

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of Leila at Home, by Ann Fraser Tytler

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

Title: Leila at Home

Author: Ann Fraser Tytler  
Illustrator: John William Orr

Release date: June 15, 2015 [EBook #49220]  
Most recently updated: January 25, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Juliet Sutherland, Chuck Greif and the Online  
Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LEILA AT HOME \*\*\*

---

### LEILA AT HOME.

*By the Same Author.*

LEILA; OR, THE ISLAND. By ANN FRASER TYTLER.

LEILA IN ENGLAND. A continuation of *Leila; or, The Island*.

LEILA AT HOME. A continuation of *Leila in England*.

*Also, lately Published.*

ARBELL. A tale for young people. By JANE WINNARD HOOPER.

THE CANADIAN CRUSOES. By CATHARINE PARR TRAILL. Edited by AGNES STRICKLAND.



LEILA AT HOME Page 38.

# LEILA AT HOME.



New York:--C. S. Francis & Co.

## LEILA AT HOME.

A CONTINUATION OF

**Leila in England.**

BY

**ANN FRASER TYTLER,**

AUTHOR OF "MARY AND FLORENCE; OR, GRAVE AND GAY," ETC.

*WITH ENGRAVINGS BY J. W. ORR, FROM ORIGINAL DESIGNS.*



**New York:**

**S. FRANCIS & CO., 252 BROADWAY.**

**BOSTON:--CROSBY, NICHOLS & CO.**

M.DCCC.LIII.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1853,

By C. S. FRANCIS & Co.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District  
of New York.

### PREFACE.

IT was the intention of the writer of the following pages to have bid a last farewell to Leila, but some of her young readers have said "No;" and she feels too grateful for the kindness they have shown her, not to make the attempt to meet their wishes. Circumstances have so long prevented her fulfilling this intention, that it may be necessary to remind them that they took leave of Leila when she had just set off for Woodlands, (near Richmond,) a property Mr. Howard had purchased near the residence of her uncle, Mr. Stanley; that Leila was in all the joy of her cousin, Selina Stanley, having recovered her speech; that Selina's sister, Matilda, was continuing to make many good resolutions, and too often to break them again; and that their brother, little Alfred, was little Alfred still, and not over wise.

**LEILA AT HOME.**

## CHAPTER I.

THE wooded banks of Richmond were in all the soft green of early spring, when they were first seen by Leila. A few months had passed; the trees were now half stripped of their leaves, and the autumn tints were fast fading into sombre gray as she a second time caught sight of its wooded heights; but how different were now her feelings, how much more beautiful did the whole scene appear to her with Selina by her side! Selina was spring, summer, sunshine, and all to Leila, and she had not a sigh to give to the falling leaves or the moaning wind.

As the carriage drew up before the same low, picturesque-looking house, which she had before visited, Matilda and Alfred (who with their papa and mamma had preceded them but a few minutes) stood holding the house-door open, ready to give them welcome. Little Alfred bustled out to assist in letting down the steps, and Matilda, in her eagerness to help them to alight, had well nigh brought them to the ground.

"Softly, softly," Mr. Howard exclaimed, as he endeavoured to catch hold of Leila's frock; but Matilda had succeeded in extricating both the little girls from the carriage.

"Oh, what a day of joy!" she cried; "Cousin Leila still to be with us for a whole month, and Selina as able to talk to her now as I am; Selina, do you remember when you went away?"

Selina did remember: she coloured, her eyes filled with tears, and throwing her arms first round her sister's neck, and then round Leila's, she darted from their side.

"Why does she do that? where has she gone?" Leila anxiously inquired.

"I think I know," Matilda answered; and pointing to a door on the opposite side of the passage, she flew back to the carriage to assist in getting out the parcels.

Leila crossed the passage, and softly opened the door; Selina was on her knees by the side of her little bed; she timidly advanced, and lifting the white muslin curtain which partly concealed Selina's slight figure, she knelt by her side. As the two little girls rose from their knees, their eyes met eyes so full of gratitude to heaven, as almost made Selina's half-whispered explanation, "Leila, I could not wait till night, unnecessary;" "and now," she continued, "I must go to dear mamma."

When Selina returned soon after, she found Leila and Matilda, assisted by Amy, arranging the smaller parcels, and carrying them to the different rooms. Matilda looked eagerly in Selina's eyes.

"I see what you have been doing," she said, reproachfully: "but I think it is I that should cry: when we were here before, I had to speak both for you and myself. Oh, it was so nice; no, no, Selina, I don't mean that, I don't indeed; I am so glad you can speak, oh, so very glad; I said it only to make you laugh, and now I am near crying myself, but I won't; this is not a day to weep, the very happiest day of all our lives. Come, let us go and visit the school-room; not to say lessons, you know, but just to enjoy ourselves."

"Yes, that will be an excellent plan," Leila answered; "and perhaps in the bread-basket we shall still find the head of the doll, which would have been so pretty a doll for my Sally, if it had not been so hardly dealt with."

Matilda laughed; "How funny you are," she said, turning to Leila, and passing her arm round her waist; "you have put away my sorrow in a minute."

The three little girls proceeded to the school-room.

"How very nice it looks!" Leila exclaimed; "how bright, how cheerful-looking; so different from what it was before."

"And were you very melancholy when you were here before, and did not find us?" Matilda inquired.

"Oh, so melancholy when I saw the flowerpots," Leila answered; "and I cried so when I saw the paper with 'Custom commonly makes things easy.' Yes, 'Custom commonly' was the worst of all."

"But that is all over now," Matilda observed; "so we need not speak about it, for now we are all three as happy as can be; don't you think so, Selina?"

"Indeed I do, Matilda; but it is such a deep joy I cannot find words to utter it; it does not make me merry, but do not think it is because I am sad. If you are happy and think it a joyful day, what must it be to me? I had given up all hope of ever being able to speak again; I was telling Leila so that very day, and making her promise not to pray for it any more. Then so many changes have come upon me. When I saw Leila on the ground, when I thought her dead,—oh, I must not think of it; and when she opened her eyes again, and said, 'Who spoke? what has happened?' and when she knew God had opened my lips, what a moment that was! Leila's joy, and my joy too, and to be able to tell her how much I loved her. You do not know how I used to struggle before, and what it was for me not to be able to speak."

"Indeed I do know very well," Matilda answered; "for when mamma often says to me, 'Matilda, I must beg you to be silent, you distract my head,' I am more anxious to speak than ever; and so vexed, I would rather she had given me a good slap."

"A good *slap!*" Leila exclaimed. "Oh, Matilda, if my papa were ever to slap me, I would—" she covered her face with her hands and shuddered.

"What would you do?" Matilda anxiously inquired, as she pulled down Leila's hands, and tried to get a sight of her face.

"I would die," Leila answered, in a voice so low that the words were scarcely audible.

But Matilda caught them. "Oh dear," she cried, "how I have shocked you; what a shocked face you have; well, I am always saying something wrong, and I dare say I shall never be better; for these kind of things come out before I know what I am saying. Selina, do you think it was so very wrong, and was Leila right to say she would—? You know what I mean. You always tell me we should take trials patiently."

Selina coloured. "I think you were both a little wrong," she said, timidly. "You were wrong to talk in that way of dear mamma, who is always so patient and gentle with you; and very wrong to say you would never be better, when you know God will give you strength if you pray for it with all your heart; but not if you say wandering prayers, and do not really wish it;" and she looked anxiously at Matilda.

"And cousin Leila?" Matilda inquired.

Selina proceeded. "Yes; Leila I thought was a little wrong to express herself so strongly; you know Uncle

Howard always says she must try to command her feelings more,—you are not angry with me, Leila, for saying this?”

“Angry? Oh! no, no. I love you even more when you tell me I have not done right; for I feel that you are so true, and you say it so gently, just as my papa does.”

“Well to be sure!” Matilda said; “to *like* to be told that one is not good, I can never get up to that; I don’t like at all to be told I am not good; I would rather say it of myself than that others should say it; indeed, it comforts me sometimes to say it all out. Selina, do you know that at this very moment I am not good?”

“Yes, I do know,—you were glad when I said Leila had been wrong too.”

“And is that all?” Matilda inquired.

“No, not quite all; you were disappointed when you found it was so small a fault.”

“Oh, Selina! it is too bad in you to say that; you are glad when you find people are good, and like yourself, and I cannot help being rather glad also, when I find people a little like myself, though I am not good; but you are getting into a way of seeing me through and through; you must not do that, or you will see a great many things to frighten you; at least, please don’t begin to-day, when we were to have been so merry; but do you know what I think is going to happen; something that won’t make us merry at all,—and yet I shall be so curious to see her.”

“See *whom*?” both the others exclaimed; “what do you mean, Matilda?”

“I mean that we are going to get a governess; that is, that I think, perhaps, we are to get one.”

“And why do you think so?” Selina asked.

“Because when I went into the drawing-room with one of the parcels, (mamma’s blotting-book, you know,) I heard Uncle Howard say, ‘Yes, I certainly do see the advantage of having a governess; *but*—’ and then I put down the parcel very slowly, that I might hear more; but mamma said, ‘Matilda, don’t linger in the room, for we are engaged at present, and wish to be alone.’ So, you know, I was obliged to be off very quick; do you think you will like it Selina?—to be sure, it won’t be so bad for you, but it will be bad enough for poor me, with all my scrapes; and yet I should like to see what sort of a face she has got, though I am quite sure I shall not like it.”

“But perhaps the governess is for *me*,” Leila said, in a sorrowful tone; then added, “and I shall never be alone with my papa any more.”

“No, no,” Matilda eagerly exclaimed; “don’t vex yourself, Leila. Don’t put on that sorrowful face; I am sure the governess is for us; for once before I heard mamma say something about it to papa,—it was one day when she said I was unmanageable, and you know you are never unmanageable.”

“If you mean that I never am very bad, you are mistaken; you don’t know all the things I do sometimes, and wish to do.”

“Well, well,” Matilda answered, “don’t tell me about them, for I don’t want to hear; it is too bad that to-day, when we have no lessons, and are so happy to be home again, we do nothing but speak about faults, and make each other melancholy. See, the sun is out—it is quite fair now—let us go into the garden and have a nice race.”

Leila’s face brightened. “It will be delightful,” she said, as they all three ran off together.

## CHAPTER II.

MATILDA’S faults and Leila’s fears seemed alike forgotten. They talked, and laughed, and ran races, till fatigue at last made a quieter mode of amusement desirable, even to Matilda. The arbour, which was in a sheltered spot at one end of the garden, was still almost in summer beauty,—the china-roses and many of the autumn flowers were yet in rich luxuriance, and the bright beams of the sun brought back the feeling of summer with all its gladness. As they seated themselves in the arbour, a robin flew down from a neighbouring tree, and timidly advanced within the entrance, then paused and seemed to fix its clear bright eye on Leila; she softly raised her hand, and pointed to her lips to enjoin silence; but Matilda made a sudden movement, and the next moment the robin was gone. Leila sighed.

“Are you sorry I frightened it away?” Matilda inquired.

“No,” Leila answered, cheerfully; “it was not that; you know the robin did not know us, it would have flown away the moment any of us had moved, and we could not have sat all day quite still; so never mind, Matilda, only it made me think—” she stopped and coloured.

“What did it make you think of? Do tell me.”

“It made me think that in the island the birds never were afraid of me; they never flew away, at least a great many of them did not; they knew me quite well there.”

“And you are wishing to be back to the island,” Matilda exclaimed, reproachfully, “because the birds know you there; and you would leave Selina and me, who know you, I am sure, far better than the birds, and love you better too; I am sure I wish that—*that* island—”

Selina placed her hands before Matilda’s mouth. “Hush, hush, Matilda, don’t say it. You are working yourself up to be angry; you will be sorry afterwards; indeed, you will be sorry now;” and she pointed to Leila, who stood covering her face with her hands, while the tears trickled down between her fingers.

Matilda flew to her; she tried to remove her hands, and kissed her repeatedly. “There, you see, I am off again, and worse than ever. Oh, this badness! will it never leave me? and, Cousin Leila, perhaps you will begin to hate me now!”

Leila removed her hands from her face, and hastily brushed away her tears; then, throwing her arms round Matilda’s neck, she said,—“Oh, Matilda! never, never say that again, for I love you very much.”

“You are so kind and good,” Matilda was beginning to say.

Leila stopped her. “No, Matilda, no; I am not good. I was not crying now because I was sorry about the island, but because I was angry at you for speaking of it in that way,—and now let me tell you all that is in my heart. I am happy here, quite, quite happy; I like living in the world exceedingly, I think the world is delightful, and the trials that papa spoke about I think are not coming to me, at least, not the great ones; for you know it is a little trial when you are angry with me, and I should bear it better, I know; but it is about the island I wished to speak,—I do not wish to go back to it to live. No, I could not leave—” she fixed her eyes fondly on Selina,—“nor you either, Matilda,” she

added; "I could not leave you, I do love you very much, though sometimes you make me angry; but I love the island very much also. God placed me there when he snatched me from the dashing waves. It was my home, my happy home; I had my papa all to myself then; he used to call me his little friend, and he was such a friend to me, always keeping me right. You know I was alone there with my papa, and with God; and it was so much easier to be good there. I thought more of God in the island, for every thing seemed so full of his love, and all so beautiful. The island was God's garden, the flowers always springing, so bright and beautiful, the trees so green, and nobody to take care of them but God; the birds always singing to Him, the fountain making that sweet sound, and the everlasting hills.— Oh! Matilda, it was comforting to live amongst God's works, every thing to make me love Him, and nothing to make me forget; here I am happy, too happy sometimes, for it is a kind of happiness which makes me forget, and then afterwards comes the sorrow."

"And what do you do then?" Matilda anxiously inquired.

"I often try to put it off, and I dash about, and try to be merry; but I am not merry; I get more sorrowful; then I remember that it is conscience that is speaking to me, and that papa says *conscience* is the voice of God, and if I do not listen, *He* will turn away from me; then I get frightened as well as sorrowful, and I go away by myself, sometimes into my room, sometimes into the garden, and there I think"— She hesitated, then continued,— "I think of Jesus Christ, and of all he did for us, and how he loved little children, and took them in his arms, and blessed them: and I pray to Him in my heart to love me and to bless me also. Do you remember how he raised the little daughter of twelve years old from the dead? I always think how good she must have been after that, and how she must have loved Jesus Christ, and yet it should be the same with us; He keeps us alive every moment, and preserves us from every danger, and I forget Him often, though twice he has saved my life, in the stormy sea, you know, and from the frightful—" She stopped and shuddered.

"Don't, don't think of it," Matilda exclaimed; "don't work yourself up in that way, Leila."

"But it does me good, Matilda, to think of it, and beside it was such a day of happiness also,"—and she looked fondly at Selina.

