyes were fixed, not on the paper held before his face, but on the little pot of daisies which rested on his knee. And over the delicate pink and white blossoms was breathed a vow,—a vow registered in heaven and faithfully kept on earth.



[33]

A CLUSTER OF DAISIES.



[34]

[35]

II.

A CLUSTER OF DAISIES.

"WHAT are you thinking of, Frank?" said Mrs. Forster, looking at her husband as he stood leaning against the casing of the window, gazing thoughtfully out at the lovely garden beyond.

"Of a bad habit of mine," he answered.

"You have none; at least none that I cannot put up with," she said playfully.

"That's not the question, dear Gertrude," he returned gravely. "It is whether my Maker can put up with it, and I believe that He cannot, since he has said He 'will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.'" [36]

Mrs. Forster colored as she bent her head over the sleeping baby on her lap.

"You did not know, perhaps," her husband said, after a minute's silence, "that I was ever guilty of this—sin?"

"I did know it, Frank; at least I have heard you now and then, when you were speaking to your dogs and horses, or even when you were a little impatient with the men. But you did not mean me to hear such words; and I noticed you never used them in my presence." [37]

"No," he said a little sadly: "I would not speak in my wife's presence words which were not fit for her to hear; but I forgot an ear still purer, which I was insulting and defying. That is the second thrust I have had to-day, Gertrude, which has made me feel that I have treated the Almighty with less of reverence and respect than I would show to some of my fellow-creatures. Let me tell you of the innocent lesson I received from the little flower-girl, who sent the daisies to you."

And sitting down beside her, he told her of the teaching which had come to him from the little wayside blossom; to whose lonely, thirsting heart his few kind words and smiles had been as drops of dew from heaven. [38]

But even while they talked of her and her pretty lady-like ways and sayings, which seemed so far above her station, they did not know she was a "Daisy," and that those were her namesakes over which Mrs. Forster bent, dropping happy tears and kisses on them, mingled with many a blessing on the little giver.

Plucking one of the flowers from the stem, she opened her baby's tiny hand and placed it within it. The fairy fingers closed around it, clasping it tight, while the unconscious little one slept on.

"Her name is Gertrude, but we'll call her Daisy, Frank, as soon as she is old enough to be [39]

called any thing but baby," said the young mother, "and her pretty pet name may serve as a reminder of this day's lesson, if ever it should be forgotten."

"You think I may need it," said her husband, smiling. "I trust not; for the sin, to say nothing of the vulgarity, of taking God's name in vain, has been set forth so plainly by my innocent little teacher, that I must have a short memory, indeed, if I failed to remember her lesson. She thought *gentlemen* must know better."

"But, dear," said the lady, "you said you would inquire about this child, and see if we could not be of some use to her." [40]

"So I did," he answered; "and so I will, and should have done long since; but day after day I have let business or pleasure keep me till I had but just time to catch the train, and none to bestow on the poor little creature who seems to have been so grateful for the few kind words I have given her. You think I am rather fanciful about this child, I know, Gertrude; but I am convinced that some of her few years must have been spent among different people than those by whom she is now surrounded. Nor am I the only one of her customers who has noticed the grace of her speech and manners, so uncommon in a child of her class. Ward, and others beside, have seen it; but like myself have never made it their business to see after her. However, to-morrow afternoon, I shall make it a point to be at the depot in time to have a talk with her. I wonder if the woman who keeps the fruit-stall at the corner, and whose child I believe she is, would give her up and let her go to school." [41]

He was as good as his word; and more than an hour earlier than usual, our little flower-girl saw "her gentleman" coming down the street towards the depot. It was an eager, wistful little face, with some questioning fear in it, that she raised to him, for she was anxious lest she should have offended her kind friend, as she had learned to think him, by her plain speech of the day before. [42]

She had scarcely meant to speak so plainly; the words had seemed to escape her without her intending it, and, it was true, had been drawn forth by the gentleman's own questions; but when she remembered them afterwards she feared that he would think her rude and disrespectful.

She need not have been afraid. His eye and voice were even kinder than usual as he came near to her, and he laid his hand gently on her head, saying,—

"Well, my little woman! and how does the world go with you to-day? The lady told me to thank you very much for the daisies."

The young face brightened. [43]

"Did she like them, sir?"

"Very much indeed,—all the more because she has a little one at home whom she is going to call 'Daisy' after your pretty flowers."

"Is she your little girl, sir?"

"Yes, she is a mite of a Daisy, but a very precious one," he answered; then looking into the flushed face, with its soft, shining eyes and parted lips, he added, "You are a Daisy yourself."

The flowers she held dropped at her feet unheeded as she clasped both hands upon her breast, and with quick-coming breath and filling eyes, asked eagerly, "How *did* you know it, sir? how did you know it?"

"Know what, my child? What troubles you?" [44]

"How did you know I was Daisy?" she almost gasped.

"I did not know it," he answered in surprise. "Is your name Daisy? I thought it was Margaret."

"They call me Margaret, sir,—Betty and Jack; but Daisy is my *own, own* name, that papa and mamma called me," she answered, recovering herself a little.

"And where are your papa and mamma?" he asked. "I thought the woman who keeps the fruit-stall at the corner was your mother."

"Oh, no, sir!" she said. "She is only Betty. She is very good to me, but she is not mamma. Mamma was a lady," she added, with simple, childish dignity, which told that she was a lady herself. [45]

"But *where* are your father and mother?" he repeated, with fresh interest in the child.

"Mamma is drowned, sir; and we could never find papa," she answered, with such pathos in her tones.

"Come into the depot with me," said General Forster: "I want to talk to you."

She obeyed, and, taking up her basket, followed him into the waiting-room, where, heedless of the many curious eyes around, he made her sit down beside him, and drew from her her sad, simple story:—how long, long ago she had lived with papa and mamma and her little brother and baby sister in their own lovely home, far away from here; where it was, she did not know, but in quite a different place from the great bustling city which she had never seen till she came here [46]

with Betty and Jack; how she had left home with mamma and the baby on a great ship, where to go she could not remember; how Betty was on board, and mamma had been kind to her; how a dreadful storm had come and there was great confusion and terror; and then it seemed as if she went to sleep for a long, long time, and knew nothing more till she found herself living with Betty and Jack in their poor home far up in the city.

They had been very good to her, nursing and caring for her during the many months she had been weak and ailing; and now that she was stronger and better, she tried to help them all she could, keeping the two small rooms tidy, while Betty was away attending to her stall; and in the afternoon selling the flowers which Jack raised in his little garden, and she arranged in tasteful bouquets. And, lastly, she told how from the very first time she had seen General Forster, she thought he "looked so like papa" that she felt as if she must love him, and was so happy when he stopped to buy flowers of her and spoke kindly to her. [47]

The story was told with a straightforward and simple pathos, which went right to the listener's heart, and left him no doubt of its truth. But the child could tell nothing of her own name or her parents', save that she was always called "Daisy" at home, and that she had never since heard the familiar name until to-day, when she thought this stranger had given it to her. Betty and Jack always called her "Margaret;" and Betty thought she knew mamma's name, but she did not. But she loved daisies dearly for the sake of their name, which had been her own; and she had raised and tended with loving care the little plant she had given to "my gentleman" as a token of gratitude for his kindness, and because he was "so like papa." [48]

Having learned all that he could from the child herself, the gentleman went to the fruit-woman on the corner. [49]

"So," he said, "the little girl whom you call Margaret is not your own daughter?"

"Indade, no, sir," answered Betty; "niver a daughter of me own have I barrin' Jack, and he's not me own at all, but jist me sister's son what died, lavin' him a babby on me hands. More betoken that it's not a little lady like her that the likes of me would be raisin', unless she'd none of her own to do it."

"Will you tell me how that came about?"

Betty told the story in her turn, in as plain and simple a manner as the child's, though in language far different. [50]

Her husband had been steward on a sailing vessel running between New Orleans and New York; and about three years ago, she, being sick and ordered change of air, had been allowed to go with him for the voyage. But it made her worse instead of better; and on the return trip she would have died, Betty declared, if it had not been for the kindness and tender nursing of a lady, "Margaret's" mother. This lady—"her name had been Saacyfut, she believed, but maybe she disremembered intirely, for *Margaret* said it was not"—was on her way to New York with her little girl who was sick, a baby, and a French nurse; but her home was neither there nor in New Orleans,—at least so the child afterwards said. [51]

Her own account of the storm was the same as the child's; but while the recollection of the little one could go no further, Betty remembered only too well the horrors of that day.

When it was found that the ship must sink, and that all on board must leave her, there had been, as the little girl said, great confusion. How it was, Betty could not exactly tell; she had been placed in one boat, the French nurse, with the child in her arms, beside her; and the lady was about to follow with the infant, when a spar fell, striking the Frenchwoman on the head and killing her instantly, knocking overboard one of the three sailors who were in the boat,—while at the same time the boat was parted from the ship and at the mercy of the raging waves. In vain did the two sailors who were left try to regain the ship: they were swept further and further away, and soon lost sight of the vessel. They drifted about all night, and the next morning were taken up by a fishing-smack which brought them to New York. [52]

Fright and exposure and other hardships, while they seemed to have cured Betty, were too much for the poor little girl, and a long and terrible illness followed: after which she lay for months, too weak to move or speak, and appearing to have lost all memory and sense. And when at last she grew better and stronger, and reason and recollection came back, she could not tell the name of her parents or her home. [53]

"*Margaret* Saacyfut," Betty persisted in saying the French nurse had called her little charge, "Mamsell *Margaret*," "and if the lady's name wasn't Saacyfut it was mightily nigh to it."

"*Marguerite*" had been the French woman's name for "Daisy:" that the General saw plainly enough, but he could make nothing of the surname.

"But did you not seek for the child's friends, Betty?" he asked.

"Deed did I, sir," she answered. "Didn't I even advertise her, an' how she was to be heerd of, but all to no good. An' I writ to New Orleans to them what owned the ship, but they were that oncivil they niver answered, not they. An' it took a hape of money, sir, to be payin' the paper, an' me such hard work to get along, an' *Margaret* on me hands, an' I had to be done with it. For ye see me man was gone wid the ship, an' niver heerd of along wid the rest to this day; an' I had to use up the bit he'd put by in the savin's bank till the child was mendin' enough for me to lave her [54]

wid Jack."

"It was a very generous thing for you to burden yourself with the care of her," said General Forster.

"Burden is it, sir? Niver a burden was she, the swate lamb, not even when the sense had left her. An' that was what the neighbors was always a sayin', and why didn't I put her in the hospital. An' why would I do that after the mother of her savin' me from a buryin' in the say, which I niver could abide. For sure if it hadn't been for the lady I'd 'a died on the ould ship, and they'd 'a chucked me overboard widout sayin' by your lave; and sure I'd niver have got over such a buryin' as that all the days of me life. And would I be turnin' out her child afther that? An' isn't she payin' me for it now, an' 'arnin' her livin,' an' mine too? She an' Jack tends the bit of a garden, an' arternoons she comes down an' sells her flowers, an' where'd be the heart to refuse her wid her pretty ways and nice manners; a lady every inch of her, like her mother before her." [55] [56]

And thrusting her head out from her stall, Betty gazed down the street with admiring affection on her young *protégée*.