"Yes, yes, I know what you mean," Matilda said, hastily; "and I am sure it was a day of happiness to me too; but we won't think any more about it now, for I do tire a little if you speak too much about goodness; but what with you being so good, and Selina being so good, I surely shall get better in time; indeed, I am a little better already, I assure you I am—I am almost always sorry now when I do wrong."

Selina looked up and smiled. "Yes, indeed, you are better, Matilda. I think there has been a great improvement in you since Leila came to stay with us, and now I hope that you will not take to Lydia Mildmay again so much, or allow her to have such influence over you as she used to have,—she did you no good."

"Why do you always say that?" Matilda exclaimed, colouring violently; "I do wish, Selina, you would just tell me at once why you don't like Lydia. I am sure it is very ungrateful in you, and I think that you need not be so sorry that she should praise me sometimes, she praises you also a great deal."

"Yes," Selina answered, "she does; but I don't like her praise, and I would rather she did not."

"And why do you not like her praise?"

"Because I cannot help thinking it is not sincere."

"Now, Selina, that is too bad in you. Mamma often says, 'Give me a proof of it, Matilda;' so I say to you, give me a proof of it, Selina."

"No, I cannot give you a proof of it now; some other time we will talk of it again. I wish to go to mamma now—I dare say I can help her to arrange something—you know there must be a great deal to arrange on our first coming home."

"And let me go with you also," Leila eagerly said; "for I dare say I could do some good. When we arrived in the cave, I remember I assisted papa to arrange a good deal. I unpacked the canteen, and put out all the cups and saucers, and helped nurse to arrange the pans, and when papa put up the shelves, I put the clothes upon them, and his boots and shoes all in a row; but in this country there is not so much to be done; I sometimes think it is stupid to have so many people making places for every thing, I used to like so much making plans and contrivances."

"Well," Matilda said, "if you are both going to be such busy bees, I will go to Alfred for a little; I see him down the middle walk, and we can romp together; for you know this is to be a holiday, mamma said so; so I need not work, unless I like it myself." She was off in a moment.

"Why," inquired Leila, as they entered the house together, "would you not give Matilda a proof of why you did not like Lydia?"

"Better not," Selina answered; "it does not do with Matilda to talk to her too much on subjects she does not like; if I had gone on, in a few minutes more she would have been angry. Did you not observe how her colour was rising?"

"Yes, I did; and I am never very sure when I am talking to Matilda how she is to take it; she gets red very often,—but I need not wonder at that, for it is just the same with me—I am sure to get red very often too."

"Yes," Selina answered, "you do; you colour very often, but then it is not with anger."

"You don't know, Selina; you think that because you love me; but very often it is with anger,—not so much when papa tells me I am wrong, for he speaks so gently to me, and always seems so sorry himself, that it makes me very grieved, and I always wish to be better, and say to myself, that I will try never to displease him again; but it is quite another thing with Nurse. I often feel my cheeks get as hot as fire when she scolds me; but it is with anger then; for she sometimes teases the very life out of me. Not often though, for I know she loves me; but then she is always saying, 'Oh! Miss Leila, you are a heartbreak to me; if you would but sit to your work like a rational being,—you are not to trust to Amy mending your things,—you know your papa says you are not. You are far too much taken up with your music and your histories; and what sort of a pocket-hole is that for a young lady to have?' I am laughing now, Selina, while I am telling it to you; but though sometimes I can bear it pretty well, and try to please her by beginning to mend my pocket-hole as quick as possible, at other times I get quite into a passion, and can't bear to put in a single stitch; but we must make haste now, or every thing will be put in order, and we shall have no work to do. I like that kind of work very much, don't you, Selina?"

### CHAPTER III.

MATILDA'S idea, that their having a governess was a point determined on, proved more correct than her hasty conclusions generally did. Mr. Howard had been for some time aware that the mode of life which he must pursue in England would prevent him giving that undivided attention to Leila which his island home had afforded him, and which every day was becoming more necessary in the formation of her inquiring mind and impetuous character. He felt that Nurse, with all her fond affection, in her attempts to rule, was only fostering in his child a spirit of opposition and self-will; and that Leila was beginning to think in many things she knew better than Nurse, and that she did right to reject counsel, which, though always well intended, was often not judiciously given. Though resolved not to yield to the feeling, he had been too long accustomed to the exclusive society of his child, not to be aware that there would be many occasions in which the presence of a third person would prove irksome to him, and it was therefore with real gratitude that he listened to Mrs. Stanley's proposal, that the intended governess should reside under their roof, yet still have the joint charge of the cousins. "The distance was so short," she observed, "not two miles, it would only be healthful exercise for Leila to walk when the day was fine, and in bad weather she could easily be sent to them in the carriage. She should take care that Leila was always at home to dine with her papa when he was alone, and to read and sing to him in the evenings, as she had been accustomed to do."

When Mr. Howard sent for Leila next day to communicate this intelligence, she entered his room with an unusually grave expression; the dreaded idea of a governess had been haunting her imagination the whole morning, and gaining strength every minute. She advanced slowly, and taking her papa's hand in hers, she looked up anxiously into his eyes:—"Is it a governess, papa?" she said, "is it? Oh, tell me quick."

"My dear child," Mr. Howard answered, as he stooped down and kissed her forehead, "my dear, dear child, what is all this? Why do you look at me in this piteous manner? Indeed you must not agitate yourself in this way; you must not let your imagination get the better of you; it certainly was on this subject I wished to talk to you; but is the idea of a governess so very frightful to you?"

"No, papa; perhaps she is not frightful, but you know I never saw one; perhaps she is like other ladies, but then you know she will be always there, always sticking to me; Matilda said something which made me know that; always *sticking*, papa; and then I shall never be alone with you. No more nice chats with your little friend." Her voice failed, she could not continue.

Mr. Howard looked at her anxiously; "Leila, my dear child, you distress me; if you allow yourself to get into this way of anticipating imaginary evils, you will enervate your mind, and unfit yourself to bear as you ought to do the real trials of life; remember who says, 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Now listen to me; I can see that Matilda has made you aware that you are to have a governess, and all the morning you have probably been working yourself up with the idea of suffering from what I trust may prove the greatest blessing to you. I cannot now devote my mornings to you as I did in the island; I must frequently be absent, and you are now of an age to require superior instruction to that of your faithful and affectionate nurse; but you will still be my little friend; in the evenings you will sing and read to me as you used to do, and we shall always dine together."

Leila's face brightened. "O, what a comfort!" she exclaimed: then added, "but I don't know that I shall be quite comfortable. My governess won't like dining by herself; she will be melancholy."

"Now, dear child, you are again running on before the point, though I am glad that now it is that you are anxious for your governess' comfort: but she is not to be exclusively your governess, Leila, and she is not to reside at Woodlands. Your aunt has most kindly proposed that you should spend the mornings with your cousins, and be educated with them. We are to breakfast together early as we used to do; when fine, you are to walk there immediately after breakfast, or be sent in the carriage when the weather is bad; and by five o'clock you are to be home to dine with your papa. I give you a general invitation to dinner, Miss Leila Howard, and pray give me a favourable answer."

"Papa, papa, how delightful you are to me," Leila exclaimed; "all my fears, all my sorrows; where are they? You are like the sun to me, papa; the sun chasing away the clouds, and now there is nothing but the blue sky and my beautiful governess."

Mr. Howard smiled; "And who told you she was to be beautiful?" he inquired.

"Nobody, papa; but I think she will be, and I am sure I shall like her so much."

"I hope indeed that you will like her, my love; for if your aunt succeeds in the application she is about to make, your governess is likely to prove a very estimable person; but I don't suppose she ever was beautiful, and she can't be very young now."

Leila's countenance fell. "As old as the hills, I reckon," she ejaculated, in a very low voice.

But her papa caught the words: " 'As old as the hills, I *reckon*,' " he repeated; "Leila, from whom have you caught up that phrase?"

"From Peggy Dobie," she replied.

"From Peggy Dobie; but, my love, have I not told you that I do not wish you to acquire Peggy Dobie's mode of expressing yourself? I shall regret my promise of allowing Peggy to remove to Woodlands, if you are to adopt her phrases, and try to imitate her mode of speaking."

"But, papa, I promise you I will not, and I dare say our governess would not like me to speak in that way either. I hope she will come to us very soon; how soon do you think, papa? in a few days?—our governess, I mean. I know Peggy Dobie cannot be here so soon, or my pets either: how delightful it will be when they all arrive, what a world of happiness it will be then!"

"My dear Leila, I have already told you that I hope this lady, if we succeed in engaging her, may prove a real blessing and advantage to you; but you must not allow your imagination to run away with you in this way, or suppose that you are immediately to find her in every way delightful; she is a person who has experienced severe trials; her husband lost a large fortune by the failure of a bank with which he was connected; he died soon after, leaving her and one little girl totally unprovided for. Her sister has taken this little girl to be educated with her own children, and Mrs. Roberts has for some time past been looking out for a situation as governess. Your aunt has a high idea of her principles, and was much struck by the truly Christian way in which she has borne up under her misfortunes; and having resided several years abroad, she speaks both French and Italian with facility, and is besides an excellent

musician. All this makes her a most desirable person, but the sorrows she has gone through may probably make her graver than you may at first think agreeable; and you must remember, besides, that a governess has an arduous task to perform, and many difficulties to combat."

"What difficulties, papa?"

"The difficulties, my love, of having three little girls to correct, to control, and to instruct."

Leila repeated the word *correct*.

"Yes, my love," Mr. Howard continued, "Mrs. Roberts would be unworthy of our confidence, and neglectful of her duty, if she did not correct your faults."

"But, papa, she would only have two to correct: Selina is quite perfect; don't you think so, papa?"

"No, my love; I know no one in this world who is perfect, and Selina, though several years older than you are, is still very young, and requires much care and instruction to form her character; but she has fewer faults than any other little girl I know—she is indeed singularly admirable; Mrs. Roberts, I have no doubt, will think herself very fortunate to have such a pupil."

"And what will she think about me, papa?" she anxiously inquired.

"Why, she will probably think that she has got rather an impetuous little woman to manage, one who often allows her imagination to get the better of her." But seeing Leila's downcast face, he added,—“yet I feel sure also that she will not be long of loving my little girl, though she is not *perfect*; and now Leila," he continued, "have you any idea of what is to be done to-day?"

"No, papa, I have no idea. Are we to begin our lessons again? Oh, no! I see you have a plan—I see it in your face. Do tell me: I am sure you have something pleasant to tell."

"Yes," Mr. Howard answered, "I think you will like the arrangement for this forenoon. I have just been proposing to your aunt that we should visit Woodlands, that you should see your future home, my child; and we have settled that you young folks are to walk there with Nurse and Amy, and I have ordered the open carriage to drive your uncle and aunt; we shall probably be there first to receive you."

"Papa, how delightful! May I run and tell Selina and Matilda the good news? and Alfred, may he go too?"

"Certainly, my love."

"Well then, I am off—how delightful to have so much to tell; and I may speak about our governess also, papa, may I not?"

"Yes, my love, you may; but your aunt has probably by this time mentioned the subject to your cousins; I know she intended doing so this morning."

## CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Leila entered the school-room Selina was reading, but Matilda stood gazing out at the window with rather a disturbed expression of countenance. "Well, Cousin Leila," she said, "we have news for you, and not very good news either. Now all the day long it will be,—'Hold up your head, Miss Leila,' 'Why do you walk in that awkward way, Miss Matilda?' 'How troublesome you are; I wish you would take example by your elder sister—one awkward trick after another—I really must complain of you to Mrs. Stanley.' Yes, Selina, you need not shake your head at me and look so grave; Leila will look grave also when she knows the truth. Yes, Leila, I was quite right, it is all settled, we are to have a governess; so no more pleasant days for us. Botheration, botheration."

Leila had not been able to resist laughing at first; but she checked herself, and remained silent.

Selina spoke. "Oh, Matilda! how can you speak in this way, and after all mamma has been just saying? and you seemed to feel it so."

"Yes, I know I am wrong; and when mamma was speaking to me I felt very sorry, and I resolved I would try to please this Mrs. Roberts, or rather mamma, for I would rather please mamma than any one in the whole world; but, Leila, you looked when you came in as if you had something joyful to say; if you have, please to say it, for we need good news very much to-day."

But no sooner had Leila communicated the pleasant intelligence of the proposed visit to Woodlands, than all traces of sorrow were banished from Matilda's face; she was in ecstasies, and, flying across the room, she dashed the book from Selina's hands, and throwing her arms round her neck, she exclaimed,—“Now no more reading to-day, if you please, *Mrs. Demure*; this is what I call the right kind of a holiday—how merry we shall be! Well, I do think Uncle Howard makes most delightful plans; how do you manage, Leila, to get him to do so many nice things?"

"I don't manage," Leila answered; "he is always thinking of doing kind things to me and every body, and he has told me all about our governess, and made me like having one more than I did at first; I will tell you about it as we go along, for we are to walk, you know, and we must make haste and get ready, that papa and uncle and aunt may not be there long before us."

The walk proved every way delightful. The sky so brightly blue, the sunshine splendid, and the woods, now tinted with the glowing hues of autumn, gave additional beauty to the scene. Here and there a solitary unprotected tree, standing out from the others, might have given warning to more contemplative minds that winter and its storms were approaching; but there was no winter in their young hearts—all was fresh, gay, and green, and withered leaves brought to them no memory of blighted hopes, and of a world of many sorrows.

The distance could not be two miles, they all agreed, though Matilda and Alfred did their best to lengthen it, by continuing, during every few yards of their progress, to run up a little bank by the side of the road and down again, assuring the others that it was by far the quickest way of getting on, but Leila greatly preferred walking quietly straight forward with Selina; it was always a particular pleasure to her to have Selina entirely to herself. She now related to her all her papa had told her of Mrs. Roberts, and many were the good resolutions made by both, that they would do all they could to make her situation pleasant to her. As they came in sight of a pretty-looking house, standing in a small garden, Leila stopped.

"Look, Selina," she said, "I think that must be Woodlands, had we not better ask some one if it is?"

A countryman came up to them at that moment, walking very quickly, and was about to pass on before. Leila ran forward.

"Pray do stop," she said, "if you are not very busy, and tell us if that is Woodlands?"

The man turned back and looked at her with astonishment.

"Dear heart, young lady, but you must be a stranger in these parts—that Woodlands, *that?* It would be but a humble post indeed to open the park gates to them good people, a very decent family too, I mean to say nothing disrespectful, but Woodlands, bless your heart, Woodlands is one of the *principalest* houses in the whole countryside. Do you see that beautiful great house standing on the height there, with the broad terrace and the pleasure-grounds sloping down to the river, and them grand woods on each side, shutting out the summer's sun and the winter's blasts?—*that's* Woodlands, and it's not every day you will see its like; but you are pleasant-looking young ladies to my mind, and if you have a fancy to see Woodlands, though it's not to every one I would say as much, I have no objections to unlock the gates for you, for once and away."

"And are the gates always locked?" Leila timidly inquired; then added, "papa told us to go there."

"No, no, my young lady; it's not papas or mammas either that can give that permission. As long as my head's above ground, there shall no promiscuous company enter there; but never vex your sweet heart," he continued, more mildly, (observing Leila's expression of blank dismay,) "never vex your heart; you shall see the place for all that;" then added with a sigh, "but Woodlands has gotten a new master, one Squire Howard, they tell me—a fine man from the Indies. Heaven send he may be a kind one; but they tell queer stories about him too. It was I that showed the two gentlemen that came to settle about it all over the place, and they said something of his having lived in a desert island, a Robinson Crusoe sort of an affair that I could not make out at all; but if we are to have a master from a desert island, I hope he will keep more company about him than his man Friday, or Woodlands will be a changed place."

"My papa had no man Friday with him in the island," Leila meekly answered; "but we do not live there now. We came into the world last May, and our man-servant's name is John; in the island we had only Nurse—look, she is coming up to us now, and she is to be my papa's housekeeper at Woodlands."

The ruddy face of the countryman became actually pale, as he pulled off his hat, and stood immovable before Leila.

"My master's daughter; it's not possible. Surely——"

Matilda, who from the moment she had joined them, had continued walking with the others, and had hitherto remained wonderfully silent, could now no longer restrain herself.

"You may indeed look surprised," she said, "for you have made a fine mistake. Yes, it is quite true: you have all this time been speaking to Miss Howard. She is the young mistress of Woodlands. And now will you open the gates?"

"Don't, Matilda, pray don't," Leila exclaimed in a voice of entreaty; "do you not see how sorry he looks?" then turning with a smile to the poor man, who still remained uncovered before them, "Do put on your hat," she said; "the sun is hurting your eyes, and you need not be the least sorry for what you have said. I dare say you were told to take care of it; that was just the way Nurse used to watch over every thing in the island, only there we had no gates to lock."

In a few minutes longer they had reached the lodge, a pretty small thatched house in the cottage style, with a profusion of China roses and honeysuckles on its white walls. Leila instantly thought how delightfully it would have suited Peggy Dobie, but she did not say so. The gates were no longer shut, they stood most invitingly open; a tidy, pleasant-looking young woman seemed to have been watching for them at the door of the cottage.

"Oh, Bill, Bill," she exclaimed, "you have been long, and to have been away to-day of all days in the year, and a fine lady and gentleman away up the approach in the carriage, and the squire himself, and a kind, civil-spoken gentleman he seems to be."

But the young people were too impatient to listen to further details; the moment they entered the gates they bounded forward. The windings of the approach, though calculated to show the finest trees on the property, they thought much too long, and by the time they reached the house they were breathless with impatience. Mr. Howard, who had been watching them from the window, was at the door to meet them. "Welcome to all of you," he said, and he stooped down and kissed Leila repeatedly; "welcome to your future home, my Leila; may it be a happy home to you, my dearest child."

Leila seemed at first quite bewildered; the entrance hall seemed to be so large, the drawing-room larger *still*. The windows of the drawing-room opened on a trellised balcony, festooned with creeping plants, and filled with rare and beautiful flowers; a broad flight of steps, with stone balustrades on each side, and large vases, scarlet pomegranate and pink oleander in full bloom, led from this balcony to the terrace below; and beyond this terrace the velvet turf, interspersed with beds of gay and fragrant flowers, sloped down to the edge of the broad river, on which many little boats were gliding up and down; happily no steamboat being in sight on this first-favoured moment.

All were loud in their expressions of admiration; they had never seen any thing more beautiful; but though Leila admired, she seemed still bewildered, and almost more oppressed than pleased.

"It is very beautiful; but how shall I ever be able to manage such a house as this?"

Selina whispered, "Don't distress yourself, Leila, it is not till you are grown up that you will have to manage; your papa will do it now, and my mamma will help him."

Leila brightened a little, but still looked anxiously around the room: "Surely it is very large," she said.

It was Matilda's observation, "Young mistress of Woodlands," that had done all this; poor Leila was weighed down to the ground with a sudden sense of her responsibilities; to common observers she was a simple child, young, even for her years; but there was often a deep under-current of thought about her, to be discovered only in the changes of her expressive countenance, and in the hesitating, varied tones of her voice.

Mr. Howard understood her: "We will manage all for you very nicely," he said; "so, my dear Leila, do not be afraid; and this room will not look so large when it is furnished, and we have sofas, and chairs, and large tables, and little tables, and all sorts of pretty things in it; and it certainly will not be too large if we succeed in having all the kind friends around us at Christmas whom I hope we shall have. Your aunt, uncle, and cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert, and Maria, and perhaps the Selbys, with Louisa, who knows?"



Leila, from the moment of entering the house, had been working herself up, and struggling against comfort; but comfort, in the shape of such a Christmas party as this, who could resist? She quickly gave herself up to all its happy influences, and when her papa led her into the adjoining breakfast-room, which was small, and leading into a spacious conservatory, she was in ecstasies.

"My birds, my birds," she exclaimed, "my turtle-doves, my parrots, how they will enjoy it. They will think this more beautiful than their green parlour."

All was sunshine to her again; it was a moment of exquisite happiness, such happiness as is only to be felt in very early life, before the sad memories of the past, "and the shadows of coming evils, have dimmed its brightness."

The young people returned home in high spirits; Leila forgetting every care in the remembrance of the beautiful conservatory, and in the anticipation of the enjoyment of her birds in taking possession of it; and Matilda far too much excited to allow any of them to rest, even for a moment.

"Come," she said, "we will act a play now;" and flying into the passage, she seized her papa's hat, placed it on one side on her head, tied over her dress a green linen pinafore of Alfred's to imitate a blouse, and returning into the room, "Now," she said, "I will be Bill; you, Cousin Leila, are to be talking very gravely with Selina, consulting her how you are to order the dinner at Woodlands when I come up to you; and you, Alfred, are to be the pit, and stamp with your feet, and call out very loud."

"But why," Leila exclaimed, "should poor Alfred be in the pit? I don't like that, it puts me in mind of such melancholy things,—Joseph and his wicked brothers, you know,—and he called out and they would not listen; and the cruel thing we did ourselves; we put the poor goats into the pit; but papa said that was a necessary evil."

Matilda laughed: "You are so odd," she said; "it is not that sort of a pit at all. I never saw it myself, but Lydia told me about it,—it is a place where all the gentlemen sit in rows to see the play, and they stamp very loud with their feet, and call out encore; encore means—say it again; don't forget that, Alfred."

Leila was quite relieved and satisfied, and the play proceeded; and so admirably did Matilda imitate Bill's voice and manner, and so complete was the picture when she drew off the hat, and stood with a face of mute dismay before them, that Selina and Leila were convulsed with laughter; as to little Alfred, he stamped so loud, and called *encore* so often, that even Matilda, with all her love of amusement, was fairly exhausted.

"Now," she said, "we have had enough of this; let us play at Nurse's play now, let us play at being rational beings, and sit down quietly to our work; now there's a proposal for you, Selina, what do you say to that? I am going to turn over an entirely new leaf, and I will begin with putting back this hat into its right place, and folding up this crumpled pinafore so very nicely that Nurse will say it is fresh out of the fold. Now it is all done, and I declare you have got out your work already; well, here is mine, and we can sit down comfortably and converse about our future lives."

"Yes," Leila said, "that will be a delightful subject."

"I don't know that," Matilda replied; "you are forgetting about the governess; she is to be here very soon, if she can come. Mamma wrote to her this morning; she bid me hold the taper when she was sealing the letter, and I could not help thinking how nice it would be if I could give a little push and set the letter on fire."

"Oh, Matilda," Selina exclaimed, "how sorry you make me; why do you talk in this way and why should your future life not be happy because we are to have a governess to save mamma trouble; you know she is not very strong, and she is not able to manage us herself."

"To manage *me*, you should say, Selina; but how can my future life be happy, when she will be for ever finding fault with me?"

"But why do you think so? It is quite in your own power to go on happily with her; she will not find fault with you unless you deserve it, and surely you would not wish to grow up in your faults; you could not have a happy future life if you are not good, for you have a conscience, Matilda, and after a little you are always sorry when you do wrong."

"I am, Selina; you know me very well; but then I am so often bad, and so often sorry, that there is no great happiness about my life after all, even though I have not a governess. Well, we shall see if she makes this great change."

"She cannot make the *change*, Matilda, she can only tell you what is right; and you cannot do it either, of yourself. You must pray for the Spirit of God to come into your heart, and to make you really sorry for your faults, and really anxious to do what is right."

"But I am really anxious," Matilda answered; "and I am always wishing I could be as good as you are."

"I wish you would not say that so often; I am not good."

"Oh, if *you* are not good, and you expect me to be better than you are, it is a bad business! I need not try."

"Why do you talk in that way? You do not know all the foolish things I think of and wish to do; but remember, Matilda, the lesson I have had, and the great blessing God has given me. Before I had made up my mind to be always dumb, I used often to pray to Him, and promise that if He would open my lips, I would try to be more and more His child, and praise Him with my life as well as with my heart; and when I read of Jesus Christ opening the eyes of the blind, and making the dumb to speak, I used to have such deep sorrow, that sometimes I could scarcely bear it; I used to shut myself up alone and say to myself, Why did I not live then? Surely if I had asked Him myself, and He had seen my sorrow, He would have listened. Oh, it was a sinful thought."

"But why was it sinful?" Matilda asked.

"It was sinful, because it was doubting His wisdom, for He knew what was best for me; it was also doubting His power, for in heaven He equally hears our prayers and sees our sorrows; and the miracles He worked on earth are not greater than those which are every where around us. The spring and summer coming again, and bringing up the flowers, and making the dead earth so green and beautiful, are miracles of His power; and the very miracle I asked for was granted—granted in a moment—my lips were opened; from that time I made my resolution——" She stopped and coloured.

"What resolution?" Matilda eagerly asked.

"The resolution that I would try to think of Him more than I had ever done before; that I would be part of every day alone, not to ask for more worldly blessings, but to thank Him for giving me more than I ever can deserve."

"And so this is the reason," Matilda said, "why you go away in the forenoon and lock your door. I never could

find out what you were doing; once I thought I would look through the keyhole, and I went on tip-toe, but then I remembered mamma saying that was a mean, low habit, and I did not. But you do another thing, Selina, which you never used to do before; in the morning, after you have read the Bible, you turn over and over the pages, as if you were looking for something. What are you doing then, for you cannot be reading?"

"I am finding out texts. Every day I search for a text, and an answer to it, and I get them by heart; it helps to keep good thoughts in my mind during the day."

"And you never told me a word of all this," Matilda said, reproachfully; "and if you had, it might have made me better, and I could have learned texts also. Why did you not tell me?"

Selina looked distressed, and coloured. "I believe I was wrong, but I always feel ashamed to talk on those subjects before any one; I fear it is a false shame."

"No, Selina, no," Leila said quickly: "my papa explained to me about that; to be sure, to Matilda or to me you might have said it, for he told me that with a very dear friend it was a delightful subject, but that in the world I must not talk about God as I used to do in the island; I must try to think of Him constantly just the same, and always ask myself how He would wish me to act, but I must not say so before indifferent people (that means worldly people). He says before worldly people it may do harm, for their minds may not be in a good frame at the moment, and it might make them worse, and might make them turn away; and even before good people I should not talk in this way, for good people may be shocked, and think it too sacred a subject to be talked of before many; but, Selina, I would like to do all that you have been telling me you do; I would like to find out texts also, and try to keep them in my mind, for it is not so easy to be good here as in the island, so many new things come into my mind here. What was the text you found out for to-day?"

"It was from the Psalms: 'Blessed be God which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.' "

"And what answer did you find?" Leila inquired.

"My answer was also from the Psalms: 'I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.' "

"And it was an excellent answer," Leila observed, "and very comforting. I am so glad, Selina, you have told me of this plan. I know a great many texts, for you know in the island I had no other book to read but the Bible, but I never thought of this plan; I wish I had."

Tears stood in Matilda's eyes: "I do not know the Bible by heart as Leila does," she said; "but you, Selina, will find out a text to suit me, and I will learn it," and she rose and left the room.

"I must go to her," Selina said; "she is a dear, kind sister to me, and always so sorry when she does wrong."

Leila was left alone. "Such a happy home preparing for me, and so many to love," she whispered to herself; and clasping her hands together, she looked up for a moment, then left the room to seek her father.

## CHAPTER V.

NEARLY a month had passed rapidly away: Mr. Howard had been much in London during the mornings, selecting furniture for Woodlands, and giving many necessary orders for their future comfort; and Mrs. Stanley had been well pleased to find that the joint example of Selina and Leila appeared to have a beneficial effect on Matilda; the daily lessons went on smoothly and well. Matilda now learned her texts regularly, and after the first few days, had always selected them for herself; and these texts generally evinced, not only a knowledge of her own faults, but a sincere desire to get the better of them: the text for that morning had been, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord."

And the answer she had selected was, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee."

During this period Woodlands had been frequently visited. Leila had become more and more pleased with the grounds, and the beautiful walks with which it abounded.

Mr. Howard had selected a pretty little cottage, near the poultry-yard, for Peggy Dobie, and Leila had had much delight in seeing the China roses, and several pretty creepers, trained on its white walls, and the little garden put in nice order, and well stocked with useful winter vegetables. She had asked the gardener to put up a green turf seat in a warm corner of the garden; he had humbly proposed that it should be in the shade, but Leila said no—that Peggy Dobie always sat in the sun when she watched her bees, and that she said, "The sun was gude baith for bees and bodies, and gladdened her auld heart."

Peggy had been allowed time to visit her friends before leaving her country, but the period was now approaching for her arrival, and Leila's gay spirits were in full flow. Selina, the cat, and one solitary parrot, had been poor substitutes for the loss of all the other favourites; above all, the absence of Dash had been particularly felt and mourned over. "Now," she said, "I have but a few days to wait, and I can scarce count up all the pleasures that are coming upon me;—Woodlands, and all the Christmas party, with all the friends that I love; and Dash, and Peggy Dobie, and all my birds and turtle-doves again,—joy, nothing but joy."