"Och! but she's the jewel of a child," she went on; "and it is surprisin' how me and Jack is improved and become ginteel all along of her. Ye see, sir, I did use to say a hape of words that maybe wer'n't jist so; not that I meant 'em for swearin', but it was jist a way of spakin'. But after *Margaret* began to mend and get about, ye would have thought she was kilt intirely if I let one out of me mouth. So seein' how it hurted her, I jist minded what I was about, an' Jack the same, for he was a boy that swore awful, poor fellow; he'd been left to himself, and how was he to know better? At first him and me minded our tongues, for that the child shouldn't be hurted; but by and by didn't she make it plain to us that it was the great Lord himself what we was offendin', and knowin' she'd been tached better nor me, I jist heeded her. And now, sir, them words that I never thought no harm of and used to come so aisy, I jist leave them out of me spache widout troublin'; and a deal better it sounds, and widout doubt more plasin' to Him that's above. And Jack the same mostly, though he does let one slip now and agin. So ye see, sir, it's not a burden she is at all, at all, but jist a little bit of light and comfort to the house that houlds her." [57] [58]

Glad to find a listener in a "gintleman the likes of him," Betty had talked away to the gentlemen, so taken up with her story, that she paid little heed to the business of her stall. She made wrong change more than once, gave quarts instead of pints, oranges in place of apples, and peanuts for sugar-plums, and provoked some impatient customers not a little; while one wicked boy, seeing her attention was taken up with something else, ran off without paying for the popcorn he asked for, and was not called back. [59]

But Betty lost nothing by the time and thought she had given to the gentleman, or the interest she had shown in her young charge, as she found when she looked at the number upon the note he slipped into her hand when he left her: a note which the warm-hearted Irishwoman laid by "to buy that new gown and pair of shoes *Margaret* needed so bad."



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THE DAISY TRANSPLANTED.



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III. THE DAISY TRANSPLANTED.

"**B**ETTY," said General Forster, stopping the next morning at the fruit-woman's stall, "could you make up your mind to give up that little girl if you were sure it was for her good?"

Betty sighed and shook her head mournfully as she answered,—

"I've always looked to give her up, sir, if them Saacyfuts, or whatever their name'll be, turned up, and if it was for her good, sorra a word would they hear out of me, though I won't say but it [64]

would go hard with me and Jack. But ye'll not be tellin' me ye've been findin' her friends since last night, sir?"

"Not the people she belongs to, certainly, Betty; but I have found those who will be friends to her, and provide for her, if you will consent. She should go to school and be well taught: do you not think so?"

"Indade, an' there's none knows that better nor meself, sir. An' is it yerself that's the friend ye're spakin' of?" and Betty gave a searching look into the gentleman's face.

He smiled. "Yes," he said: "I would like to put her to school and take care of her. She seems a sweet child, and a good one. And you see, Betty, I have it in my power to do more to find her friends than you are able to do, and we may trace them yet. If we never find them, I will promise to provide for her as long as it may be necessary. Are you willing?"

Betty again stared into the face of her questioner as if she would look him through.

"I'm sensible of your kindness, sir," she answered; "but ye see I'm in a way responsible for the child, not to say that she is as dear to me as me own flesh and blood, and I'd say 'yis,' and thank ye kindly, but—ye'll excuse me plain spakin'—ye're a stranger to me, and I couldn't be partin' wid *Margaret* widout I was certified as to yer *karacter*. For if I didn't think she'd be brought up right, niver a foot should she stir to go wid ye. I seen Miss Gertrude Allston a walkin' wid ye once last summer, sir, jist after I set up me stand here, but she niver heeded me wid her swate face. But I used to be laundress in her mother's house afore I was married, and a swate child was Miss Gertrude and a good as ye're sayin' of *Margaret*, and she'll niver go far wrong, I'll answer for it. So, if ye'll jist bring me a line from her and she says ye're all right, I'll not say ye nay."

General Forster laughed heartily, not one whit offended at Betty's "plain spakin'."

"Miss Gertrude Allston, as you call her, will give me all the lines you want, Betty; and she thought me right enough to marry me. She is my wife,—Mrs. Forster."

"An' is it so, sir?" said Betty, dropping the rosy-cheeked apple she was polishing, and gazing at the gentleman with a mixture of curiosity and admiration that was droll to see. "Well, but ye're in luck; and if it's Miss Gertrude that has the managin' of ye, that's *karacter* enough of itself, an' I'll say take the child an' my blessin' on all of yees. But when she gets among yer fine folks, ye'll not let her be forgettin' the woman what cared for her when there was none else to do it: will ye, sir? An' ye'll be lettin' me see her once in a while?"

There is no need to say that this was readily promised, and the General went on to tell Betty what plans he and his wife had for Daisy. She was to be taken for a while to his home, where Mrs. Forster would provide her with proper clothing; and then send her to Miss Collins' boarding-school to be taught and trained in a way to satisfy her friends if they should ever find her, or that she might one day be able to earn her own living, if it should be needful.

"An' I'm glad she should have the bringin' up of a lady which is what I couldn't give her," said Betty, with another sigh, for it went to her heart to part with her darling; "but ye'll not be able to make her more of a lady nor she is now; no, not if ye dress her in gould and jewels, an' silks an' satins. Niver a rough word nor way has she with her, if she has been with me and Jack more nor two year, nor ye couldn't find a purtier behaved child in all the land."

An hour or two later, Betty, having found a friend to "mind" her stall for her, guided General Forster to the tiny house in the suburbs of the city where she lived with Daisy and Jack.

The two children were out in the little garden gathering the flowers which were to be tied up in bouquets for Daisy's afternoon sale; and great was their surprise, when the sound of the gate-latch causing them to look up, they saw Betty coming home at this unusual hour of the day, and the gentleman with her. Their business was soon told; but although Daisy flushed and smiled with astonishment and delight when she heard what the "gentleman who looked so like papa" meant to do for her, the little face soon shadowed over again, and she shook her head gently but firmly when she was asked if she would go.

"An' why for no, dear?" asked Betty. "Sure ye'd niver be for throwin' away a chance the likes of that, not to spake of it's bein' ongrateful to the gentleman's kindness, an' he no more nor less than the husband of Miss Gertrude."

But Daisy shook her head again; and then first begging the gentleman's pardon, as a polite little girl should do, stepped up to her faithful friend, and putting her arms about her neck whispered something in her ear.

The tears she had before with trouble kept back now started to Betty's eyes.

"Och, an' is it that, honey?" she said in her broadest brogue, "an' ye'll not let that be thrubblin' yer dear heart. What a tinder, grateful little sowl it is! Ye see, sir," she went on, turning to the General, while she smoothed with her loving hand the little head which lay upon her breast, "ye see, sir, it's just as I tellt ye. She's a lady, every inch of her, an' has feelin's that's jist uncommon. An' there's a matter of back rint jew, it's more'n a year, though me landlord he's as good as gould, an' a bill at the poticary's, an' little scores at the baker's an' grocers what I niver got paid off yet, not since the child was sick an' I couldn't rightly make things go; an' she says she won't be lavin' us now that she can turn a penny wid her posies an' help along."

Drawing the child to him, General Forster whispered to her in his turn, promising that the "back rint" and other "scores" should be paid off without delay if she would but come with him; and Daisy, feeling herself nearer home and friends than she had ever done since the dreadful day of the shipwreck, when she was parted from "mamma," put her hand trustingly in his to be led where he would. [73]

But the parting went hard. Daisy could not leave those who had been so kind, and shared their little all with her, without many a bitter tear. Betty kissed her and clung to her and called down all heaven's blessings on her head; and Jack hung over the gate, uttering frantic howls as he watched the sobbing child led away by her new protector. Not one thought gave Jack to his fourteen years; not one to the "fellers from beyant the lot," who, drawn by his cries, came flocking to see what ailed him who was all their terror and admiration: their admiration, because he was bigger, stronger, braver than any other boy of his age among their crew; their terror, because of late he allowed no bad word to be used in his presence, banishing all who offended in that way from their games, choosing as his favorites and chief companions those who were most careful not to take God's name in vain. So cursing and swearing had come to be much less frequent than of old among the lanes and lots lying around the humble house where the little Daisy had bloomed and grown during the last two years, dropping upon the path which God had chosen for her good seed of which she knew not herself. [74] [75]

Betty went back to her stand with a heavy heart, knowing that when she went home that night she should miss the sweet little face which had brightened and cheered her after many a hard day's work; but she was half-consoled for her own loss when she saw Daisy coming down the street holding General Forster's hand. For the General's first care had been to take the little girl to a place where children's clothes could be had ready-made; and where he had her fitted out, as Betty said, "as nice as a new pin and as became the little lady she was by right."

But Daisy was as much a lady in the coarse but clean calico frock and patched shoes she had worn yesterday, as she was now in the nice clothes provided for her by General Forster; for it was the sweet manners and pretty ways she had never lost which made her so, and the new garments covered as warm and loving a little heart as the old ones had done. And so Betty found, and knew that pride would have no place there, when, as she reached the stand, Daisy drew her hand from the gentleman's, and running behind the stall as she had many a time done when she was eager to show Betty what a good afternoon's sale she had made with her flowers, threw her arms about her neck and kissed her again and again as lovingly as she had done when she had no other friend in the world. [76] [77]

Gentle Mrs. Forster gave Daisy a warm welcome to her new home; and the manner in which the child fell at once into the ways and habits of those about her plainly showed that they were not new to her, but that she had at some time been well accustomed to a different life than that she had led for the last two years.

She had ways of her own, too, that were very charming: a pretty, dainty grace in her behavior and speech; a thoughtfulness and care for others, surprising in any child of her age,—for Daisy could not be more than eight years old,—and particularly so for one who had had little teaching for some time. It was easy to see that Daisy had received careful training at one time, and that the lessons then learned had taken deep root and were not yet forgotten in spite of the long separation from her home and friends. [78]

It had been intended, as General Forster told Betty, to send the little girl to boarding-school at Miss Collins'; but she soon grew so closely to the hearts of her new friends that they felt as if they could not bear to part with her; and it was at last settled that her home was to be with them for the present, at least, and that she should only go to Miss Collins for the morning, as most of the other little girls in Glenwood did. [79]

Mrs. Forster could not bear to send from her this loving child, whose greatest happiness seemed to be in making others happy, and she grew every day more and more interesting as the familiar objects and customs about her called up past recollections of the home and parents she had lost. She would watch the General for hours at a time, as he sat reading or writing, or follow him with wistful eyes as he mounted his horse and rode down the broad avenue "just like papa;" would hang over the lesser Daisy as she lay sleeping, "'cause she looks just as our baby at home used to," and delighted to wait upon her and Mrs. Forster in a dainty, neat-handed manner, which showed that such loving service came quite naturally to her. [80]

She never called the infant "baby," as the rest of the family did. With her it was always "little Daisy." She seemed to love the pretty name, either given to herself or another; and all the variety of choice flowers with which General Forster's garden was filled could not win her chief affection from her old favorite daisies, "'cause mamma loved them so and named me after them."