The morning in which Peggy Dobie was to embark with her precious cargo rose calm and bright. The wind, which had been threatening to rise the day before, was completely lulled, and Leila had been rejoicing in the brightness of the day, and had watched the sun go down in golden splendour. Later in the evening, however, the wind began to rise again, but not so as at all to alarm her, and Leila's tranquil sleep was unbroken by the coming storm, the loud howling of the blast amidst the trees, and the sound of distant thunder—it was a fearful night. Mr. Howard had more than once left his bed to look out upon the scene of desolation, for the ground was strewn with branches from the trees, and the clouds were driving before the wind with unceasing velocity. It recalled to his mind that dreadful night when he seemed about to part with all most dear to him, and though deeply grateful for the present safety of one so loved, he yet felt painfully anxious for those that might now be in similar circumstances. The good old woman too, whom he had been the means of removing from her quiet home, he thought what Leila's grief would be, and his own regrets, if aught of ill befell her. Of all this threatened danger Leila was in ignorance till awakened next morning by Nurse: her face of dismay Leila was too sleepy to observe, but her words were startling.

"Oh, Miss Leila!" she exclaimed, "poor, *poor* Peggy Dobie, and our valuable Dash, and all the poor dumb animals."

"What is it, Nurse?" Leila cried, starting up and rubbing her eyes; "are they arrived?—but no; that is not possible; they cannot arrive for two days yet. What has happened? why do you look so? Oh, tell me!"

"Calm yourself, my dear Miss Leila. It was not like my usual prudence to frighten you in this way; but did you not hear the awful wind in the night? listen to it now, how it roars."

Leila was out of bed in a moment, and gazing from the window. The lawn was strewn with leaves and branches from the trees; one branch lay across the doorway, so very large, it seemed an entire tree. She shuddered. Mr. Howard entered the room at this moment, and lifting her in his arms, he replaced her in bed, and sat down beside her.

Leila's long dark eyelashes were wet with tears; her cheeks were very pale, and she trembled violently. Mr. Howard stooped down and kissed her forehead.

"You were wrong to leave your bed, my child, you are very cold—and cold also, I fear, from excessive agitation. Now, dear Leila, give me a proof this day that you are endeavouring to gain more command over your feelings, and let me see that you do not give way to what are, I trust, unnecessary fears."

"Unnecessary?" she replied, in a low voice. "Papa, do you remember Clara?"

"Yes, my dear child, I do remember; but I remember also that there is *One* whose arm is mighty to save. He can say to the angry waves, 'Be still;' and without his knowledge 'not a sparrow falls to the ground.' He took Clara to Himself, and He saved us from further trial. He willed it so—let us trust to Him entirely. He alone, who knows the end from the beginning, can make all work together for good."

Leila hastily brushed the tears from her eyes, and laid her little hand on her papa's. Mr. Howard started, it was so very cold; but she struggled for composure, and said in a calm voice,— "Yes, papa, I will try to think of all this, and my text for to-day shall be, 'The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly, but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier: for He maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still.' Now kiss me, papa, and please send Amy to help me to dress, and when I have been to your room to say my prayers and to read to you, I am sure I shall feel quite comforted again, and you shall see that I am getting command, papa."

Leila kept her promise. Not a moment did she give way to outward emotion, but during that day many an anxious expression passed over her sweet face, for the storm continued to rage fearfully, and the party were constantly startled from their seats by the crashing sound of some large branch from the surrounding trees. These creaking and crashing sounds constantly brought a frightful moment to Leila's imagination, and no one was without anxiety, for it was impossible to believe but that such a storm must bring disastrous consequences to many an anxious heart. Selina seldom left Leila's side for a moment, and made constant efforts to draw her into conversation; and Matilda, as every fresh gust of wind arose, exerted herself in every way she could think of to distract her attention from the scene without. Later in the day it began to rain heavily, and the wind fell, and towards evening the sky cleared, and the moon shone out so bright, so calm, its mild rays shed instant peace and hope into Leila's young heart, and she lay down to sleep with many bright anticipations of the morrow.

The morrow came, the lawn looked fresh and green, all traces of the storm had been removed, and every surrounding object seemed rejoicing in the sunshine. Leila proposed that after the lessons they should walk with Nurse and Amy to Woodlands to see if all was in order in Peggy Dobie's cottage for her reception in the evening.

"I am sorry," she said, "that she is not to arrive here at first with my pets, for we cannot know the very moment, and it will take some time for Bill to send us the message. How nice it would be if we had a carrier-pigeon, papa, then it could fly to us in a moment; when we are staying at Woodlands, perhaps you will allow me to teach a carrier-pigeon, then I can send letters to Selina and Matilda whenever I wish to tell them any thing. Eh, papa? is not this a nice little plan? But you have not answered me yet if we may go to Woodlands."

"Why, my dear child, so many nice little plans from you come popping out, one after another, that it is not easy to answer them all; but I have no objections to your going to Woodlands, only remember, Leila, that it is not at all certain that Peggy will arrive this evening; the steamboat will probably have been detained by the storm."

"Well, papa, I will try to be very patient; but I don't think it will be detained; I think that perhaps the wind will have blown it on much quicker; so we must be quick also. You know, papa, you say we must not anticipate evils, or give way to imaginary fears, eh, papa?"

"Get along, little woman," was all Mr. Howard's answer, as he patted her head, and the next moment she was gone.

As soon as the lessons were over, the young party proceeded merrily on their way to Woodlands. They soon reached the lodge, and found Bill at his post, who opened the gates, and gave them entrance with the greatest alacrity; and when informed of their intention to visit Peggy Dobie's cottage, took down a large key that hung behind his own door, and prepared to lead the way. He would not hear of Nurse's proposal to save him that trouble. "What!" he said, "was he not proud to do that small service for his master's daughter, or any of her friends—he hoped to do many a greater service than that for the family ere long."

They were all much pleased with the perfect order in which they found every thing around the cottage, and still more delighted with all within. Mr. Howard had indeed done his part; the little bed-room looked so comfortable, with its nice tidy bed in one corner, its chest of drawers, its white deal table, with basin, ewer, &c., all, in short, was complete. And then the kitchen—the kitchen was a picture indeed; there stood the pretty chairs, and the small round table of walnut-tree, looking so bright, which Leila had entreated her papa to procure for Peggy. In a corner next the latticed window, was a small cupboard with a glass door, showing such pretty cups, saucers, and glasses within, as could not fail soon to become the pride of Peggy's heart. Above the small dresser there were shelves with plates, and dishes, and bowls, and mugs innumerable, and close by the door a cuckoo clock was ticking cheerily. They all looked round in perfect ecstasies.

"It is most delightful," Leila exclaimed; "there is just one thing that could be better, this arm-chair for Peggy should be turned round to the hearth, a cat should be lying before it, and a nice fire burning. Were you able to find peats in this country?" she said, turning to Bill; "you know I begged you to try."

"Yes, yes," Matilda said, "he did find them—I saw them in a box behind the door." She was off in a moment, and returned with a couple in her hand.

"Now, Nurse, dear Nurse," Leila said, coaxingly, "do let me light Peggy's first fire myself—you know how very kind she was to me; now there's a good Nurse, I see you are going to let me—you have your good-natured face on, though you are shaking your head; but I know what you mean by shaking it—you think I shall dirty my hands, and that is not a young lady's work; but peats don't dirty the hands—I am only going to put on peats and wood, you know."

"Oh, Miss Leila, Miss Leila, you have such a way with me."

"But, Nurse, you know you say yourself that I should not have useless hands and be a fine lady. There, now I see it is yes by your eyes. Matilda, give me that match-box from the chimney-piece." She was on her knees on the hearth, and had struck a light in a moment.

"Now, Selina, take the bellows, and blow very gently while I am crumbling down a little of the peat; that's it. Oh, how nice! See what a blaze already—now for the wood; we must put the wood behind, and more peats in the front—how it burns! is not this charming?"

Bill stood looking on in mute astonishment. "Well," he said at last, "desert island, or *no desert island*, you are a handy little miss; see when a London young lady would have kindled a fire in such a fashion,—but you seem all of one stamp. Heaven be praised for such a family."

"There is still one thing wanting," Leila said, "still the cat. Peggy will not think herself at home without a cat upon the hearth. You are so good-natured," she continued, looking up in Bill's face, "perhaps you would be so very kind as to give us your cat, just for one day, till Peggy has time to unpack her own."

Bill smiled. "There is nothing in my house that I would not give," he replied, "to pleasure my young mistress; but, bless your heart, the cats in our country would never abide on a strange hearth. Our cat would be through the window in no time, I am afear'd."

"It was very foolish in me to propose this," Leila answered, "for I dare say all cats are the same, and our Selina almost mewed her heart out when she was first put into the ship—she can't bear strange places either."

Once more she looked around the room to see if all was perfect; the small latticed window with the China-roses clustering in about it, she was sure would delight Peggy, for Peggy was so fond of flowers; might they not gather a few and make a nosegay for the middle of the table. The next moment they were all in the little garden—the flowers were quickly gathered and arranged, and after giving Bill many injunctions to be so very kind as to step up frequently and put more wood on the fire, and also to be quite sure to send off a quick messenger the very moment Peggy and the pets entered the gates, they left the cottage.

They had not time to enter the house at Woodlands, where all with regard to furnishing had been going on prosperously, but they had seen what had been done there more than once. Leila had thought it all beautiful, but she had a simple taste; she really did not like fine things, and her only request with regard to the furnishing had been, "Nothing fine in my room, papa—please, nothing fine; just a nice little bed with white dimity curtains, and a large sea-grass mat under my little washhand-stand, for I don't like to wash and dash and splash on a Brussels carpet."

The rest of the day passed in pleasant expectation, but towards evening the young people got very restless indeed, and little Alfred was perpetually popping out at the door and running a little way down the gravel walk, in the hope of meeting some one from Woodlands, and bringing the first intelligence; but no carrier-pigeon or swift messenger of any kind arrived; and at a later hour than usual the young people retired to rest, disappointed, but not alarmed. To-morrow was a new day, and to-morrow would bring all they wished. But to-morrow came; it was a long trying day of expectation, and still no tidings were received. It was with great difficulty that they could attend at all to their lessons; but Mrs. Stanley was very indulgent, and repeated most of them herself; and the moment they were over, she despatched them all to count over their clothes, and to put their drawers in order; to be busy and active was what she particularly required of them on that long, long day. It came to an end at last, and they went early to bed; but Mr. Howard had now become seriously uneasy, and next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, went to London to inquire at the steamboat office if they had received any intelligence with regard to the "Victoria."

Leila's face quite brightened as she saw him depart; the very idea that he would bring back intelligence quite raised her spirits; she never for a moment dreaded that this intelligence might not be favourable.

Mr. Howard returned sooner than was expected, but he had learned nothing. Neither the Victoria, nor the other steamboat which had sailed on the same day, had come in, and the owners were in much anxiety, as there were reports of several wrecks on the coast. This last part of the intelligence received, Mr. Howard did not communicate to Leila, but he looked anxious, and she knew his face too well not to feel considerable alarm. Next day he again went to London. Mrs. Stanley saw it would be too much to ask any of them to attend to their lessons; Leila was beginning to have a pale, exhausted look, she therefore gave Selina a book of natural history to read to them aloud, while the other two worked by the window. Poor Leila, she did not listen much. She worked very little, and looked out a great deal; after some hours horses' hoofs were heard on the gravel walk; she saw her papa alight at the door; her heart beat violently; she felt unable to move; he looked up and smiled; she could not read that smile; it was sweet as usual, for when was his smile ever otherwise when it rested on her? But it was a melancholy smile. He entered the room, they all clustered round him.

"The Victoria has come in," he said.

Leila clapped her hands. "My pets, my pets," she cried; "and Dash, and Peggy Dobie—all—ALL safe!"

"Dear child," Mr. Howard continued, looking anxiously at her, "dear child, your pets are safe, but Dash and Peggy—" he stopped.

"What of them, papa? Oh tell me, tell me quick—why do you look so grieved?"

Mr. Howard drew her towards him. "Try to calm yourself, my beloved child, for you have much to bear. Peggy and Dash are not in the Victoria; they have not been seen since the night of the storm."

"But how is that possible, papa? It cannot be, they were in the ship—oh, yes they were. I cannot understand what you mean. I am not very frightened; say it all out quick."

Mr. Howard then went on to say that he had not been able to see the captain, and had got but a confused account from two of the sailors, but that both agreed in the same story. The storm had been most fearful; they had anchored that dreadful night off Scarborough, but with little hope of being able to keep their anchor. They expected every moment to be driven on the shore. The passengers in the fore cabin were too much frightened to keep below

as they were advised and entreated to do. A heavy sea had swept the deck, and several of them were swept overboard. Peggy, with Dash by her side, had been seen on deck the moment before by both these sailors. The night was frightfully dark, the sea running mountain high; to save any of them was impossible. Next morning both Peggy and Dash were amongst those missing.

Leila for a moment did not utter a word, she grew deadly pale, then throwing her arms round her papa's neck, she cried, "Lost to me, lost to me for ever! Oh, poor Peggy, and my dear, dear Dash—my dearest friend—" but seeing her papa's look of distress, she stopped, then continued, "I am wrong, very, very wrong; I am vexing you. Peggy herself said, if the dearest was left, if she had him to love and him to listen to—and have I not you, papa, and are you not my dearest one, and so many besides to love?" and she drew Selina towards her, and with her pocket-handkerchief she wiped Selina's eyes, then went on, "and it is bad in me to be so sorry for Dash—for poor Peggy is a human being—but Dash, my own Dash, and twice he saved my life." She covered her face with her hands and sobbed violently.

Mr. Howard did not attempt to console her or to stop her tears; he lifted her gently in his arms, and laying her on the sofa, sat down beside her, clasping her hand in his.

After some time she became more calm; she lifted his hand to her lips and kissed it, then shutting her eyes she in a few minutes dropped asleep; it was but a troubled sleep, but all were thankful that it had brought forgetfulness for the present. After some time she awoke with a sudden start, slowly she remembered all. Sad memories they were which clouded her sweet face, and tears again filled her eyes, but brushing them hastily away, she said, in a low voice, "The great trial has come to me at last, and I must bear it, but God will help me." Then rising from the sofa she slowly left the room.

Matilda sprang up to follow her, but Selina held her back, and whispered in her ear, "You had better not, Matilda: I am sure Leila has gone to her own room to pray."

Anxious to see the captain of the *Victoria*, and if possible to obtain more intelligence, Mr. Howard, on the following morning, again went to London, but to his disappointment found that the vessel had sailed on her downward passage a few hours before. A gentleman came into the office while he was there to inquire for one of his trunks which was missing, and Mr. Howard found he had been a passenger in the *Victoria*. He said he had been much at sea, but had only once before been out in a similar storm; that their escape had been most providential, as several vessels near them had been driven on shore. The frightful accident which had taken place had thrown a heavy gloom on all; their being unable to render any assistance had been heart-rending; it was a moment, he said, he never could forget, but the darkness of the night and the violence of the storm had rendered all attempts impossible. Not half an hour after the wind had fallen in some degree for a short time, and a boat had put off from the shore; some of the passengers had taken advantage of this, and had left the vessel; but it seemed to him as if no boat could live in such a sea, and he had, after some hesitation, resolved to abide by the ship.

Leila listened in breathless agitation. "And Peggy, papa, and Dash? did he say nothing of them?"

"He spoke of Dash, my love, with much regret; he said he was a most noble animal. He seemed not to be aware to whom it belonged."

Leila sighed heavily. "A most noble animal; yes, he was noble, every body loved Dash." Then taking her papa's hand, she looked anxiously up in his face, and said, "Dash could swim so well; do you think, papa, there is any—" She stopped.

"Any hope, you would say, my love; I fear, Leila, we must not trust to it, but the same idea struck me, and before I left town I wrote an advertisement, fully describing Dash, and giving our address; and this I sent to the 'Times' newspaper office."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, dear papa," and she hastily walked to the window and looked out. She was determined not again to give way.

Leila's naturally buoyant spirits did not long remain much depressed; still the sudden shock, after all her bright anticipations, had been so great, that it left evident traces in her appearance, and when any accidental circumstance recalled the late events, a pang of such acute sorrow shot through her frame as it greatly pained Mr. Howard to witness, and he was not sorry that neither Mr. and Mrs. Herbert nor the Selbys had accepted his invitation for Christmas; the Selbys had a family party that day, and the Herberts were on a tour of visits; both parties, however, promised to be at Woodlands soon after Christmas, and Mr. Herbert added, that if Mr. Howard would allow him, he would be glad to introduce to him his son, who would be at home for the holidays. Christmas-day, therefore, would be spent in a manner more congenial to the tone of their present feelings; and Mr. Howard arranged that they should not remove to Woodlands till a few days before, when Leila could have the comfort of having her uncle and aunt and her cousins with her.

The meeting with her pets again had been very trying to Leila, and still more so was her first visit to Peggy Dobie's cottage; Susan, Bill's wife, had been employed to take charge of her pets for the present, till some one could be found to fill the situation, and the cottage had continued locked up. Matilda had in vain tried to dissuade Leila from making this visit, but she said she felt sure she would feel better when it was over, and she thought of it so much; and Selina seemed to be of the same opinion. It appeared as yesterday when she had been there before, but with what different feelings! there stood the glass with the withered flowers, on the little table, and the wood-ashes lay cold upon the hearth. Leila gazed earnestly on every object which before had given her such delight; the tears ran silently down her cheeks, there was no violent emotion. She turned Peggy's own chair from the hearth, and placed it against the wall, then left the cottage followed by Selina and Matilda. She was certainly better after all this was over, yet there were feelings which did not soon leave her; she could not help remembering, with self-accusation, that her papa had only yielded to Peggy's removal to England in consequence of her entreaties; he had at first represented to her that at Peggy's time of life it were wiser to leave her in her own country, and probably more for her happiness to do so; but Leila had been carried away too much by her own wishes in this instance to practise the lesson of self-sacrifice which her papa so often inculcated; she now felt this deeply, and it was a lesson not lost upon her.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE day had now arrived when Mrs. Roberts was expected; the young people were all assembled in the school-room busy with their different tasks; Selina and Leila were seated silently at their writing-desks, translating English into French; Alfred quietly in a corner, drawing birds and animals on a slate, his favourite employment. Matilda alone was restless and unquiet; she kept constantly running from the table to the window, holding a book of French dialogues in her hand, and looking out on the approach, while she rhymed the same phrase over and over again: "Il faudra faire comme nous pourrons, il faudra faire comme nous pourrons, il faudra faire comme nous pourrons; now surely this is knocked into my brains."

Selina shook her head.

"Well, Selina," she continued, "you need not shake your head; il faudra faire comme nous pourrons, and I am sure I am doing the best I can."

"Are you?" Selina quickly said, and went on with her writing.

"How provoking you are, Selina; there do you two sit as quietly as if nothing were going to happen, and as if Mrs. Roberts might not arrive every moment."

"But will running to the window and shaking the whole room make her come any sooner?" Selina inquired.

"To be sure it will, that is, I shall see her sooner. Alfred, do run down and listen if you hear a carriage," and she snatched the slate from his hand; "there's a good boy, run down and do like Fine-ear, you know; stoop down and put your ear to the ground, there's a man," and she pushed him out at the door.

Alfred returned again almost immediately. "I could not play at fine-ear, Matilda," he said, "for I saw the carriage at a little distance the moment I went out; listen, it is stopping at the door now."

All the three young girls jumped up and ran instantly to the window. The steps of the carriage were let down, a ladylike person, rather slender, and rather above the middle height, stepped out, her bonnet entirely concealing her face. Mr. Stanley came forward, he seemed to welcome her kindly; they entered the house together. The next moment they heard the drawing-room door close. Matilda glided from the room.

Selina looked anxiously after her; in a few minutes she returned.

"I have seen her trunks," she said; "I don't like them."

Selina looked distressed.

"Well, Selina, why do you put on that sorrowful face? I did not say I did not like her. Come, cheer up, I will do the best I can."

The drawing-room bell rang; in a few minutes Amy tapped at the school-room door to say the young ladies were wanted in the drawing-room. They all went down.

Mrs. Roberts seemed talking earnestly to their mamma when they entered; but she stopped, and as Mrs. Stanley introduced them, said a few kind words to each. Her face was not pretty till she smiled; her smile was very pleasing, and her voice was low and sweet. Leila felt she should like her; both she and Selina, when addressed, said something in return, and probably just what they ought to say, though no one heard it; Matilda said nothing. Almost immediately after Mrs. Stanley told them they might return to the school-room, that Mrs. Roberts was probably a little tired with her journey, but if she felt inclined by and by for a walk, they might join them in the garden.

It was all over in a moment. "Well," Matilda exclaimed, as they entered the school-room again, "how do you like her?"

Both answered, "Very much, we like her very much."

"Very much," Matilda repeated; "well, I don't. I don't like her at all."

"And why, Matilda? why do you not like her?" Selina anxiously inquired.

"I don't like her nose."

"Don't like her nose!"

"No, I don't; she has a pinched nose, and don't you see it droops?"

Selina saw that at this moment it was a hopeless case; she did not even attempt the vindication of the nose.

Mrs. Stanley was not disappointed in her expectations with regard to Mrs. Roberts; she proved to be a highly principled, amiable, accomplished woman, and with a gentle steadiness about her which peculiarly fitted her for the task she had undertaken. With Selina and Leila she had comparatively little trouble, and they soon became fond of her, and anxious to give her satisfaction, but with Matilda she had a far more difficult task; besides having strong prejudices to combat, she had to struggle not only with careless inattentive habits, but often with an obstinate determination not to overcome them, for Matilda's goodness as yet only came by fits and starts; there was no very steady improvement, and the arrival of Mrs. Roberts seemed rather to have thrown her back. She had fancied that she would not like her, and she seemed too often to have a wish to act up to the opinion she had formed. Mrs. Roberts' patience with her was wonderful; indifferent observers might have fancied that Matilda was her favourite; she spoke more to her than to the others, often conversing cheerfully with her on interesting subjects, and trying to draw out her feelings and sentiments; and Matilda, though she gave her much trouble, was not quite insensible to this. There were times when she acknowledged that Mrs. Roberts was rather a kind person, though her nose did droop.

The removal to Woodlands now took place, and the following morning Mrs. Roberts granted a holiday to the young people, that every room in the house might be visited and properly admired, and also that Leila might have time to settle with Susan as to a convenient arrangement for several of her pets, while, with the assistance of her cousins, she hung the cages with the parrots and the smaller birds up in the conservatory. She had for some time been bringing up a pair of turtle-doves as a gift to Mina, and teaching a young parrot to speak, which she intended for Louisa. The turtle-doves were now at a very interesting age, just beginning to be independent, and to coo to each other in a most melodious manner, and the parrot gave proof of fine abilities, and could already say, "I am Louisa's pretty bird."

The house was most comfortably though simply furnished; but the conservatory delighted Leila more than any part of it: the flowers so fragrant, so bright and beautiful, and the birds so happy, they were already singing in the branches. Once more she walked about amongst the birds and flowers, and felt that but for one sad thought she would not have had a wish ungratified. She quite longed to give her papa an account of all her arrangements, and

went in search of him. She found Mr. Howard reading in his library, but he answered her little tap at his door with his usual kind voice.

"Come in, I think I know who is there; what have you got to tell me, love?" and the book was thrown aside, and she, seated on a low stool at his knee, kept looking up in his face, and pouring out her little history, he entering into all her arrangements with all the attention and satisfaction her heart could desire. "And now, papa," she continued, "you know I am of a great age now, I am eleven, and I want to talk to you a little about my responsibilities."

"Your responsibilities, my love!—that is a very fine word for you; where did you pick up that word, Leila?"

"I think it is a very nice word, papa, and I understand it; and you must know I have responsibilities in my new home, for I heard Aunt Stanley say to Mrs. Roberts the other day, that Miss Palmer had gone now to keep her father's house, and would have many responsibilities; that besides the regulating the house, and attending in every way to his comfort, she would also have the school to attend to, and the poor people to visit, and it was a large parish. I could not find out what a large parish meant, but I understood all the rest; and don't you think, papa, I should have a school, also, and visit the poor people?"

"No, dear Leila; I think you are too young to have a school at present; but don't look so disappointed, my love; let us talk this matter over quietly. Miss Palmer is a great many years older than you are, she is a grown-up young lady, and it is quite right that she should in every way imitate her excellent mother's example, and endeavour to make up as much as lies in her power for the loss they have sustained in Mrs. Palmer's death: but you, my love, are still a child, and requiring too much instruction yourself to be able to instruct others; yet you, dear Leila, also have your responsibilities."

"I am so glad of that papa,"—and her countenance brightened again.

"Yes," Mr. Howard continued, "you are responsible for the talents God has entrusted to you, for the employment of your time, for the cultivation of the abilities He has given you; for the use you make of the religious instruction you receive in correcting your faults; you are by nature ardent and impetuous, you must struggle for the mastery over yourself; for more self-denial, in rejecting the sudden impulses by which you are governed; you must try to check that excessive sensibility which, if indulged in, must unfit you for the necessary exertion for the welfare of others which is so high a duty, and without which you would soon become a useless, selfish being—turning away from the misery of others, from the fear of what you yourself must feel in witnessing it."

"But, papa, if I am not to teach a school or visit the poor, and only to cultivate abilities, is not that turning away from others, is not that being selfish?"

"But, my dear Leila, it is by no means my wish that you should turn away from others; though you are as yet too young to teach a school yourself, you are not too young to accompany your Aunt Stanley when she goes to visit the school, in which she takes so much interest. Selina often accompanies her; I shall ask her to allow you to do so also; and in this way you will become acquainted with the duties you will, I trust, one day fulfil yourself. You will, also, accompany me in visiting the poor; you have now a weekly allowance, which, though not much, will still enable you, by practising self-denial in some of your own desires, to save a little each week for the benefit of others: with this you can sometimes buy materials which may be useful to poor children; and by employing some part of your time in making them up, you can bestow a double benefit; for remember, Leila, it is not real charity to give of your superfluity only."

"I know it, papa; I know that you are thinking now of the rich man throwing into the treasury, and the widow's mite, and I will try to be the widow's mite. Am I staying too long, papa?" she continued; "must I go now? perhaps you wish to have your book again?"

"No, my dear child, I am in no hurry to resume my book; I am quite pleased to have a little talk with you; besides, if I had not heard your little tap at the door just then, I meant to have sent for you—I have got something to show you."

"To show me, papa?"

"Yes, my love; something which will interest you, but will also bring to your mind sorrowful recollections."

Leila looked up anxiously in her papa's face. "Is it about Dash?" she said; "has any one answered the advertisement? or Peggy?—but no, about Peggy, that is impossible; poor Peggy!"

Mr. Howard smiled mournfully as he answered. "No, my child, I have heard nothing of them."

Leila continued: "I have tried to bear it, papa, and not to give way; and I have prayed to God, and He has strengthened me, and often I feel quite comforted, sometimes I feel quite happy, just as if it had never been; but often when I am talking and laughing I am not really happy—I am only pretending, for Selina and Matilda always look so distressed when I am sorrowful; but night is the worst—I always think of Peggy at night;—and how kind she was to me; and there is nobody to be made sorrowful then, and so I often cry very much; but I won't talk of it any more, and I am forgetting you had something to show me;" and she hastily brushed the tears from her eyes.

Her papa carefully unfolded a small paper which he took from his pocket-book, and showed Leila a very few small seeds.

"Flower-seeds?" she asked, inquiringly; "are they not, papa?"

"Yes, my love, they are the seeds of Clara's flower."

She started. "Of Clara's flowers! Who has been to visit her lonely grave? Who, papa?"

"No, one, my love; I gathered those seeds the day we left the island; but I did not mention it to you, because I thought I had lost them, and that they had dropped from my pocket-book. This morning I found that this paper had fallen within another, and that the seeds were still there; there are only seven of them, but I don't think there ever were more, for I remember I had difficulty in finding even these."

Leila gazed at them earnestly. "I also tried to find seeds that day, and could get none—how interesting they will be to me. I will plant them instantly, and when they spring up, I will have some of Clara's flower to give to her mamma."

"But, my dear Leila," Mr. Howard said, "had you not better wait till spring? I fear this is not a good time to sow flower-seeds;" but seeing her look of distress, he added,—“at least, it would be more prudent to sow only part now, and the others in spring, this will give you the best chance of securing some of the plants."

"Well, papa, I will do that, and three I think will be prudent;" and selecting three of the seeds, she folded them



into another paper. "You had better keep these, papa, that I may not be tempted; and I will go now to the gardener—he is very good-natured—he will give me a flower-pot and the proper earth, and I will plant them this moment and put them into the conservatory. In the conservatory it will be the same for them as in the island, for it is always so warm there; so you see, papa, I am very prudent about them, for I did not mean to put them out in the cold. Every day I shall watch for their coming up. You could not have given me any thing, papa, so very interesting to me—I will come back and tell you when they are planted;" and she darted off.

## CHAPTER VII.

OLD David, who had been many years at Woodlands, was indeed very good-natured, and from the day when Leila had evinced so much anxiety to have poor Peggy's garden put in nice order, had taken quite a fancy to his young mistress. He stood over her while she sprinkled the earth gently upon the seeds, having given her a flower-pot of the proper size to put them in, and he seemed much interested as to their coming up, but could give no positive opinion when that event might take place. "Some very small seeds," he remarked, "came up very quickly, while others of equal size required to lie in the ground a long time; he would not despair," he said, "though they did not make their appearance for a month; besides, who could tell what might be the nature of flower-seeds from that outlandish country," for Leila had told him they came from the island, though he had no idea of the other circumstances which made them so precious in her



LEILA AT HOME Page 89.

eyes. The residence of the squire on a desert island had for some time past been a favourite subject of discussion both in David's cottage and at the lodge, and the wonderful histories related by Nurse had been listened to with the most profound attention and astonishment, and had served to throw a sort of romantic interest around both Mr. Howard and his child. Old David had remarked, "that it was easy to see their young mistress was something by common, something sae gleesome, and springing about her as if her foot had been used to the hill-side and the heather brae. She remembered him muckle of the highland lassies of his own dear country; for though he had been long enough in England to have forgotten his Scotch tongue, (and the more the pity,) yet he had not been long enough to forget their ways, and he was still a highlander in his heart, every inch of him."