But though she remembered so much, the child could not recall the name of her parents, or where they had lived. Their name "was not what Betty called it," she was sure; but none the less had it passed from her mind. [81]

"Francine," the French bonne, used to call mamma "Madame," and herself "Mademoiselle Marguerite;" but when she was asked what other people used to call mamma and papa, the little face grew clouded and pained with the effort to remember; and when name after name was mentioned to her, she shook her head at each one.

The General tried by every means in his power to discover the friends who must still be

mourning the loss of their sweet little daisy blossom, but all in vain; and as week after week went by, he and his wife decided that they could not send her forth from their own roof unless her relations came to claim her. She was an added ray of light where all had been brightness and sunshine before,—a lovely, precious little flower, lending new fragrance and beauty to the home where she blossomed.

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DAISY'S SISTER FLOWERETS.



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IV.

DAISY'S SISTER FLOWERETS.

"GOODNESS gracious! mercy *me!*"

"I didn't mean to, Susy; 'pon my word and honor I didn't; just as sure as I'm alive."

Such were the words uttered by two different little voices which our Daisy heard, as holding by General Forster's hand, she reached the gate of Miss Collins' garden on the first morning of her going to school in Glenwood.

Now would it not have been thought that some terrible misfortune must have called forth that exclamation from the first young speaker; or that the second thought herself accused of some dreadful crime, and that she must prove her innocence at once by all the strong words she could think of, if she would escape severe punishment?

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And what was this mighty matter?

Why, just this.

Susy Edwards and several of her schoolmates were "making a land of Egypt." For of late the geography lesson of the young class had been upon that country, and they had been much interested in the pictures of the pyramids and Sphinx. And Susy, who "liked to make her knowledge of use in her plays," and who was considered by the other children to have a great genius in that way, had proposed that they should turn a portion of their play-ground into Egypt. This was thought a capital plan, and the recess of the day before had been employed in this way,—the little planners and builders leaving it with great regret, and returning to it before school-time that morning with fresh pleasure and some new ideas.

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The gravel walk was supposed to be the desert; the trough which led the waste water from the spring, the River Nile; while a jointed wooden doll, cruelly deprived for the purpose of all its limbs, had half of its remainder buried in the gravel, to represent the Sphinx. Any number of pyramids, four or five inches high, had been built out of pebbles, and several were still going up.

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And Lily Ward, the pet and darling of the school, the youngest child, and till that day the newest scholar there, had brought that morning a tiny doll's bath-tub, with a doll to match lying in it, saying it was to be "Moses in the bulrushes, for it couldn't be a real land of Egypt without a Moses."

Lily's idea was received with great applause and admiration, and she felt rather proud of it herself when she heard it so much praised.

But a difficulty arose. The little tub did duty for the ark of bulrushes most beautifully, it was

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"so real and so cunning;" and never was a meeker baby than the one which lay so quietly within it. But he must be hidden, and nothing could be found to answer for flags. The grass about the mock River Nile was quite too short for that purpose, trampled on as it was through each day's playtime by at least twenty pairs of little feet; and the willow twigs which Lola Swan planted would not stand up straight enough to make a shade for the ark.

"There isn't time to plant them deep enough," said Lola; "the school-bell will ring in a few moments, and then we'll have to leave it."

"And the sun will go and come round here before recess," said Lily, in a tone of distress, "and Moses will be all sunburned. Besides, it isn't a bit real: they never leave babies lying out in the sun." [90]

"Put him out on the grass and turn the ark upside-down over him till we come out again," said Susy.

But Lily scouted the idea of having her Moses treated in this way; and all began at once to deepen the holes for the willow twigs before the bell should ring.

But suddenly a bright thought struck Lily.

"Let's play Moses' mother and Miriam put a pyramid over him," she said. "We could do that pretty quick, and it will be nice and shady for him, and very real too, 'cause they did have pyramids in Egypt." [91]

All agreed readily, for this was thought an excellent arrangement, and they fell to work as fast as possible; while Bessie Norton whispered to Violet Swan, "What a smart child Lily is, isn't she?"

"Yes," said Violet, in the same tone, "very; and I expect when she is grown up she will do something very remarkable."

"What?" asked Susy Edwards, who heard them.

"Be a genius, I expect," answered Violet, solemnly.

"Oh, how nice!" said Bessie, who had not the least idea what genius meant, but did not like to say so.

The pyramid over the sleeping Moses was nearly completed, the little builders expecting each moment to hear the bell, when Lola Swan, coming with a fresh supply of pebbles, tripped over a stick which lay upon the grass, and, trying to recover herself, let her load fall around and upon the half-built pyramid, knocking down half a dozen or so of the stones which composed it. Not much harm was done, but Susy immediately exclaimed,— [92]

"Goodness gracious! mercy me!" and Lola answered as you have heard in the words which met Daisy's ear as she and General Forster entered the garden.

The click of the gate-latch caused all the children to look up, and Moses and the pyramids were for the moment forgotten at the sight of the new scholar. [93]

"Why! there's Daisy Forster," said Lily, for Daisy was now known by this name.

"I wonder if she's coming here to school," said another; and that question was speedily answered, as, stopping by the little group, the General, whom all knew and liked, said, "Here's a new schoolmate for you. Will you be kind to her, and make her feel at home?"

"Yes, sir, we will; and I'll take care of her," said Lily, scrambling to her feet and taking Daisy's hand in a patronizing manner. "She won't feel much strange after one day, 'cause we'll all be good to her, and she shall help us make our land of Egypt." [94]

"Ah! that is what you are doing, is it?" said the General.

"Yes, sir," answered Lily; "we're just putting a pyramid over Moses in the bulrushes, 'cause we hav'n't time to fix so many bulrushes till recess. And part of it is knocked down. Lola did it, but she didn't mean to, and if you peep in there between those stones you can see a little bit of the ark and Moses' dear little china arm poking up. Please to peek, sir."

The General did as he was requested, saying that he saw Moses quite plainly.

"It isn't much matter if we do have to leave him now," said Lily; "he's pretty nicely covered up." [95]

"I think so," said the General, gravely; "and if I were Moses, with a pyramid being built over me, I think I should prefer to have a small breathing-hole left."

"Why, so he would," said Lily; "and now we can leave him nicely fixed, and play he's very comfortable in his pyramid, even if it's not quite done."

Lily being satisfied with the fate of Moses, all the rest were so; and the bell now ringing, the little group turned towards the house. Daisy wondering, as well she might, that a matter which was so easily settled should call for such violent expressions of distress and alarm as she had heard from two of the little girls. [96]

"Why, Miss Collins," said General Forster, as that lady met them at the door, "what a bouquet of flowers you have here! A Rose, a Violet, a Daisy, and a Lily; as choice a nosegay as one could

wish for."

"And the Lily is going to take care of the Daisy, and make her feel to home, Miss Collins," said Lily, who still held Daisy's hand. "The General said I could."

"No, he didn't," said Susy.

"Yes, he *did*, 'pon my word he did; least I said I would do it, and he didn't say I couldn't: did you, sir?" said Lily, throwing back her head to look up at the General's tall figure. [97]

"And that comes to the same thing, does it, Lily?" he said, laughing; "well, I suppose it does; and I promise you shall look after Daisy till she feels no longer a stranger among you."

"She knows me, and Loly and Violet, as well as any thing," said Lily; for the little girls had met several times before, and Lily felt herself and the two Swans to be on rather intimate terms with Daisy Forster.

"All right, then. I leave her to you. Good-morning, Miss Collins," and with a bow to the lady, with whom he had before made all the necessary arrangements for Daisy, a pleasant nod for the little ones, and a kiss for Daisy, he went away. [98]

Daisy felt rather lonely when he was gone, in spite of Miss Collins' kind look, Lily's tight clasp of the hand, and Violet's, "We have real nice times in school. Don't be afraid." For she was far more shy with children than she was with grown people, probably because she had never had any companions of her own age; and the number of young faces, most of them strange, about her, made her long to be back again at Mrs. Forster's side. And they all looked at her a good deal, for her story was well known among them, and she was an object of great curiosity.

Lily observed this, as she took her seat with Daisy beside her, and thought she must speak up for her charge. [99]

"Miss Collins," she said, "please to make a rule."

"Well," said Miss Collins, smiling; for Lily was constantly asking for new rules concerning things which did not suit her. She had begun with this more than a year ago when she was only a visitor at the school; and she was even now not a regular scholar, but only coming for a few weeks. For her papa and mamma had gone on a journey, and Lily, being lonely at home when Ella and the boys were at school, it had been arranged that she was to go with Ella in the morning. So she was rather a privileged person, and spoke her mind freely concerning that which did not please her, which the other children thought rather a joke, and were generally ready enough to fall in with Lily's rules. So now they all listened. [100]

"Please to make a rule that nobody must stare, ma'am," said Lily: "it makes people feel so to be stared at,"—and Lily put up both hands to her cheeks,— "specially if they are new."

"Very true," answered Miss Collins: "let us all try to remember the Golden Rule, and then we shall neither stare nor do any thing else to hurt another's feelings."

Then she struck the little bell which stood upon her table, and all knew the school had begun, and they must be quiet.

Next calling Bessie Norton to her, Miss Collins gave her a number of Bibles, and the little girl handed one to each of her classmates. Then Miss Collins read a verse aloud, and the children followed, each in her turn. [101]

"Minnie Grey may take the Bibles," said Miss Collins when this was done.

Minnie rose, and went from one to another collecting the Bibles. But instead of taking as many as she could conveniently carry at one time, giving them to Miss Collins, and coming back for the rest, she went on piling one on top of another, till one arm was quite full, when she came to Daisy and held out her other hand for her book. As she did so, the top one of the pile fell to the floor. Minnie stooped for it, and down went two or three more. [102]

"Oh! bother the old things," said Minnie, in a low voice, but very impatiently.

Daisy had stooped to help her pick up the Bibles, but the glow her cheeks wore when she raised her head again was not all owing to that.

Bother the old things! What old things? Why, the Bibles, God's own Holy Word.

Daisy was very much shocked, and she looked up at Miss Collins, expecting to hear her reprove such *wicked words*, *she* thought them.

But Miss Collins had not heard Minnie's exclamation, though the noise of the falling books had called her attention that way, and she said,— [103]

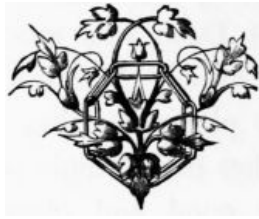
"Minnie, my dear, you are careless with those Bibles: do you forget whose books they are?"

"I don't care," muttered Minnie, but not so that the lady could hear. Daisy heard again; and the thought passed through her mind, "What a wicked little girl Minnie must be!"

And yet Daisy was mistaken. If she had asked Minnie's parents, teacher, or playmates, they would all have told her that Minnie was an uncommonly good and pleasant little girl; truthful,

obedient, industrious, and generous and obliging towards others. She had no thought now that she was breaking one of God's commandments; and she would have been both offended and grieved, if she had known what was in Daisy's mind, believing herself, as she did, to be innocent of any wrong.

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DAISY AT STUDY.



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V.

DAISY AT STUDY.

DAISY was soon at home with her schoolmates, and a great favorite among them.

It was not strange that they liked and were interested in her. She was such a gentle, modest, amiable little girl; watching and joining in the games and lessons of the others with a kind of innocent wonder which amused and touched them all. For Daisy was not at all accustomed to be with children of her own age, and their ways were all new to her.

And of course she was behind all the rest in her studies. She could not even read as well as Lily Ward; and had to begin with the simplest lessons, such as Lily and two or three of the very youngest children learned. At first this troubled her, and she feared the rest of the class would laugh at her.

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But she soon found she need not have been afraid of that, for the rule of Miss Collins' infant class was the law of kindness; and any one of the little girls would have thought it almost a crime to laugh or mock at Daisy, for that which was her misfortune and not her fault.

They might now and then fall out a little among themselves, for they were by no means perfect children; sometimes there would be some selfishness shown, or even a few angry words pass from one to another; but, on the whole, they agreed about as well as any twenty little girls could be expected to do; and not one among them would have had the heart purposely to do an unkind thing to another. Least of all to Daisy Forster, whom they all looked upon with a kind of tender pity and interest, because of her sad and romantic history; and who was at once taken up by both teacher and scholars as a sort of twin pet with Lily, for whom allowances were to be made, and who was to be encouraged and aided as much as possible.

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So Daisy found plenty of helpers, who, so far from laughing at her mistakes and backwardness, were rather inclined to think her quick and industrious, as indeed she was, trying hard to make up for lost time, and "catch up" with those of her own age.

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She was almost too eager about this, and had to be checked now and then, for since the long illness which had followed the shipwreck, Daisy had never been strong; and too much fatigue or study, or even too much play, would make her nervous and sick, and her little head would become confused and ache. So now and then Mrs. Forster would have to take the books from her, and forbid more study, sending her out to play, or to work in the plot of ground which had been given her for a garden of her own.

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She was not always pleased at this, and sometimes would be rather fretful and impatient. But Mrs. Forster soon found a way to put a stop to this.

One afternoon she found the little girl bending over her slate with flushed and heated cheeks, anxious eyes, and trembling hands.

"Daisy," she said, quietly, "what are you doing? Miss Collins has not given you lessons out of school, has she?"

"No, ma'am," said Daisy; "but I asked Ella Ward to set me a whole lot of sums so that I could do them at home, and I can't make this one come right. I know it is not right, 'cause Ella put the answers on the other side of the slate, and mine won't come the same, all I can do." [112]

Mrs. Forster took the slate from her hand.

"This sum is too hard for you, Daisy," she said: "you do not know enough arithmetic for this."

"It is not any harder than the sums Lola and Violet and the other girls as large as I am do," answered Daisy, looking ready to burst out crying; "and I have to do arithmetic with the very little ones, like Lily, and it makes me ashamed; so I want to go on all I can. *Please* give me the slate again, Aunt Gertrude," she added, as Mrs. Forster laid it beyond her reach. [113]

"No, dear. I do not wish you to study out of school. I am glad you want to improve, but you have as much to do there as is good for you; and at home I want you to have rest and play. You are improving quite as fast as could be expected, and for a time you must be content to go on with those who are younger than yourself."

"But it makes me ashamed," pleaded Daisy, again.

"There is no reason for that," said Mrs. Forster, patting the hot cheek she raised towards her. "The other children do not laugh at you and make you uncomfortable, do they?"

"Oh, no, ma'am," said Daisy; "they are all so good to me, and when they can't help seeing what a dunce I am" (here Daisy's tears overflowed), "they always say kind things about how I never went to school before, and how my own dear mamma was drowned, and there was nobody to teach me till I came to you." [114]

"You are not a dunce, dear," said the lady. "A child who idles away her time when she should be studying, and does not care whether or no she learns as much as is fit for her, is a dunce: not a little girl who really wishes to be industrious, but does not know quite as much as others of her own age only because God has not given her the same advantages in time past. No one will think my Daisy a dunce. Now, we must have no more studying at home, no more lessons than those Miss Collins sets you." [115]

Daisy did not look satisfied: on the contrary, she even pouted a little.

"Daisy," said Mrs. Forster, "suppose Uncle Frank were to give you some beautiful and costly thing which would be of great use to you in time to come if you took good care of it, say a watch: what would you do with it?"

"Why! I *would* take great care, oh! such care of it," said Daisy, opening her eyes in some surprise at the question. She did not see what that could have to do with her studies.

"I'd wind it up every night, and try to keep it right and safe every way I could. But I don't know if I am quite large enough to have a watch of my own, or take care of it; maybe the best way would be to ask you or Uncle Frank to keep it for me till I was older." [116]

"And suppose for a while he gave you no key to this watch, but let it run down and be quiet?"

"I'd just put it away till he gave me a key, and be patient about it," said Daisy, wondering more and more.

"And if, by and by, when he gave you this key, you should go on winding and winding the watch farther and faster than it was right for it to go, till the wheels and springs were all spoiled and out of order, would Uncle Frank think you cared much for his gift?" [117]

"Why, no, Aunt Gertrude; and he wouldn't think I cared much for him, either, to use his pretty present so."

"You are right, dear. And now I want my own little Daisy to see how it is with herself. God has given to you a young mind, bright and quick enough; but, for a while, He did not choose that it should do much work. But now He has given you the key by which you may wind it and set it to work; and if you use it without proper care, and so as to hurt and wear out this precious gift, would it not seem as if you cared very little about it, and did not respect and honor the Giver?" [118]

"Yes'm," answered Daisy, beginning to see what Mrs. Forster meant; "but I never thought about that."

"I believe I never thought about it before, dear," said Mrs. Forster, smiling. "I am not afraid to praise you, Daisy; and I may safely say that I have never seen any little child who showed such true honor and reverence for her Maker, and all which belongs to Him. You must have been well taught, my child; and to know and remember such lessons is worth all the book learning in the world."

Daisy was pleased, as she always was when any one spoke to her of her long-lost home, or praised the teaching she had received from those who had loved and cared for her there. And [119]

from this time there was no further trouble about the lessons; for it was enough for Daisy to know that she was misusing any one of God's good gifts, to make her change her ways. Many a lesson might have been learned, and, indeed, had been learned, by those older and wiser than herself, from the loving care and respect paid by this little one to her Creator's name, and to all the works of His hand.

And it was a great trouble to her to hear the careless way in which many of her schoolmates used sacred names and things. They did not mean any harm; they did not think it any sin; but every day Daisy was shocked and distressed by hearing such words as "mercy," "gracious," "goodness," and "good heavens," and the like, from the lips of the other children, as they were about their play and study. It had become a habit with nearly all in the school; one caught it from another almost without knowing it; even Lily Ward, who once thought the clergyman "preached a sermon at her" because she said "hush up," now and then followed the example of the others when any thing vexed or surprised her. A few weeks at school had accustomed Lily to the constant use of expressions which a year ago she would have considered "real naughty words."

The older girls in Miss Sarah Collins' room had fallen into this bad habit as much, if not more, than the little ones of the infant class.

And it was not only this carelessness of speech in which they were all, large and small, to blame; but it seemed to Daisy so strange that they could handle and treat the Bible, God's holy Word, with so little reverence and respect, knocking it about among their other books as if it were no better than these last, even using it, sometimes, for purposes to which no book, even the most common one, should be put.

Daisy wondered that Miss Collins did not teach them better; but either she did not notice all this, or she did not think it of much consequence; certain it is that she did not check them, and the evil seemed to Daisy to grow worse from day to day.

At first she did not like to speak herself. You may wonder that this was so, since she had not feared to speak so plainly to General Forster, who was a grown gentleman, so much older than herself; but she had done that almost without knowing what she was saying, for, as you know, his profane words had startled her so that he was surprised, and he had almost forced her to tell him what had disturbed her.

And here she was with every thing strange around her, school, schoolmates, and teacher all new to her; so it is not astonishing that she was rather shy and felt afraid to interfere with the others, or to tell them that she thought they were doing wrong.

But by and by there came a day when she could no longer hold her peace.



DAISY A TEACHER.



VI.

DAISY A TEACHER.

ONE morning just after school commenced, a heavy shower came up; and when it was time for the recess, which was always given to the infant class at eleven o'clock, the ground was still so wet that the little ones were forced to find amusement within doors or upon the piazza.

"What shall we play?" asked Rosie Pierson.

"Lady Queen Fair," said Bessie Norton: "we'll go out on the piazza and play it."

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"Yes," said Violet; "and Lily shall be Lady Queen Fair, and we'll dress her up a little. Miss Emily," as a third Miss Collins, who gave music lessons to the girls, passed by, "may we have a rose to put in Lily's hair for Lady Fair?"

The young lady smiled, stopped and pulled a couple of roses from the vine which wound itself around one of the pillars of the piazza, and gave them to Violet, then passed on.

Time had been when Violet would have hoped, perhaps would have asked to be Lady Fair herself, and been sulky and displeased if the other children had not agreed; but now she was very different, and more apt to prefer another before herself.

The roses were soon arranged, the one in the hair, the other in the bosom of the little Lady Queen, who took her dignities in the calmest manner. Meanwhile some of the other children were drawing forward one of the rustic chairs with which the piazza was furnished, to serve as a throne. [129]

But the little queen, like many another royal lady before her, found her throne by no means an easy one.

"Ow!" she said, rubbing her little round white shoulders where she had scratched them against the rough bark of the twisted boughs which made the back of the chair, "ow! this is not nice at all, or comfortal. My feet don't come to the floor, and if I lean back I'm all scratched. I'd rather be a queen without a throne." [130]

"Oh, no! You must have a throne," said Susy Edwards. "Queens have to."

"I don't see why," said Lily, rather pettishly; for she did not feel very well that morning, and that and the close heat of the day made her more fretful than usual. "I should think queens could do just as they have a mind to and make their subjiks do it too; and I don't see what they have to have their skin all scraped up for if they don't want to;" and Lily twisted her head to give an aggrieved look at the little fat shoulder with that red mark upon it.