But to return to Leila. She had just completed sowing the precious seeds when Alfred ran into the conservatory.

"I cannot find Selina," he said; "but, Cousin Leila, you are always so good-natured, perhaps you will go with me to Mrs. Roberts,—I have done a cruel thing, though I did not mean to be cruel, and I would like to have some one with me when I tell it."

Leila, having placed the flower-pot in what David pronounced to be the most favoured spot in the conservatory, proceeded immediately with Alfred to seek Mrs. Roberts. They found Selina and Matilda with her.

"Mrs. Roberts," Alfred began, in a hesitating manner, as they entered the room, "you told me not to be cruel, and I promised, and indeed I was not cruel; but I have brought the body to you to see if you can bring it alive again;" and he placed a little bit of paper, crumpled up, before Mrs. Roberts.

Matilda jumped up. "What is the boy saying? the *body!* what body?" and she was about to seize the paper, but Alfred spread his hands over it.

"Matilda, you are not to touch that paper," Mrs. Roberts said gently; and, turning to Alfred, she continued,—"and now, my little man, compose yourself, and tell me distinctly what has happened."

Alfred then proceeded to say that he had been playing in the garden, and on lifting up a stone, a number of spiders had run out from below it, that one was very large and beautifully spotted, that he did not mean to kill it or even to catch it, only to touch it very gently with his finger; but on his doing so, immediately all its legs fell off, and it dropped down dead; that he instantly looked for its legs, but could not see them, they had quite melted away. And Alfred was so overcome by the recital of this sad catastrophe, that he dissolved into tears.

"Crying for such a thing as that?" Matilda exclaimed; "foolish Alfred."

"But, Matilda, it had eight legs."



"And so," Matilda continued, "because its eight legs melted away you must melt away also. Take care, Alfred, we shall be looking for *you* next on the carpet, and not be able to find you."

Alfred now did not know whether to laugh or cry, but unfolding the paper, he carefully laid before Mrs. Roberts what appeared to be a very small, shapeless particle of brown earth—it certainly had no resemblance to a spider.

"That is the body," he said, in a mysterious whisper, intended only for the ears of Mrs. Roberts; "and now," he continued aloud, "do you think I can do any thing to revive it? If I were to put it into a cup of warm water, perhaps —"

Matilda laughed. "Perhaps its legs would grow on again, you mean. Well, Alfred, this certainly would be a wonderful water-cure; you should set up an establishment and call it the warm water-cure for making legs and arms grow on again. You would make a fortune; for I heard mamma say the other day, that this seemed to be the age for believing in every sort of wonderful cure that could be invented, the more improbable the better."

"How you run on, Matilda," Mrs. Roberts said; "you should be aware Alfred cannot enter into all this sort of thing—you forget the difference of age between you;" then turning to Alfred, she continued,—"No, Alfred, it would not do to put this spider into water. This is what is called a wolf-spider, and were you to put it into warm water, you would certainly kill it; at present I do not think it is dead."

Alfred's countenance brightened.

Mrs. Roberts continued,—"Give me that sheet of white paper." She placed the paper on a small work-table in a sunny corner of the room, and laid the spider upon it.

"Now keep quiet, all of you," she said, "and we shall see what it does." In a few minutes the spider unfolded its legs, and running across the paper to the edge of the table, it shot out a slender thread from its body, by which it swiftly descended to the ground.

Alfred clapped his hands, exclaiming,—"Alive, and I did not kill it, and it has got all its legs again; how very wonderful! But where did the thread come from by which it got down so very quick? Mrs. Roberts, do tell me!"

"It spun the thread from a sort of gluey substance which is contained in the flasks in its body. Each spider has four of those flasks or bags of gum, and from each tube communicates with what is called its spinneret, and with the gluey substance which passes through these tubes, it spins its thread with these spinnerets; it is very wonderful, but too difficult for you to understand at present. That thread which appeared to you so fine is composed of many finer threads, which make it stronger; just as in cords of equal thickness, those which are composed of many smaller ones united are greatly stronger than those which are spun at once; but where has the spider gone to now, Alfred? Yes, I see it; don't touch it;" and Mrs. Roberts took a cup in which she carefully caught the spider without touching it, and having placed this cup in a saucer full of water, she desired them to watch its further proceedings. The spider ran repeatedly to the brim of the cup descending on the other side, but was always stopped by the water which surrounded it. Sadly perplexed by this unexpected obstacle, after having ran round and round by the edge of the water several times, it stood still, and raised its two fore-legs in the air.

"It is trying," Mrs. Roberts said, "to ascertain from which side there is a current of air to carry its thread to some object to support it, the opposite rim of the saucer, for instance."

"Oh, how very curious!" they all exclaimed. But this world of waters seemed quite overwhelming to the poor spider, who could feel no current of air, and it was returning hopelessly into the cup when Mrs. Roberts said,—"Now you shall see it throw its little silken bridge across, and get free from this sad imprisonment;" and she blew very gently in the desired direction.

The spider instantly descended again to the edge of the water, and shot out a thread, which it fixed to the cup at one end, while the other end floating in the air, also became fixed to the brim of the saucer. It first pulled this thread with its fore-feet, as if to ascertain its strength, then passed swiftly along it, spinning another floating thread as it went, lest the first should not be sufficiently secure to ensure its safety, and arriving safely on the brim of the saucer, descended the other side, and once more scampered off.

"Well done, you clever creature," Matilda exclaimed; "how I wish I could sometimes escape from the school-room as cleverly."

Leila glanced towards Mrs. Roberts half afraid.

But Mrs. Roberts only smiled. "You are a sad girl, Matilda," she said; "there is much folly bound up in your little heart, but I don't despair of you; the time will come, and I trust ere long, when you will not find the school-room such an imprisonment."

Matilda looked gratefully at Mrs. Roberts, and sudden in all her impulses, she jumped up, and kissed her hand; then turning round, she said,—"But, Leila, you have expressed no surprise at all those wonderful things! I do believe you knew about them before, though you did not say a word."

"Yes," Leila answered, quietly; "papa told me a good deal about spiders in the island."

"Out with it, then," Matilda said, impatiently; "do, Leila, tell us every thing you know; how odd you are; when I know any thing I am dying to tell it. What more did your papa say about them?"

"He showed me a water-spider, sailing in its curious little raft, and watching for its prey; and a mason-spider, living in a beautiful nest, lined with a sort of orange-coloured silk, which it had spun itself, and with a little door to its nest with a spring hinge, which shuts of itself when the spider goes in. And he did a curious thing about the eggs of the wolf-spider; he took away the bag of eggs, and then the little spider carried off the bag belonging to the large spider; and they had such a fight about it."

"Oh! do tell us more about that," Matilda said, eagerly. "I should like so to hear about the fight; and so the little spider carried off the bag of eggs belonging to the big spider—that was most excellent!"

"And most just," Selina observed.

"Now, Selina, that is so like you; how can you expect a spider to have a sense of justice, and it is natural for spiders to fight, I dare say; indeed it is natural for other people also sometimes, and just because they have a sense of justice. But, Leila, do tell us all about it."

Leila coloured; "Mrs. Roberts could explain it much better," she said.

"No, my dear, I don't think I could; you will do it more simply, because you will tell only what you understand yourself; but stay, did you not say, Alfred, that you saw a great many spiders under the stones in the garden?"

perhaps, Leila, you might find some with a bag of eggs—take this tumbler to catch them in—bring two, if you can find them, a larger and a smaller, and put this paper over the glass, that they may not escape. Matilda, I see you are eager to go also—you may accompany Leila; but allow her to catch the spiders—great care must be taken not to injure the bags.”

They were off in a moment, and soon returned with two spiders in the tumbler.

“Now we shall see it all,” Matilda said, “you can’t think how cleverly Leila caught them; she is an excellent spider hunter. Now, Leila, begin; do try to make them fight.”

Leila lifted the smaller of the two spiders very gently, and took up a needle.

“Stop, stop,” Matilda exclaimed; “are you going to stick a needle in its body? I don’t want to see that.”

“No, no,” Leila answered; “don’t be afraid; I am only going to take off the bag, and the bag is not a part of its body, though it looks like it—it will easily come off; the spider glues it on, and it can easily do so again, after we have seen them fight.”

She then very dexterously disengaged the bag of eggs without breaking it, and put it on the table. The spider, instead of running away, as it otherwise would have done, showed the greatest anxiety to regain it. She slowly wandered over every corner of the table, crawling over books, work-boxes, &c., &c., as if in search of something; then, having at last discovered the lost bag behind Selina’s work-box, she suddenly made a rush towards it, and having seized it with her upper pair of jaws, she ran off with it, carrying it as a cat often does its kitten.

“O look!” Matilda exclaimed, “she is stopping behind your writing-desk, Leila; she thinks she has got into a cunning hole, where no one will see her—what is she about now?—she is pushing the bag between her legs, and I do believe she is glueing it in—yes, indeed, for there she is scampering off again, and with her bag just as it was before; she will be off the table in a moment.”

But Leila caught the spider, and taking the bag from her again, she put her under the tumbler where the larger spider was:—“Now,” she said, “if they are the same as the spiders in the island, she will fancy the bag of eggs of the other spider to be her own, and she will fight for it;” and hardly had she spoken, when both spiders were struggling and fighting violently for the possession of the bag—they reared themselves up, extending their front legs in a threatening attitude, and showing their angry feelings in the most evident manner. In the struggle the other bag of eggs became detached from the larger spider, and the little one, after making the most violent efforts to seize it, finally succeeded; the larger spider having rolled over, the other one scampered off with the bag, and Leila having raised the tumbler to permit its escape, it was presently again on the table—it passed its own bag of eggs on its way to the window, but took no notice, seemingly quite satisfied with its stolen treasure. The other spider was now also set at liberty, and having, after running about some time, discovered the other bag of eggs, it was making a dart towards it, when Mrs. Roberts took the bag up, and having pricked it with a needle, instantly a multitude of young ones ran out, and climbing up on the old spider, almost covered her—she remained quite still, apparently overwhelmed (as well she might be) with the burden of such a family.

“Poor thing!” Selina observed; “she will never be able to manage so many little ones.”

“Oh, she will get a governess,” Matilda said; “and I only hope she may get as good a one as Mrs. Roberts.”

Mrs. Roberts shook her head but could not help being amused:—“You are an odd girl, Matilda,” she replied; “but you had better take the spider down into the garden again, it will be more likely to find a governess there, who will understand the nature of the charge.” She gently lifted the spider, placed it in the glass, and gave it to Matilda—then added, “You will be the better, all of you, for a little fresh air in the garden: I have a letter to write, which has been too long delayed, but I shall join you there as soon as I have finished.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTMAS had now passed: on the morning of that day they had all attended church, then walked to a pretty, small village on the property, to visit several of the cottagers; Mr. Howard having, the day before, sent money and a supply of blankets and of coats to those that required such assistance. In the evening a mutual exchange of gifts took place at Woodlands, which greatly interested the young people; but the day was on the whole a trying one to Leila; she had not regained her former spirits, and it seemed as if those particular days to which she had looked forward with the most pleasure, seemed still more to recall the memory of her late trial. A short time after Christmas, the expected party assembled at Woodlands. The Selbys were the first to arrive. Captain Selby was delighted to see again his little fairy queen, as he called Leila. Louisa seemed improved, taller, and with more animation of manner; and the meeting between Leila and her was most affectionate on both sides. Louisa was soon taken to the conservatory, followed by Selina and Matilda; Louisa stealing many a look at Selina, who had long been a subject of much interest to her, though not unmixed with dread, lest she should too entirely usurp her former place with Leila; but the kind reception she met with greatly reassured her. She struggled with her natural timidity, and Matilda did much to establish something like ease between the parties: she eagerly introduced Louisa to all her former favourites amongst the pets; and seemed most anxious to draw her attention to one of the parrots in particular.

“How this one must have grown,” Louisa observed; “I scarcely remember it: what a pretty bird!”

The parrot instantly flew to the side of its cage, exclaiming, “I am Louisa’s pretty bird, take me home—pray take me home!”

Matilda clapped her hands. “That is just what I wanted it to do—yes, it is for you; Leila has taught it to say that—it is to be your parrot.”

Louisa was still holding Leila’s hand, and trying to thank her, when Leila was called away. The Herberts had arrived. She found Mina eagerly watching for her at the drawing-room door, all her usual shyness having given way before the interest of the moment. The meeting between them was of the most affectionate nature; but no one till that moment had suspected the depth of feeling with which Leila had looked forward to seeing Mrs. Herbert again. “Mamma, mamma!” she exclaimed, as clasped in Mrs. Herbert’s arms, she hid her face on her shoulder, and struggled to retain her tears. Mrs. Herbert was much affected, and no real mother could have more fondly returned her caresses; but seeing the struggle Leila was making to restrain her emotion, she called her son Charles to her

side, and putting Leila's hand in his, she said with a cheerful voice,—

"I must not forget my dear child has also a brother to receive, who longs to know her."

But Leila was disappointed; Charles was not such as she had expected to have seen, and looking up in his face she said hastily, "You are too tall to be my brother."

The bright, sparkling look of pleasure with which he had approached to meet her, faded before this reception; he too was disappointed, but he only said with much gentleness, "That is a fault I cannot change; I can only try to make you forget it."

And he did manage to do so in a wonderfully short space of time, for he had a good deal to overcome. Leila had expected to have seen a little boy such as Alfred, and had been thinking a great deal of her little brother, and how she would watch over him, and keep him out of scrapes; she was quite bewildered when she saw before her a youth apparently about sixteen, and it was not in the first moments of disappointment, that his slight graceful figure, his beaming countenance, and deep blue eyes, so full of sweetness and animation, had any charm for her; but before the day was over she had told Mina in strict confidence, that she did not think Charles nearly so tall as she had done at first, and that she did not know why it was, but she was not half so frightened for him as she expected she would have been; and the pleasant surprise of next morning still further promoted intimacy between them. Leila was called to the window by Selina to admire a beautiful small Arabian pony, which Charles was leading up the approach towards the house; the side-saddle and embroidered saddle-cloth seemed to say it was intended for a lady's use; and what was Leila's astonishment and delight, when she found it was a present from Mr. and Mrs. Herbert to herself; the beautiful saddle-cloth the work of Mrs. Herbert and Mina. Leila had no words to express what she felt; for to learn to ride, to have a pony of her own, to accompany her papa in his rides, had long been the earnest wish of her heart. Charles was immediately constituted riding-master to the whole of the young party; a busy time he had, and with strict impartiality did he fulfil his appointed duty; one point of difference only did he insist on, he particularly requested that Leila alone was to speak to the pony and caress it, and it was only to be from her hand it was to receive a piece of bread on the commencement of its daily labours, and also at their close. Selina had communicated to Charles the sad story of Peggy Dobie and the faithful Dash; of all Leila had suffered, and was still suffering, from their loss; and he felt that could she become attached to a new object, it might in some degree interest her mind: but though Leila soon became fond of her pretty Selim, no new favourite could fill Dash's place to her; *he* could never be forgotten.