"I'll fix you," said Lola. "I'll put Miss Collins' footstool under your feet and you shall have the big cushion behind you. Some one bring the cushion while I carry the stool." [131]

The footstool was brought in a moment; but the cushion was not to be found.

"The big girls had it yesterday," said Fanny Satterlee. "I saw them with it in their recess when I was going home. There comes Cora Prime now; let's ask her. Cora, what did the big girls do with that cushion yesterday when they had done with it?"

"The Lord knows; I don't," said Cora, playfully tapping Fanny on the head with the roll of music in her hand.

"Oh!" exclaimed Lily. [132]

Daisy did not speak; but as Cora's eye happened to fall upon her, her face said as much as Lily's "Oh!"

"What's the matter with you two?" asked Cora, looking from one to the other of the little girls, but still good-natured.

"You oughtn't to say that," said Lily.

"Ought not to say what?"

"The Lord knows," answered Lily.

"Well, don't He know?" asked Cora.

"No," said Lily, doubtfully, "I guess not. I don't believe He'd bother Himself with knowing about a worn-out old cushion what has a hole in the cover, and such things."

"Yes, He does, too," said Cora, laughing; "are not the very hairs of our head numbered?" [133]

"Now, I *know* you ought to be 'shamed," said Lily. "You're talking Bible; and that is not right, is it, Daisy?"

"No," said Daisy, as boldly as Lily herself could have done, for quoting Scripture in a careless manner was also a habit of many in the school.

"You two saucy monkeys! correcting your elders," said Cora, much amused. "I heard you both talking Bible to Miss Collins this morning with all the rest of your class."

"We were only saying what we learned in Sunday school yesterday," said Lily. "That's not the same thing. I *know* it's not right to talk Bible that kind of a way. Papa says so, and he tells us not to do it." [134]

"Your papa's saying so does not make a thing right or wrong," said Cora.

"Yes, it does, too!" said Lily. "My papa knows a whole lot, and he wouldn't tell a story for any thing. Cora, you'd better go to your music lesson: I 'speck Miss Emily wants you."

"Oh, you are very considerate for Miss Emily, all at once," said Cora, more amused than ever; "but you haven't told me why I shouldn't say, The Lord knows, when He does know."

Lily looked at Daisy, who stood by the arm of her chair, for help. The little one felt that Cora was wrong, but she did not exactly know how to answer, and she had noticed how careful Daisy was to honor the name of God. [135]

"Is it not taking the name of God in vain?" said Daisy.

"Upon my word!" said Cora. "Do you mean to call that swearing?"

"Well, yes," said Lily, taking up the word, "a kind of baby swearing, I s'pose; but you know it's not very good of you, Cora."

"Everybody says such things: they don't mean any thing," said Cora.

"Not *everybody*," answered Lily. "Daisy don't."

"Then Daisy's uncommonly good," said Cora. [136]

"Yes, she is," replied Lily; "and I s'pose *everybody* ought to be uncommonly good and never say them."

Cora laughed again.

"Everybody must mind their p's and q's before you: mustn't they, Lily?" and away she ran to her music lesson.

"Here's the cushion," said Rosie Pierson, running out from the school-room. "I found it in the closet under the shelf where those careless big girls left it, I s'pose."

The cushion was put behind Lily's shoulders, but still the little queen fidgeted on her throne and declared she was not yet "comfortal."

"'Cause if I lean back against the cushion my feet won't touch the stool," she said. [137]

"We'll put something else on the stool to make it higher," said Nettie Prime, who was trying to arrange Lily satisfactorily: "what shall we take? Oh, I know. Daisy, run and bring the big Bible off Miss Collins' table for Lily to put her feet on."

Daisy, who made a motion to start forward as Nettie began to speak, stood still when she heard what she called for.

"Make haste," said the latter, impatiently: "we won't have a bit of time to play."

Daisy did not move, but stood with rising color, trying to make up her mind to speak. [138]

"Oh! you disobliging thing!" said Violet, and she ran for the book.

"Oh! don't," said Daisy, as Violet came back and stooped to put the Bible on the footstool; "I didn't mean to be disobliging, but we ought not to use the Bible to play with."

"Pooh!" said Violet: "Lily's little feet won't hurt it. It's all worn out, any way. The cover is real shabby."

"I didn't mean that," answered Daisy; "I meant because it is God's book, and we ought to treat

it very carefully."

"Oh, fiddle! How awfully particular you are, Daisy!" said Minnie Grey. "Why, girls, do you know, the other day, when I was playing paper-dolls with her and I turned up a Bible to make the side of a house, she took it away, and when I put it back again 'cause it stood up better than the other books, she said she wouldn't play if I did so with the Bible." [139]

"I s'pose Daisy would call that 'taking God's name in vain,'" said another, half reproachfully; "wouldn't you, Daisy?"

"I think it is something the same," answered Daisy, feeling as if all the others were finding fault with her and thinking her "awfully particular," a crime which no little girl likes to have laid to her charge.

"I don't see how," said Lola. "I know we ought not to play with the Bible; but I don't see how it is taking God's name in vain." [140]

"But the Bible is God's book, and He told it to the men who wrote it, and His name is in it a great many times," said Daisy, "and I think it seems like taking it in vain to play with it or to put things upon it, or to knock it about like our other school-books. And it is not right to say 'the Lord knows,' and 'mercy,' and 'gracious,' and such words, when we are just playing, or when we are provoked."

"What is the harm?" asked Rosie. "Mercy and gracious are not God's name."

"Well, no," said Daisy, slowly, not exactly knowing how to explain herself. "And maybe I make a mistake; but it does seem to me as if it was a kind of—of—" [141]

"Of little swearing, as Lily says," said Lola.

"Yes," said Daisy. "Rosie thinks it is no harm; but even if it is not much harm, I don't see what is the good of it. We can talk just as well without saying such words."

"I guess they are pretty wicked," said Lily. "The day mamma went away, I said 'good heavens,' and she said 'Lily! Lily!' very quick, like she does when I do something very naughty, and she asked me where I learned that; and I told her Elly said it. I didn't mean to tell a tale about Elly; but mamma looked sorry, and she told me never to say it again. I guess 'mercy' is 'most the same, and I guess I won't say it any more; and, Daisy, if I hear the other girls say those words, I'll help you correct 'em." [142]

Lily promised this with an air of such grave importance that the other children laughed. Not in the least abashed, Lily went on,—

"Papa's coming home day after to-morrow, and I'll ask him to tell me a whole lot about God's name, and why it is wrong to say those things; and then I'll tell all you girls. But I'm not coming to school any more when mamma comes home; so you'll have to come to my house, and I'll have a swearing class, and teach you all about it."

Lily's words might have been taken with a different meaning from that which she intended to give them; but the other children understood her, and that was enough. [143]

"But, Daisy," said Lola, "how do you know so much about these things when you don't know a great deal about every-day lessons, and have had no one to teach you for so long?"

"I don't know," said Daisy. "I think my own mamma who was drowned used to teach me in the home I used to have;" and the dreamy look came into her eyes which they always wore when she spoke of her far-away home and those she had loved there. "I think I've forgotten a good many things," she added; "but you know I couldn't forget what mamma taught me about Jesus and what He wanted us to do if we loved Him. And I think if we do love Him we won't say words about His name, His heaven, or any thing that is His, that are not very good and gentle, and that we are very sure He would like us to say." [144]

"But you are so *very* particular, Daisy," said Minnie; "I think you are most *too* particular."

"I didn't think we could be too particular about doing what Jesus likes," said Daisy.

The other children had all gathered about Daisy, and were listening with interest to what she said. Perhaps they heard her with more patience than they would have given to any one else; for Daisy was a kind of mystery to them, and they looked upon her as a sort of fairy or princess in disguise, and would not have been at all surprised to hear the most extravagant stories about her, for she was "just like a story-book child." Lily had said so one day when she was speaking of her at home. [145]

"No," said Lola, thoughtfully; "but it does not seem as if such little things could be wrong. I know it can't be right to play with the Bible or say its words just when we are joking or for our own common talk; but I don't see the harm of saying 'goodness,' or 'mercy,' or 'heavens,' or those words which you never will say, Daisy; they are not God's name, and I don't see how it is taking it in vain to say them." [146]

Daisy looked thoughtful. She felt she was right, and wanted to explain herself; but she was rather shy and could not find words to do so.

But Lily, whom shyness never troubled, came to her aid.

"Never mind," she said: "I'll ask papa just as soon as he comes home, and he'll tell us all about it; and if he says it is naughty, why, it is, and we won't do it; and if he says it's good enough, why, we will. That's the way to fix it."

Here the bell rang.

"There, now," said Susy Edwards, "we have to go in, and we've wasted all our time talking, and never had a bit of good of our recess." [147]

But I think Susy was mistaken, and that they had one and all gained more good from their talk than they could have done from any amount of play; for it had set more than one young mind thinking; and from this day, even the most careless among them would check herself when she found she was on the point of using these words which had grown so common among them, more from want of thought than from any wish or temptation to do wrong.



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THE SWEARING CLASS.



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VII. THE SWEARING CLASS.

WHEN Lily's papa and mamma came home, she was so glad to see them, and there was so much to hear and to talk about, that she quite forgot her purpose of asking her father to teach her about the third commandment. Besides, she no longer went to school now that her mother was at home, but had her lesson each day with her as she had done before Mrs. Ward went on her journey; and so she was not as apt to hear or to say those careless words which Daisy Forster had said it was not right to use. [152]

But it was at last brought to her mind one evening as the family all sat at the tea-table.

"Mamma," said Ella, "will you let Lily and me have a tea-party to-morrow? I want to ask half a dozen of our girls, and I suppose Lily would like to have a few of the little ones at the same time."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Ward, "you may each ask six of your most intimate friends."

"Can Walter and I ask some of the fellows?" said Ned.

"Oh, mercy! no," said Ella: "we don't want any boys. It is not to be a regular party, Ned. I just want the girls to spend the afternoon and drink tea; and it makes more fuss to have boys too." [153]

"Goodness me! You needn't get into such a way about it," said Ned.

"Children," said Lily, her brother's and sister's words bringing back to her what Daisy had said, "children, you needn't either of you swear about it."

Lily's efforts to keep the family straight were generally considered as a good joke, and her reproofs and advice received with a laugh; but this plain speaking was rather *too* much for either Ella or Ned, and the former exclaimed,—

"Well, who is swearing, I'd like to know?"

"And who gave you leave to correct your elders?" said Ned. [154]

"Nobody: I just took it," said unabashed Lily; and then, turning to her father, she exclaimed, "Papa, I b'lieve the girls in our school are pretty heathen, and don't know enough about the comman'ments. So I told them we'd have a swearing class, and I'd ask you to teach it, 'cause I s'pose you know a good deal about swearing; and this will be a good chance when they come to-morrow."

This speech turned the vexation of Ella and Ned into amusement, and they laughed with the others.

"I don't think your playmates will thank you for asking them here to take tea and then bringing them up for a lecture from me, my pet," said Mr. Ward.

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"Yes: they will, papa. They want to know about it, and I think we'd better make a swearing party of this. I b'lieve it would do those big girls good too. They swear, oh, dreadfully! and they don't seem to think they do, least Cora don't. Mamma, let's make a rule we won't have any swearing in this house: won't you?"

"Certainly," said mamma, smiling; "and I think we must find out what *swearing* is, and be careful not to break the rule."

"If one is going to call 'goodness' and 'mercy,' and such things, swearing, one might as well give up talking altogether," said Ella.

"Perhaps not exactly swearing," said her father; "but the use of them is a bad habit, and one that I have noticed is quite too frequent among all the young people of this place. It is growing stronger too, as all such habits do, and going from bad to worse. But I must go out now, and have not time to talk to you about it. If Lily can persuade her little friends to take the 'swearing class,' as part of their afternoon's entertainment to-morrow, well and good; if not, we will have a little private talk among ourselves some other time."

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Ella was not at all pleased by Lily's proposal; and hoping that it would pass from the child's mind before the afternoon, she was careful not to make her remember it by the use of any such words as had called forth Lily's reproof.

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This had very nearly proved successful; and in the excitement of arranging her baby-house, setting out the new tea-set mamma had brought her, and dressing the doll which had been papa's present, Lily had almost forgotten her plan for mingling wholesome instruction with the amusement provided for her young friends.

There were Lola and Violet Swan, Daisy Forster, Rosie Pierson, Minnie Grey, and Bessie Norton; and they were all having a real good time sitting around a small table and playing tea out of the new china set, when Minnie said,—

"I have a secret to tell all of you, if you'll promise never to tell."

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"I won't," said Violet.

"On your sacred word and honor?" said Minnie.

"On my sacred word and honor," repeated Violet.

"And you, Rosie?" asked Minnie.

"On my word and honor," said Rosie.

"Sacred?" said Minnie.

"Sacred. Sacred word and honor," was Rosie's answer.

Lily repeated the words as desired, and next came Daisy's turn.

"I won't tell," she said, when Minnie looked at her.

"On your sacred word and honor?" asked Minnie.

"I promise I won't tell, Minnie."

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"But you must say on your word and honor."

"I can't," said Daisy.

"Then I shan't tell you; and you're real mean, Daisy Forster," said Minnie. "Why won't you say so?"

"I don't see why I need, and I don't know if it is quite right," answered Daisy, coloring.

"Oh, Daisy Forster, what a girl you are!" said Rosie.

"Well," said Lily, "there's nothing left, 'cept these two caramels. Daisy, you eat up this; and, Bessie, you eat up the other. Now the tea-party is all done, and we'll go and ask papa about that comman'ment. He's been playing croquet with the big girls, but they seem to be resting now."

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Lily was right. Mr. Ward had been persuaded to make the eighth in a game of croquet, for he was a great favorite with all the young people in Glenwood, and his presence never put any check upon their games or pleasure parties.

But the afternoon proved rather warm for exercise, even the gentle one of bewitching croquet; and, after a long game was finished, the whole party were ready to agree to Ella's proposal that they should take a rest, and send to the house for some cooling drink.

So Mr. Ward was at liberty to attend to Lily, when she came rushing up to him, followed,

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rather more slowly, by the rest of the children.

"Papa," she said, throwing herself across his knee, as he sat upon the green mound which was raised about the foot of one of the fine elm-trees which shaded the croquet-ground, "papa, Daisy says we oughtn't to say upon our words and honors! Oughtn't we? And will you teach us about taking God's name in vain now? It's the *singalest* circumstance, but I went and forgot all about the swearing class, till Daisy said that."

"A very singular circumstance, certainly;" said Mr. Ward, lifting Lily to a seat upon his knee, and smiling, while the other girls laughed at her speech. "I am quite willing to have a little talk with you all on this subject; but tell me first what you want to know." [162]

"Daisy is so awfully particular, Mr. Ward," said Minnie, in an aggrieved tone. "She won't let us say any thing; at least, she says every thing is 'wrong.'"

"Every thing?" said Mr. Ward: "that is bad. Does Daisy want you all to keep silence? That *must* spoil your play."

"Oh, no!" said Minnie, "not that; but she says such lots of things are wrong to say. Why, sir, she won't say 'upon her word and honor,' 'cause she don't think it is right."

"Why do you want her to say it?" asked Mr. Ward.

"I was just going to tell them all a great secret, and I wanted her to promise, on her sacred word and honor, she would never tell; and she wouldn't do it." [163]

"So Daisy is apt to break her promises, is she?" said the gentleman, with a smile at Daisy, which told very plainly that he was only joking.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Minnie. "Indeed she is not. Daisy always tells the truth, and never does what she says she won't; at least, we never knew her to do it: did we, girls?"

A chorus of young voices was raised in Daisy's favor.

"And yet you cannot trust her unless she swears to what she promises," said Mr. Ward.

"Swears, sir!" said Minnie. "I'm sure I don't want her to swear! 'Word and honor' are not bad words, are they?" [164]

"Not in themselves, certainly;" answered Mr. Ward. "Many a thing which is good in itself when properly used, becomes bad and hurtful if put to a wrong purpose. Now to swear is to say, by some word or person which you consider holy and sacred, that you will or will not do, that you have or have not done, a certain thing. Suppose some man were accused of a crime, and that the judge were about to try him, and punish him if he were guilty, and it was thought that I knew whether or no the man had done that of which he was accused. So I am called to the court, and there made to promise that I will tell the truth, and nothing but the truth; and to make sure of this I am made to lay my hand on the Bible,—God's holy word,—and call upon Him, to hear me tell what I know. And this is considered a very solemn thing, even by many who have little care or respect for God in other ways; and it is called swearing, or taking the oath." [165]

"They ought to be 'shamed of theirselves," said Lily, indignantly; "they ought to know you would never tell a story, papa. And to go and make you swear too! I wouldn't do it if I was you; but I'd tell 'em the third comman'ment, and run away fast from them."

"But if this is done in the fear of God, and as a sort of prayer that He will hear and help us to tell that which is true, it is not taking His name in vain, Lily," said Mr. Ward; "and to do it falsely is considered even by men to be a great crime. This is called perjury; and if any one is found guilty of it, he is severely punished by the law. Now it may be wise, and even necessary, for a man to take an oath at such a time as this, when the very life of another may depend on whether he tells the truth or no; but it can hardly be necessary for one little girl at play with another to make her promise sure by swearing to it. For to say 'by your sacred word and honor' is neither more nor less than a sort of swearing or taking an oath that what you say is true." [166]

"Then we'll make a rule not to say it any more," said Lily. "We didn't know it was naughty before, papa. But please tell us now about other words. Daisy says we mustn't say 'mercy,' and 'gracious,' and 'heavens,' and maybe we mustn't; but why is that swearing? Swearing is taking God's name in vain, and how do such words take His name in vain if we don't speak it? And she thinks playing with the Bible, or saying its words when we are playing or just talking common talk, is taking God's name in vain, too. Is it?"

"I will tell you," said Mr. Ward. "Suppose, Lily, that some great king or queen, or the president of our own country, were to come here; would you not wish to be particularly polite and respectful to them, both in your manner and way of speaking?" [167]

"Um-m-m, I don't know," answered Lily, doubtfully; "not partic'lar. I guess I'd just as lieve be saucy to them as to any one else."

Mr. Ward saw this would not do, at least, not for Lily: he must go higher than earthly rulers.

"Suppose, then," he said, "that Jesus should come down here among us, so that we could see Him with our eyes, walking and talking with us, what would you all do?" [168]

"I'd fall down and worship Him," said Minnie.

"I'd listen to every word He said, and never speak one myself for fear I should miss one," said Daisy; "and then I'd remember them all the days of my life." [169]

"Dear child!" said Mr. Ward, laying his hand fondly on hers: "I believe you do treasure your Lord's words and try to live according to them."

"I'd ask Him to put His hand on my head and bless me just as He did those other little children when He was on earth before," said Lola, softly.

"So would I. And I'd be glad there were no disciples to forbid us to come to Him," said Lily. "I s'pose they thought Jesus wouldn't care about children; but He did, didn't He? And you wouldn't think so, papa, would you?" and the little child laid her hand lovingly against her father's cheek. "I'd keep very close to Him all the time He was here, and take fast hold of His hand, only I wouldn't be troublesome, but just keep as still as a mouse; and I'd give Him every thing of mine that He wanted." [170]

"So you would all show your love and reverence for Him by every means in your power," said Mr. Ward, "trying not to grieve or offend Him by treating His name or His presence with the least carelessness or disrespect, but letting Him see that you honored the one and were blessed by the other: is it not so?"

"Yes, sir," came from the older as well as the younger children. [171]

"And if, after He had gone away, He should send you each a letter, telling you what He wanted you to do, how you were to love and serve Him, and in which you would find all the advice, help, and comfort you might need at any time,—how would you treat that letter?"

"I'd keep it all my life, and take such good care of it," said Rosie.

"I'd read it, and read it, and read it; and kiss it, and kiss it, and kiss it," said Lily, "and then I'd put it in my bosom, and keep it, oh! so carefully."

"And so would I, and I, and I," said the rest, satisfied to have Lily for spokeswoman.

"And if you saw any one misusing that letter, how would you feel?" asked Mr. Ward. [172]

"I'd be very provoked with them," answered Lily, "and I think I wouldn't love them any more, 'cept it was you, papa, or mamma, or Elly, or any one of my own that I *have* to love; and then I'd cry, and ask you not to serve my Jesus' letter so."

"You mean the Bible is Jesus' letter to us: don't you, sir?" asked Daisy.

"Yes; and, dear children, our Lord's presence is here among us as much as if He were in man's form which He once wore on earth. His ear is as quick to hear our words of love and praise, or those of carelessness and disrespect, as it was then; His eye as ready to see the use we make of the precious Word He has given us. But we forget this when we use His book more carelessly than we would any gift from an earthly friend, or when we take His name lightly or without thought upon our lips. To do this is to take it in vain, and it displeases Him." [173]

"But, Mr. Ward," said Minnie, "it is not cursing and swearing to say 'mercy,' and 'gracious,' and 'good Lord,' and such things, is it?"

"Not cursing, certainly: that is to use God's name profanely, or to call on Him to destroy us or other people; and this is a most terrible sin. But, Minnie, the use of such words in play or thoughtlessness is a bad habit, and leads to worse. Suppose a man breaks open a bank here, and takes all the money from it: that is stealing, is it not?" [174]

"Why, yes, sir," answered Minnie.