Many days passed pleasantly away, varied by rides, and walks, and reading aloud. In the evening there generally was music. Mrs. Herbert had a fine voice, which had been much cultivated, and Charles and Mina did great credit to her instructions; the young people thought there could be nothing more beautiful than the trios Charles and Mina sang with their mamma Mrs. Herbert had proposed to have a singing class, and to instruct the whole group; but Leila alone had become her pupil. Louisa had very little genius for music; so little, that her mamma did not wish her to give much time to its cultivation. Selina had been forbidden to attempt singing for some years, her voice, even in speaking, being still weak; and Matilda, Mrs. Stanley said, was, from her habits of inattention, too far back in more necessary studies to be allowed this indulgence.

Leila made considerable progress; from her having practised the guitar so much during her residence on the island, she had acquired rather unusual proficiency on that instrument, and her voice and taste being naturally good, Mrs. Herbert found her both a willing and a successful pupil. Matilda had often entreated her mamma to allow her also to learn the guitar, for Matilda was ever eager for something new, always sure that what she had no knowledge of would be much more easily acquired than that which she was then studying; but Mrs. Stanley had always steadily refused this request, though, at the same time, assuring Matilda that, as soon as by steady and continued application, she had made that progress in her other studies which her years and natural good abilities admitted of, she should have every indulgence in the cultivation of her musical taste. It had been quite a trial to Matilda when first told that she was not to be allowed to take advantage of Mrs. Herbert's kind offer of instruction; and her temper had been on the point of giving way, but a look of entreaty from Selina had arrested the angry words upon her lips; she had hastily quitted the room, and in a very few minutes had returned with all her usual liveliness and good-humour.

Mrs. Herbert had considerably regained her health and spirits, and with the tranquil gentleness of past sorrow there was a warmth of affection and winning sweetness of manner which each day endeared her more and more to Leila, who never was happier than when, with her own transparent openness of character, she was pouring all her thoughts, feelings, and wishes into Mrs. Herbert's willing ear.

"I have never told you," she said one morning, as they sat alone together, (she on a low stool looking up into Mrs. Herbert's face,) "I have never told you how very sorry I was afterwards for having made that rude speech to Charles when I first saw him; but I was so very much disappointed, I could not help saying it; I had been thinking so much of having a little brother, and of how kind I should be to him, and how he would grow up to love me. And when I saw that tall Charles, I could scarcely keep from crying, for since my great trial of poor Peggy Dobie, and my dear, dear Dash, I don't know why it is, but so often I am ready to cry when any thing like another trial comes to me—but this has not turned out a trial after all."

"So you are getting reconciled then, my love, to Charles being tall, and don't wish so much now that you had a little brother rather?"

"No, indeed I don't—I like it much better; for Charles is so kind, and takes such care of me, and he is so fond of Mina; he is an excellent brother; and don't you think he is an excellent son too? He often looks at you just as I do at my papa. I am sure he is thinking then that you never can know how much he loves you. I dare say Charles never does any thing very wrong; only a little wrong, I suppose, for papa always says no one is quite perfect."

Mrs. Herbert smiled. "No, my dear Leila, I do not say Charles is by any means perfect; he has faults, still I may say that he is one who has never yet given us cause for serious uneasiness.

"I was sure of that," Leila answered, "for he always looks as if he could not bear to vex any one; I often wish to ask him to forgive me for what I said: but I don't know why, I often feel a little shy with Charles, though I like so much to talk to him. I hope it will go off in time, for I should like to be able to tell him every thing I think, just as I do to you; if he had been a little boy I would not have cared to do this, I would only have said little things to make him laugh and to amuse him; so, as Nurse always says, every thing in this world turns out for the best, if we would only remember this, and not fret. But," she continued, "when I said just now that I told you every thing, I forgot that there

is one thing I cannot tell you."

"And what is that?" Mrs. Herbert inquired. "Why should you be afraid to tell me every thing?"

"I am not afraid," Leila answered; "but it is not the right time yet to tell. Perhaps I shall be disappointed myself, and then I need not tell you, for it would only make you sorry; but if it comes up it is for you. Now I must go to the conservatory; I go there every morning alone, but don't ask me why I go."

Leila stood in the conservatory, earnestly contemplating a flower-pot she held in her hand, till startled by a voice behind her.

"How now, lady bright, gazing on brown earth, and so many beautiful blooming flowers around you?"

She looked up; it was Charles who had entered the conservatory unobserved, and was bending over her shoulder.

"Oh, Charles," she said, "I am so happy, so very happy; so thankful."

"Thankful," he replied; "thankful for small things indeed, for I can see nothing."

"Nothing! look again, Charles; only look here—don't you see?"

"No, I see nothing, and unluckily I have not got my spectacles at hand." But observing Leila's heightened colour, and the expression of her face, he added in quite a different tone, "Yes, I do see two tiny little green leaves just peeping above the brown earth; but they will require all your tender care to rear them. Why are they so precious to you, Leila? But do not tell me if you would rather not."

She lifted her eyes to his face. "Yes, I should like to tell you—" she hesitated, then continued in an agitated voice, "it is seeds from the flower I planted on Clara's grave, and perhaps more will spring."

Charles's colour mounted to his forehead; he took her hand. "Oh, Leila," he said, "dear Leila, how I have longed for this moment, how I have wished you to talk to me of Clara. Clara, my own sweet sister, my lost Clara; I seem to see her still, how lovely she was!"

"You knew her then," Leila said eagerly; "you remember her; but how—were you not in England?"

"No; from our being up the country and in a good climate, I was nearly ten years old before it was thought necessary to send me to England; never can I forget the first time I saw Clara. I was taken into the room where mamma was lying on her bed, so pale, so beautiful, only the slightest tinge of colour in her cheek. Clara and Mina lay on each side of her; she took my hand, a bright flush came into her face for a moment, 'My little son,' she said, 'may God watch over you and preserve you to be a protector to your sisters; if these dear ones live to be sent home to England, you will be already there. Promise me that when you are together, you will watch over them, and always endeavour by your own example to teach them to love and serve their heavenly Father. May you never, dear Charles, forget this moment; may my earnest request be always remembered, when you yourself are tempted to do what is wrong.'"

"And were you sent away from them immediately?" Leila inquired. "How melancholy this must have been for you!"

"Oh no, not immediately; Clara and Mina were three years old before I left India. They could talk and run about. In the cool season I used to make them run races in the garden with each other. They often laughed so at my constantly mistaking one for the other, for I never could distinguish them, till mamma put a small gold chain round Clara's neck."

"Was it this?" Leila said, as she took a chain from the folds of her dress, and gave it into his hand.

"Yes, the very same; but there was no locket suspended from it."

Leila touched the spring, it opened.

"My own mamma," he said, "and how beautiful! and those laughing eyes—yes, I remember how she used to look in that way, when she was playing with us all. And this was Clara's locket—my own dear sister, and now, alas! only one remains to me."

Leila coloured. "Then you will not have me for a sister," she said, in a low-toned voice.

Charles's countenance brightened, as in his usual lively manner he said, "I thought I was too tall to be your brother."

"Oh, don't, don't say that," Leila exclaimed; "you don't know how sorry I was afterwards, and how often I have wished to ask you to forgive me. Will you?" and she put her hand into his. "Yes, I see you will, I see it in your eyes. I always know when people are loving me again by their eyes." Selina's voice was heard calling her; she ran off, but returned for a moment to say, "Do not tell mamma about the seeds; it is to be a surprise to her. I have planted four, and if more spring, I should like so much to give you one also."

## CHAPTER IX.

TO pay frequent visits to the village had of late been a great interest to the young people; they had become acquainted with many of the cottagers, and Leila had already begun to have a lively interest in their children. As the party were now to leave Woodlands in a few days, she proposed one morning that, as the weather was uncommonly fine, they should cross the fields, under Charles's escort, and pay a sort of farewell visit to some of the cottagers. The cold had been so severe in the night, that the grass still felt crisp under their feet, though the sunbeams glanced brightly on the scarlet berries of the holly, and on the slender branches of the forest trees, feathered white by the hoar-frost. At the village they were welcomed by old and young, for the kind, frank manners of the young people had made them general favourites; many of the children ran forward to meet them, but they missed one little girl whom they had in former visits particularly distinguished. Her mother's cottage stood at the end of the village, and they found Dame Burton standing at her door, looking anxiously in the direction of the road. She invited them as usual to enter, but added, "I am rather out of sorts, young ladies, at this moment, for I am fearing my little Lizzy is getting into idle ways. Not a sight can I see of her, all the other children in the village home from the school, and she still loitering on the road. If I had not had the dinner to get ready, I would have been off to seek her myself, and would have sent her home in a hurry; but her father will be in to his dinner, and she will get it from him I am thinking."

Leila instantly proposed that they should return by the road; "As Charles is with us, I don't think papa will be displeased," she said, "and we can tell him why." Then turning to Dame Burton, she added, "We shall be sure of meeting your little Lizzy if we go by the road, and we shall send her home to you very quick; but I hope you won't be angry with her this time, for you know when it is an interesting play sometimes one forgets. I forget very often myself, though I am so much older than Lizzy."

The young people proceeded on their way, talking and laughing merrily; Charles protesting "that if they met the little truant, the unworthy little Lizzy, he would send her home in a hurry; he would give it her, her father's anger would be a joke to his."

Leila looked up in his face in astonishment.

"Never mind him," Mina exclaimed, observing Leila's face of perplexity; "never mind him—don't believe a word of it, he's only saying it in fun; Charles is not the least bit ill-natured. If we meet Lizzy I know the sort of thing he will do, he will tap her kindly on the back, and say, 'Now there's a good girl, run home as quick as you can.' That's the sort of way he will scold."

"Is it, my little wise sister?" Charles replied, laughing. "Well, well, you will soon see the contrary; you don't know what an angry man I can be; Leila has never yet seen me in one of my right towering passions, it will frighten her out of her wits."

"How merry we all are," Mina said, "and how happy we have all been, and now in three more days it will all be over!"

"Oh, Mina!" Louisa exclaimed, "do not speak of it; I have been thinking of it all the time, though I have been trying to laugh. I have never been so happy before, and now I may never see you all again. You will all be meeting often, but I shall be far away. You know in two months we are going abroad. I used to like the thoughts of it so much; now I cannot bear it. And you, Leila, you will be growing up, and so many to love you, you will forget me."

"Never, Louisa, never; you were my first friend, you will always——" She was interrupted at this moment by the loud screams of a child; they seemed to proceed from a lane, which, a few yards further on, branched off from the road. The screams were continued with increased violence. They caught sight of a little girl struggling to get free from a large dog, which seemed dragging her along by her clothes.

Leila sprang forward. "Don't be frightened, Lizzy, don't; we shall protect you."

At the sound of her voice the dog let go its hold with a joyful bark of recognition, and the next moment was leaping upon Leila with frantic joy.

"Dash, my own Dash!" she cried, as throwing her arms round his neck, she almost stifled the faithful animal with her caresses. "But how is this? Is it my Dash? is it really true? how did it happen? Lizzy, what is the meaning of this? how did he come here? where did you find him? Oh! tell me; but how thin you are, my Dash; how changed—oh, he has been starved! how dreadful! But, Lizzy, run home to your mother; don't delay a moment longer—she is sorry you have been so long away; and let us get home also as quick as we can, that we may get food for my dear Dash. What joyful news for papa, and for Nurse, and Amy. Poor Peggy! Oh, if Dash could speak!" She turned to regain the road, but Dash would not allow this; he began to pull Leila up the lane by her clothes, in the same way he had been doing to the little girl.

"Don't oppose him," Charles said; "there is something under all this, we had better follow as he leads." They quickened their pace, but saw nothing. Dash now frequently ran on a little way before them, returned again and took hold of Leila's dress as before, looking up in her face, as if encouraging her to go on. A sudden thought seized her; she darted forwards—she ran on a considerable way—suddenly she saw a figure lying stretched on a bank by the side of the lane; in the next moment she was kneeling by Peggy Dobie's side!

The others came up. They found Leila clasping Peggy's hands and sobbing violently.

"Her eyes are shut," she said; "she does not hear me; oh, Charles, tell me, is she dead? Can we do nothing?"

Dash began at this moment to lick Peggy's face, she opened her eyes. "Am I dreaming," she said, in a low faint voice, "and am I still in the land of the living? surely it is the faces of my own dear bairns that I see; but it canna be. Na, na, it is a vision o' the night, and it will leave me with the light o' morning as it has ever done afore; but it's morning now. Where am I? how has all this come about? oh! for a drop o' water and a morsel o'——" Her eyes closed again—the momentary exertion was too much.

Charles, who had been rubbing her cold hands, sprang to his feet. "It is food she requires," he said; "she is starving. I see a house near, I will be back in a moment."

He flew off. He returned, followed by the farmer to whom the house belonged. Charles held a bowl of milk to Peggy's lips—she seemed unable to swallow.

"No, no, mister, that won't do; this is a bad job; there has been both cold and hunger here; it's brandy she must have, and that instantly. Heaven grant it may not be too late; I have my doubts."

"No," Leila cried, "don't say it; we have found her again—she must not die!"

But the farmer was gone. He returned again in a few minutes with the brandy and a thick blanket. With Charles's assistance he poured a little brandy and water down Peggy's throat, and wrapped her in the warm blanket. "These poor thin rags," he said, "are not for such cold as this, the poor creature is half frozen; but she is coming about again, her lips are not just so white; she will do yet; and, by good luck, I see one of my carts coming from the field; we shall have her into it and home in a jiffy. Hollo, there! Joe, my man, here's a bye-job for you."

Peggy was lifted into the cart, Selina and Leila also getting in and supporting her in their arms. It was in vain Charles insisted on taking this office on himself, they would not hear of it; it seemed as if it were quite necessary for them to hold Peggy fast, as well as see her, to convince them that the scene before them was not a joyful dream. But Dash also appeared resolved to make one of the party in the cart—he leaped in, stretched himself on Peggy's feet, and to move him was impossible.