"And suppose you take a sugar-plum belonging to your sister: it is a very small thing compared to the money taken from the bank, but is it not stealing, all the same?"

"Yes, sir; and if I was to be so bad as to take Julia's sugar-plums, I'm afraid I'd maybe steal something worse some time."

"Just so," said the gentleman; "and now you see why it is not wise or right to make use of such expressions. It is, as Lily says, a kind of little swearing, and may lead to worse. Besides, it is very useless. You can surely believe one another,—unless, indeed, it is some false and deceitful child, —without saying 'upon your sacred word and honor,' 'as sure as you live,' 'Heaven knows,' and so forth. And there is so little temptation to fall into this sin that it seems strange it should be so common. There is nothing to be gained by it, even of this world's good,—no pleasure, no profit. It is only an idle, useless habit, most displeasing and vexing to the holy ear of Him whose commandment we break without thought or care. Goodness and mercy and graciousness belong to the Almighty; and so, too, we must take heed that we do not speak of what belongs to Him in an irreverent, careless way. And now I think we have had enough talk on this subject for this afternoon. You did not ask your friends here that I might lecture them." [175]

"Oh, yes! I did, papa," said Lily; "for we all deserved it very much, 'specially the big girls. But, papa, do you believe the Lord troubles Himself to know where the girls put an old, worn-out cushion, and such things; and if He does, ought we to say He does?" [176]

"God knows every thing, Lily; even the smallest trifle is seen by Him; but it is very wrong to say, in a heedless way, 'the Lord knows,' for I suppose that is what you mean. And this very thought, that His eye and His ear are always with us, noticing every word and look, knowing the very feelings of our hearts, should make us all the more careful how we use His holy name. I am glad this question has come up among you; for heedlessness in using God's name, and other sacred words, in quoting Scripture,—talking Bible, my Lily calls it,—and other such habits, were becoming too common, I fear, among all the young people in Glenwood; and we older ones too, I believe, fall too often into the custom. We have, too many of us, constant need of the prayer, 'Set a watch, O Lord, upon my mouth; keep the door of my lips.'"

"It is Daisy's doing, sir, that we have come to think of this," said honest Cora. "I, for one, have been very thoughtless about offending God in this way, and have set a bad example to the rest. I believe the little ones have caught it from us larger girls, and we have to thank Daisy that she has taught us a better lesson."



DAISY'S NAME.



VIII. DAISY'S NAME.

"INDADE, now, and hasn't me words come true, sir? For wasn't I afther tellin' ye she was as nate a little lady as iver stepped in two shoes?" said Betty Macarthy, as she stood with her arms akimbo, her head on one side, and her honest face one broad glow of delight and satisfaction, gazing at the dainty-looking little creature who stood before her, her young face bright with as much pleasure as Betty's own.

For Daisy's old friend had come to live at Mrs. Forster's; and this was the way it had been brought about.

The lady had wanted a laundress; and, thinking that Betty, who had once held that post in her father's family, might know of one, had begged the General to ask her.

No sooner had he put the question than Betty eagerly answered she should be only too glad of the place herself; for she was tired of her present position, and a countrywoman of her own was ready to take it off her hands, stock, fixtures, goodwill, and all. "For her heart was sore for the child," Betty said, and to be where she could see her every day, and to live once more with "Miss Gertrude," would be almost as much happiness as she could wish for; and then she would try to put Jack out with some gardener to learn his trade, for which he had always had a turn.

So the General, having talked the matter over with his wife, and mindful of the generous care and kindness shown to their Daisy by these poor people, not only told Betty she should come to live with them, but also put Jack under his own gardener, though there was really no need of any more hands about the place.

Thus did the "bread cast upon the waters" by this kind-hearted Irishwoman, come back to her, blessed sevenfold.

Nothing was told to Daisy of this arrangement till one afternoon, when the General had returned from the city, Mrs. Forster said to her, "I am going to speak to the new laundress and gardener's boy. Come with me, Daisy;" and half wondering, the little girl obeyed.

But her surprise soon changed into delight and gratitude when she saw who the new domestics were; for, in spite of all the pleasure she felt in her new way of life, Daisy's loving little heart often longed for the old friends who had been so good to her in her time of need, and she wanted not only to see them, but to share some of her many comforts with them.

So you may know how glad she was when her eye fell upon the two figures standing by the back door, and she knew that they had been brought to live in the same place with her. [185]

With an excitement very unusual in her, she flew at Betty, and, throwing both arms about her neck, covered her broad, smiling face with warm kisses. Betty returned them with a will, holding her fast in both arms; and then, putting her from her and looking at her from head to foot, put on an air of strong approval, and spoke to the General in the words you have read at the beginning of this chapter.

"An' isn't it fit for a princess, she is?" she continued, quite unable to keep back her admiration and pleasure at the child's improved appearance. "Isn't it fit for a princess she is; and Saacyfuts or no Saacyfuts, isn't it a right her own folks would have to the name if they found her now? Sure I'd be saacy meself to have the ownin' of a child like that. An' her not a bit spoiled, but just as lovin' and free-like as when she had none but me an' Jack." [186]

Then Daisy was told she might take Betty and Jack away and show them the neat little wash-house, shaded by a fine clump of trees, with its nice bleaching and drying ground beyond, its laundry on the first floor, and two small bedrooms above, where they were to sleep. Betty was enchanted, and expressed over and over again her satisfaction at the change in her life. It was far better, she thought, to stand at the wash-tub or ironing-table, breathing the sweet country air, with all its pleasant sights and sounds about her, than to do the same at her stall in the hot, dusty, crowded city. [187]

As for Jack, when he saw the splendid garden, when Daisy had led them there, and knew it was to be his privilege to work among those lovely flowers, he could not contain himself, but shouted and shouted, turned somersault after somersault, till recalled to himself by Betty's reminder that he must "remember that Margaret—she begged her pardon,—Miss Daisy—was a little lady now, and he must mind his manners before her." [188]

But Daisy was so like her old self, so free from any pride or haughtiness in her new position, that Jack found it hard to remember she was any other than the little waif whom he had pitied and petted for so long; and his "manners" were brought to his mind with much more force by the sight of the gray-haired old Scotch gardener under whom he was to work, and before whom his gambols ceased at once.

Meanwhile General and Mrs. Forster were talking on a very interesting subject, for Betty's words about Daisy's lost friends had given the lady a new idea. [189]

"Frank," she said to her husband, "did you notice what Betty said about Daisy's friends?"

"Yes," he answered. "I hope she won't turn Daisy's head and make her vain with her praise and flattery."

"I'm not afraid," said his wife. "Daisy has a right to her name, the modest, unaffected little girl; and she has too much sense to be spoiled by what she looks upon only as the overflowing of Betty's affection. But don't you know that the Irish often say *saacy* when they mean proud?"

"Oh, yes. I have often noticed it in people of Betty's class," answered the General; "but what has that to do with Daisy's friends?" [190]

"Is it not possible that their name is Proudfoot or Proudfit, and that 'Saacyfut' is Betty's way of calling it?"

The General laughed heartily.

"Hardly, I think," he said; "and yet—I do not know. It may be. But it never struck me. It took a woman's wit to think of that."

"We will ask Daisy when she comes," said Mrs. Forster. "If Proudfoot was their name, she must remember it when she hears it spoken, I think. She can hardly have forgotten it so entirely that she would not recognize it. And then, if it should be so, it will be a help to find her friends." Mrs. Forster spoke the last words more slowly. [191]

"Yes," said her husband, giving words to the thought which had made her half unwilling to utter them; "and if found, we must give up our Daisy."

"But we must not seek them the less for that," she said, "or I shall feel as if we had found some lovely jewel that we were striving to hide from the rightful owner. I know what terrible longings must fill her mother's heart;" and a tear dropped from Mrs. Forster's eye on her baby's face, as she clasped it more tenderly than ever in her arms.

"Daisy," said the General that evening, as the little girl stood by his knee, "did you ever hear the name of Proudfoot?" [192]

Daisy started, drew a quick, gasping breath, and suddenly threw herself into his arms.

"That is it!" she cried, in a rapid, excited manner, "that is it! That is my name, that is what they

called papa and mamma. I never heard it since; but I know it now. I am Daisy Proudfoot, I am, I am!"

It was some time before the child's excitement could be calmed; but there was no farther knowledge to be gained from her. Proudfoot was her name, of that she was quite sure; and the recollection of it at this late hour seemed to fill her with a kind of tremulous happiness; but still she could not tell where she belonged. [193]

Betty too, when she was asked if Proudfoot was the name of Daisy's mother, answered,—

"Sure, an' it was, ma'am. Didn't I say so all along, only she was always gainsayin' it?"^[A]

The matter was settled; and General Forster, loath as he was to part with Daisy, feeling that he must leave no stone unturned to trace her friends, again put advertisements in the papers, saying, that if any family of the name of Proudfoot had had a child supposed to be lost at sea, they might hear of her at such and such a place. [194]

Daisy was not told of this; she was contented and happy in her new home and among her new friends, and it was not thought best to disturb her mind with fresh hopes of finding those who might never come to claim her.

But although she was still called Daisy Forster by all in Glenwood, it was a satisfaction to herself and to the kind friends who had taken her up and cared for her, to know the name which rightly belonged to her.

However, days and weeks and months went by, and still no one came to seek the Daisy blossom which had been transplanted to such pleasant soil. And there it grew and flourished, and did its Master's work; proving how much even such a simple floweret can do by its own modest example and teaching to win others to honor Him. [195]

It was surprising to see how much her schoolmates thought of her opinion; how they profited by the simple lesson she had taught them, and tried to break themselves of the foolish and sinful habit into which nearly all of them had fallen, of using sacred names and things in such a heedless, unthinking manner.

It was not only the very little girls, but the older ones also, and even Miss Collins herself, who learned from our Daisy to set a watch upon their lips, and to remember whose ear was ever present, hearing each thoughtless word which dishonored Him or that which especially belonged to Him. [196]

Perhaps they gave more heed to Daisy's words than they would have done to those of any other one of their number. There was such a half-mystery about her, and their thoughts were so tender towards her, that they checked their heedless speech for her sake at first; then, as they learned to think more about it, for a better and higher reason, till at last the bad habit was broken up; and if, by chance, such a word as "mercy," "heavens," "good Lord," or the like, came from the lips of any child, the surprised and reproving looks of her companions told her of her fault, and punished her sufficiently. [197]

And the good influence spread far and wide. Since the little ones were so careful, their parents and older friends felt that they, too, must take heed lest they offended in this way; and so it came to pass that among the families of Glenwood God's name and word came to be held in such true reverence and honor as had never been before.

And so nearly a year passed by, and brought the Daisy and her sister-flowerets to another spring.

FOOTNOTE:

^[A] If this is considered far-fetched, the writer can only say that Betty's rendering of the name of Proudfoot was actually given by a domestic in her own family, and occasioned considerable bewilderment, till the quick wit of one of its members solved the riddle.



THE LOST FOUND.



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IX. THE LOST FOUND.

"I S that you, Daisy?"

"Yes, sir. Is that you, Uncle Frank?" answered Daisy, playfully.

"Well, I thought it was this morning when I went to town; but I am doubtful of it now."

"Why?" asked Daisy, laughing, as she reached up on tiptoe to offer the kiss with which she always welcomed her uncle on his return from the city.

"Baby Daisy is not doubtful, at least," said Mrs. Forster, coming forward, and putting her little daughter, all crows and smiles, in her father's arms. "Let her pull your hair a little to convince you of the fact." [202]

"It will be difficult," said the General. "There was a man in the cars so like me, face, height, and figure, that some of my friends were taking him for me; others accusing me of having a brother whom I have never owned. He sat two or three seats in front of me, and I could not help being amused. Ward came in, nodded familiarly to my double, with, "How are you, General?" passed on to me, stopped, and looked from one to the other with a mixture of surprise and curiosity that was droll; then asked for information which I could not give him. It was the same with many others. I hope the stranger will keep himself out of mischief while he is in Glenwood, or I may be held responsible for his wrong doings." [203]

"Did he come to Glenwood?" asked Daisy.

"Yes: I left him standing on the platform at the station, and I hardly knew whether my own carriage belonged to him or to me. However, he made no claim as I stepped into it."

"Who was he?" asked Mrs. Forster. "Did not you find out?"

"No. No one could tell me, and I could not go and ask the man who he was, merely for the reason that he resembled me so much. There, there, little woman," as the baby gave a vigorous pull at his hair. "I've had enough of mamma's proofs, and am satisfied that no other man than Frank Forster would submit to such usage at these tiny hands. I rather imagine this stranger came up to look at Beechgrove, which is to let, as I heard him asking the railway porter in which direction it lay, and where the agent was to be found." [204]

A fortnight went by, and nothing more was seen of the stranger who looked so like General Forster; nor after that evening did the General or his wife think of him.

Not so Daisy. She thought often of him with a kind of half wish that she might see him; why she scarcely knew herself, but she never spoke of it. She was rather a shy, quiet child, keeping her ideas and wishes pretty much to herself, unless they were drawn out by some one whom she loved or trusted; and neither the General nor Mrs. Forster suspected what was working in her mind. [205]

Her idea, too, that the General looked so like her own papa, they regarded only as a childish fancy, ready to see a likeness between the two she most admired and loved in all the world. And they never imagined how the child was dreaming and wondering over this unseen stranger who had had such a passing interest for them. [206]

Meanwhile, it became certain that Beechgrove, as the place was called, was taken; for the placards advertising it to rent were taken down, and the house was going through a thorough cleaning.

But the General and his wife, being people who never gossiped or concerned themselves about their neighbors' affairs, did not trouble themselves in the matter. And those who were curious and asked questions received no satisfaction from old Dr. Harding, who had charge of the property.

All Miss Collins' young scholars, however, thought themselves very much concerned in the letting of Beechgrove, and with good reason. For a large aviary belonged to the place, containing many rare and beautiful birds, and the former owner, who was fond of children, often used to invite the young people of Glenwood to see these birds, and to amuse themselves in other ways about his grounds. But since Dr. Harding had had the care of the place, not a child had been suffered to come within sight or hearing of the aviary, which had a new charm for them since it was a forbidden pleasure. [207]

So the new occupants of Beechgrove, and the question as to whether they were likely to recover their old privileges there or no, had been a subject of great interest to our young friends, [208]

and they were very anxious for information on the matter.

One morning when Daisy came to school, she found the rest of the class grouped about Mattie Prime and Rosie Pierson, who lived beyond Beechgrove, and had to pass it on their way to Miss Collins'.

"The new people have gone to Beechgrove," said Violet Swan, when Daisy asked what they were talking about; "and Mattie and Rosie saw a little girl there this morning. We are glad there is a child there, because maybe having her will make the papa good to other children, and he will let us go in and see the birds because of her."

"She's a very little thing," said Rosie. "She can't speak plain. Such a crooked tongue." [209]

"But she's very cunning," said Mattie. "We were going past the gate and she called out to us, 'Itty dirls, itty dirls;' and when we stopped she put her face through the rails to kiss us, and handed us some flowers she had. She was real sweet."

"What is her name?" asked Daisy.

"We asked her, but we could not make out what she said. Mamy Modwit it sounded like; but she did speak so crooked," said Mattie.

"Do you know," said Rosie, "I think she looked like Daisy. Don't you, Mattie?"

"Why, so she does," said Mattie. "Isn't that funny? Only Daisy's eyes always look sorry except when she is laughing or speaking, and that little girl's were so full of mischief and laughing." [210]

"How big was she?" asked Lola.

"Oh, about as large as your sister Bertie. Not near old enough to come to school."

"I s'pose there are no other children but her," said Fanny Delisle. "Willie saw the family come yesterday; and he said there were only the lady and gentleman, and the little girl and servants. If there are no children as old as us, maybe it won't come into their heads to let us see the aviary again."

This short conversation put an end to the half hope, half wish, that had been in Daisy's heart. Even supposing the stranger who looked so like General Forster were the gentleman who had taken Beechgrove, he could be nothing to her (not until now had she said even to herself that she had hoped it might be so), for the family did not answer to her own. She had papa and mamma, little brother Theodore, and a baby sister, a very little baby; and only this child of three years old or more seemed to belong to the new-comers; and she had no sister so old. [211]

Daisy reasoned this all out for herself with a sad, disappointed little heart, forgetting that time had not stood still with her own family any more than it had with her, and that changes might have come to them as well as to herself. [212]

This was on Friday, and nothing more was seen or heard of the strangers by Daisy or her playmates, till Sunday came. But then such a strange and happy thing came to pass, and in such a wonderful way. "Just like a book thing," Lily Ward afterwards said.

It was the loveliest of Sabbath days, and every thing seemed to feel it.

"What day is it, Bertie?" asked Mr. Swan, as his youngest daughter stood on the piazza steps ready for church.

"Jesus' happy Sunday," answered the little one; "and, oh, didn't He mate a nice one!" [213]

Other people than Bertie thought so; a nice one indeed.

It was the softest, sweetest, warmest of May Sundays. A busy little breeze, carrying with it the perfume of the apple-blossoms over which it had passed, stole in at the open windows of the church, and wandered around among aisles, pillars, and pews, now fluttering the leaves of a book, now toying with a ribbon, now tossing a curl upon some sunny head, now fanning some cheek flushed with a walk in the almost summer heat. A robin, saucy birdie, swung himself lightly to and fro on the branch of one of the fine old elms outside the church-door, and poured forth his hymn of praise; while from far and near came the answering notes of his mates; and mingling with his song were heard the voices of the children in the Sunday school beyond, as they sang the closing hymn. [214]

Then they came trooping in gently, and with soft footsteps, as became the house of God (honoring His name and His word had taught them also to honor the place where He was worshipped), and took their places beside their parents and friends.

Watching them from one of the pews which ran by the side of the pulpit, were a pair of roguish, dancing eyes, which Rosie Pierson and Mattie Prime recognized at once. They were those of the little girl who had peeped at them through the railing of the Beechgrove grounds. Now they were peeping over the top of the pew-door as she stood at its foot, her hands crossed upon it, her chin resting upon them. What a bright, merry, laughing face it was, and how like Daisy's! General and Mrs. Forster had noticed it from their seat, which commanded a full view of that of the strangers. [215]

Beside the little girl sat a gentleman, half turned from the congregation, his face partly shaded

by his hand; but there could be no doubt that he was the man who was so like the General. Mrs. Forster saw the likeness at once, even in the turn and shape of his head. Beyond him was a lady in deep mourning, closely veiled.

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"Frank must find out who they are," said Mrs. Forster to herself. "That child is so like Daisy. Can it be—oh, can it be?" Then she tried to collect her thoughts and bring them back to the service of Him whom she had come to worship.

Daisy came in a little behind the rest of the infant class (she had lingered for a word with her teacher), and took her seat. Almost immediately her eye fell on the new-comers to Glenwood. Mrs. Forster saw her start, flush all over, neck and face, and press her small hands tightly together, as if trying to keep back some exclamation which rose to her lips.

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With a beating heart the child watched the strangers, striving in vain to get a better view of the face of the gentleman, gazing from him to the veiled lady, and then at the little girl.

The bell ceased tolling, the congregation were gathered, the hour of service had come, and the clergyman rose in the pulpit.

But at that moment the lady drew aside her veil; and ere Dr. Parker had opened his lips, a little voice rang through the still church.

"Mamma! Oh, my own mamma!"

How much was in those few words! What a tale they told! What a world of longing, of love, of joy, they held!

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The stranger lady—ah! no stranger was she to our Daisy—started to her feet, stretched out her hands, then with a little cry sank fainting into the arms of the gentleman who had also suddenly arisen.

She was carried out; General and Mrs. Forster following with the excited, trembling Daisy; and so the father and mother found the long-lost child.

Who could describe it? Who could find words for the joy, the wonder, the gratitude of those concerned; who tell the sympathy which filled the hearts of all in that congregation, which dimmed their eyes with tears, and filled their hearts with adoration, as, before another word of the morning service was begun, the beloved minister called on all to render thanks for the great and signal mercy just shown to those long-parted parents and their little one!

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And now there is little more to tell. Only how Daisy's mamma, and the little sister whom she remembered only as a tiny baby, had been rescued from the sinking ship with some of the other passengers; how, having been unable to trace their lost treasure, and believing that the boat, with all whom it contained, had gone down in the deep waters, the parents had gone abroad, where they had remained till a few months before this time, and so had never seen the advertisements which might have told them she was still living: all this was soon explained.

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And then Daisy must tell her story, and Betty must come in to help her out where memory failed and the past was a blank, because of that long, wasting illness. And how Betty laughed and cried by turns, and would hear of no praise or thanks for what she had done, declaring that "Miss Daisy had done her and Jack far more good nor she resaved, taching them to mind their tongues afore God Almighty."

And though General and Mrs. Forster must now give up, to her rightful owners, the darling of whom they had grown so fond, yet they did not have to part with her altogether; for she was so near to them that they saw her every day; indeed, the two families became almost as one, and Daisy felt as if she had two homes.

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The little brother, whom Daisy remembered so well, had gone to a home beyond the sky, but a few weeks before her father and mother came to Glenwood.

And so the Daisy blossom, which had been parted from its parent stem and cast by the wayside, where stranger hands had gathered and lovingly tended it, was planted once more in the soil where it belonged, after it had done the Master's work, and scattered the good seed which budded for His glory; proving well, that those who "honor" the Lord He will "delight to honor."

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