"Let him lie there, he will do much good," the farmer said; "he is a wise animal, and I am thinking it is to his good offices that there is the breath of life in this poor creature. Where is she bound for, young ladies?"

"To Woodlands," Leila answered.

The cart proceeded, followed by the others; when they arrived at the lodge, Bill's astonishment was great, and his joy also, when he heard the wonderful news, for he had taken the greatest interest in Leila's distress; he called

instantly to Susan to accompany them, and taking the key, which was still in his charge, they took their way to Peggy's cottage, Charles having been sent on to the house to request the attendance of Nurse. "Her papa," Leila said, "had gone to London with her Aunt Stanley; but Nurse, she was sure, would be of great use, and might bring with her whatever she thought necessary for Peggy," who still remained in a state of stupor.

The fire was kindled, and Peggy laid upon her bed when Nurse arrived, who, after giving her a small portion of nourishment, stood by the bed-side holding her hand and gazing anxiously upon her.

"How wonderful are the ways of Providence," she said. "To think of Peggy being restored to us again, she that we mourned as sleeping under the salt wave!"

Peggy opened her eyes. "And wherefore did ye pit me there?" she said, with a faint smile. "Na, na, it was nae just sae bad as that, though it's been out o' perils by sea and perils by land that the Lord has delivered me, praise be to His holy name; but, oh! it's a deliverance past my weak comprehension, I canna make it out; but it's all His blessed work, and it's a reality—it's no' a dream."

"No, Peggy, it's not a dream," Matilda said, eagerly. "See, we are all around you, and now Cousin Leila will be happy again, and merry as she was before."

"And did the dear bairn grieve sae for me? Oh! what it is to hear the voices of ye all again, and to see your faces glinting down on me like the blessed sunbeams on my withered heart; it was for this I prayed and for this I toiled, as my puir blistered feet can testify; but it is a strength that I have nought to do with that has brought me to see this day; and now that the life seems in me again, in a measure, I would fain ken where I am. Is it your house, Mistress Nurse, that they have brought me to, and I making sae free, lying in your ain bed, wi' thae bonnie genty white curtains, and all sae clean and comfortable about me, and never sae much as a word o' thanks? you will think I hae left my manners in the sea—but we will no speak o' that awfu' element."

"But, Peggy," Selina whispered, "it's not Nurse's house—it is your own; and Cousin Leila told her papa every thing she thought you would like."

"Yes," Matilda added, "and there are peats in a box behind the door; and you have not seen the kitchen yet, with the walnut-tree table, and cupboard, and the cuckoo clock—all is for you—it is your own house."

"My own house," Peggy repeated, as clasping her hands together in deep emotion, she added, "O what am I, that such blessings should be showered upon me, when He whom I serve 'had not where to lay His head!' O my bairns! help me to praise Him, who has brought me out o' much tribulation, for my mind's weak and head sair confused. Could you no' tak' the book—it's the Psalms o' David that could speak weel for me at sic a moment."

"No, Peggy," Nurse said; "that must not be: God looks to the heart. He knows all your gratitude to Him—but you are more exhausted than I ever saw mortal being, and it's peace and quietness you want; you must try to sleep, and the young ladies will be gude bairns, (as you call them,) and go quietly home—they will come to see you again tomorrow, when you will be more able to speak to them of your mercies, for, surely, it has been a great deliverance."

"And may I not stay with Peggy?" Leila said.

"No, Miss Leila, no; Peggy will be better alone with me; and as she will require a little nourishment now and then, and it will need my experience to know how much, I will watch by her till the evening; I am sure my master will spare me on such an occasion; and you may say, that if it is his pleasure to allow Amy to step down when I leave, and stay this first night with Peggy, I think it is all she will require."

On the young people getting up to take leave, a painful struggle took place in Dash's upright mind, and for some moments he stood irresolute. Between the dear young companion of his palmy days and the friend of late misfortunes the line of duty was difficult to discern;—but this friend was no longer perishing with hunger and cold, she was now in the land of plenty and almost smothered with blankets; so Dash wagged his tail to Peggy and darted after Leila. It was not easy to say which was most light of foot, as they bounded along—Dash capering and frisking in renewed health and spirits, and Leila as if she trod on air, so impatient was she to tell all to her papa; but Mr. Howard was already in possession of the joyful intelligence, as immediately on his return from London, he had been informed by Charles of all that had taken place, and of Nurse having been sent for, and they now met both on their way to Peggy's cottage; but on hearing Leila's account, Mr. Howard thought it better to delay his visit till the next morning, and retraced his steps with the rest of the party.

As they entered the house, Leila lingered behind for a moment. "Charles," she whispered, in an agitated voice, "if you had not told us to follow Dash, Peggy would have died. Charles, if you had been a little boy, you would not have said that." The bright colour which before had animated her face had faded, she was pale and trembling; Charles was alarmed.

"You are ill, Leila!" he exclaimed; "the agitation of all this has been too much for you."

"No, I am not ill," she said quickly; "but I must go to papa." She passed him hastily, and entered the library. Mr. Howard looked up—her appearance alarmed him.

"Has any thing happened?" he inquired; "Leila, my child, why are you so pale?"

Leila threw herself into her papa's arms. "Nothing more has happened, papa; but I don't know what is the matter with me; it is joy—but it is too much happiness—how can I ever thank God enough for all that He has done for me!—He has given me so many blessings. He sent me the trial, but He has taken it away from me again, and gives me more than ever joy—tenfold joy, papa—what can I say to Him—what can I do?—surely, I am most ungrateful—my heart is very full, but I feel as if I could do nothing."

"You can give your heart more entirely, my love, to Him, who has given so much for you; you can think of Him, love Him, walk with Him, and make Him more and more to you an all-sufficient Saviour."

"But, papa, what frightens me is this; I have more blessings here than I had in the island—friends, and beautiful rooms, and fortune, and every thing I could wish for—but it does not make me give my heart more to God. I used to think of God more in the island, when I saw His beautiful world all around me; here it is beautiful also, but so many pleasures, and so many people to love, take up my heart; perhaps it would be better for me if I had trials."

"My dear Leila, you must beware of the error of believing, that were your situation different, you would be better than you are now; the fault is in yourself, not in the circumstances which surround you. You think it would be better for you if you had trials; you have a trial at this very moment—the trial of prosperity, and it has often been found more difficult to bear than the heaviest misfortunes. Remember the words of your blessed Saviour, that 'it is

easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' The possession of riches often tends to increase pride and self-indulgence; they expose you to flattery and to many temptations to pleasure, which make the self-denying principles of Christ more difficult to follow; it is not money alone, that is here meant, but all the sinful vanities of a worldly life."

"Well, papa, and is not this just what frightens me? Would it not be better for me to have no money, and to live in some quiet place like the island, where we should have nothing to tempt us off?"

"No, my dear child, had it been so, we should have been continued there; but the Bible does not tell us to renounce the world, but to overcome the world. We are to live in it, but not to be led by it. If we have the advantages of fortune and station in life, we have also greater responsibilities—we are responsible for the example we set to those who look up to us, and for the use we make of those riches which are intrusted to us, and for which, as faithful servants, we must one day give an account."

"Then, papa, this is what you mean when you say, this world is a state of trial; for it is not only a trial when we are poor and miserable, but when we are rich and happy—I never thought of that before, but then we can never be at peace, papa, nor enjoy being happy."

"Yes, my child, we can be so, by endeavouring to bring eternity more constantly before us, and by giving to things present only their proper value: this will not prevent our enjoying them where consistent with duty, but will prevent our feeling as if all were lost when they are taken away; for God has promised to 'keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Him.' If we could only keep constantly in mind, that every event, whether happy or mournful, if properly received, will work together for our everlasting good, we should indeed enjoy 'that peace which passeth all understanding.' Go then, my dear child, and enjoy the many blessings which surround you, with a grateful heart."

"Yes, papa, I will go to Charles, and tell him you have made me well again: he thinks I am ill, which will make him sorry, for you don't know what a kind brother he is to me, and I like him so very much; he is one of my blessings, and I think he will work for good, for he always tells me what is right—good-bye, papa."

## CHAPTER X.

THE young people were all impatience next morning to visit Peggy Dobie's cottage. They met Mr. Howard returning from it, who told them they would find Peggy much recovered. He had found her up, sitting by the fire reading her Bible, and full of gratitude and thanksgiving for the blessings which surrounded her.

"My bairns," she said as they entered, and she closed her Bible and laid aside her spectacles, "you have come at the right moment—I hae been giving praise to Him that has lifted me out o' my sair tribulations, and it is here I hae found the words, and noo may He put into my heart what I should say to you; how can I ever thank you enough for all I see about me, for all you have done for me?"

"You need not thank us, Peggy," Leila answered; "for we are as happy as you are; and it is so joyful that you should be alive, and so wonderful, that we can scarce believe it;—and so you like your house?"

"Like it, Miss Leila! 'deed that's no' the word to testify my wonderment at all I see around me. I hae been looking at that cupboard, wi' all the tumblers and glasses sparkling and shining like a leddy dressed out in her diamonds, and praying that my auld head may not be turned all the gether wi' the vanities o' life; but to feel that I hae come to sic a haven o' rest, to lie down on that bed last night, and to think it was my ain; to think that I am no longer a wanderer on the face o' the earth, without a covering to my auld head, or a friend to speak the word o' comfort to my crushed spirit—no, it's no' just at ance that I can get into a measure o' composedness for sic a change as this. I am in a bewilderment o' joy and gratitude—and there's Dash, bonnie man, wagging his tail, and aye looking in my face; he is telling me we are in the land o' Canaan noo. O let me ever thank God for all his mercies; and let me thank you also, my dear bairns, for all your kindness to me; for never did I think to have seen your bit canty faces again in the land o' the living, for it's out o' the swellings o' Jordan that puir auld Peggy has been delivered by an arm o' strength."

"It is so nice to hear you speaking Scotch again," Matilda said; "I like it so much. That word canty is such a nice word, and it is so nice to have you back again when we thought you dead; but how did it all happen? Were you not washed overboard in the storm? You must tell us all about it. How were you saved?"

"Yes," Leila said, "it will be such an interesting story, and so long; for you must tell us every thing from the very beginning. But you are not to tell it all in one day, for that would tire you. You are very, very thin, Peggy," and Leila took Peggy's withered hand in hers; "can we do nothing to make you better? If it will tire you to speak, we will wait for the story till another day."

"No, my dear bairn, it will no tire me; and it's weel my part to do all I can to pleasure you or yours, though I will not just say but what I may feel a wee thought ashamed to tell sic a lang tale afore all the young ladies, and this fine young gentleman."

"But Peggy," Leila said eagerly, "he is not a fine young gentleman; he is so kind and good-natured, he will like to hear the history of all that has happened to you very much; and if he does not understand all the Scotch words, I will explain them to him afterwards; he is my brother Charles now, you need not be afraid of him."

"Your brother, is he? Weel, weel, sae let it be for the present, my bonnie lamb. And noo where am I to begin in this lang tale?"

"At the very beginning," Leila and Matilda both exclaimed at once; "at the very beginning, Peggy, when you first embarked with all the pets."

"Ay, ay, and to think I hae no had the grace to ask after the puir dumb things; but I am sair bewildered, and I kent they needs be safe, for there's my cat that was amang them, just lying afore the fire quite contented, and no ways strange, puir thing. That civil gentleman, Master Bill, (I think they call him,) brought it up to me this morning, and my trunk too with my big Bible, and all the bits o' things that are sae valuable to me."

"But the story, the story, Peggy," Matilda exclaimed, rather emphatically.

"Yes, my bairn, that's true, I was forgetting, and it's aye the story, the story, wi' you young things. Weel then, to

begin at the very beginning, as you say. We got into the ship, (that is, the pets, as Miss Leila calls them, and me,) and it was a bonnie day, and the sea sparkling like diamonds, and wi' a most deceitfu' and canny look; but it was all put on; no a word o' truth in it, for it's a most unchancy and awfu' element, and in no ways to be trusted by a Christian woman. Weel, my first discomfiture was when I was telt that I was by no means to go near the pets, or to take any charge, for they would have better care than mine; deed, and I was in no ways weel pleased, forbye that I had been thinking the parrots would have been gude company, and that I could hae given them some gude instruction maybe, puir things, and got them into a manner o' more sensible discourse than aye crying, 'pretty poll,' and the like o' thae vain and silly things. But it was no to be, so I turned my mind to some wee helpless bairns that were aye wailing and wearying for something; for ye ken Peggy must aye be doing. They had lost their mother, puir things, and the father o' them was sadly put about when night came, and all their bits o' clothes to take off, and the strings o' them aye getting into knots, and he wi' no manner o' skill or judgment to gang to work in the right manner; so I took them all in my ain hands, and got them into their bits o' cribs wi' a kind o' comfort, and the wee thing who was but a babby clinging round my neck in the dark, and saying, 'Mamma was come back again, and she was no to gang away ony more.' Deed it was just a moving scene, and minded me sae o' my ain bonnie flowers; and John, for that was his name, was sae gratified, and could no' say enough for the little I could do. And so we got on wi' a measure o' comfort all the next day, till the wind began to roar like a demented creature, wi' no manner o' discretion, ranting and tearing wi' the steadfast resolution no to leave a hale rag in the ship; and there were the bairns, puir things, wailing and tumbling about on the floor, and nae marvel either, seeing that them that had come to the years o' discretion could na keep their feet; and the captain, there was he crying to put in the dead lights, which was no just civil to say the least, and we wi' the breath o' life still in our bodies. Waes me, but it was an unco' dispensation for him to be making preparations for a dead wake afore the living folk. He might hae thought, the ungodly man, that there was an arm o' strength that could lift us out o' the deepest pit of our tribulation.—But where was I? for 'deed I am sair bewildered wi' all that happened."

"You were telling about the storm, Peggy," Matilda said, eagerly. "Oh, do go on, it is so very interesting."

"Ay, that's true, I was telling about the storm; but waes me, words are weak to tell o' that awfu' scene. Weel, naething would serve me but I maun be upon deck to see the warst o' it; and there I stood, clinging aye to John, and Dash at my side, wi' the sense o' a man o' fifty, holding me fast by the gown; but it was na waves I saw, but mountains rising to the black heavens, and the white foam o' them looking ghastly white in the darkness o' the night, and every now and then a flash o' fire like a curtain o' flame in the sky, and a sound like guns mingling wi' the roar o' the awfu' blast; and there was the captain again, wi' a lang thing like a trumpet in his mouth, and he thinking, wi' his puir feckless breath, to lift his voice above the anger o' Heaven. I could na stand that, so I turned down to the cabin again; but oh, my bairns, never while the breath o' life is in my body will I forget the sound that ere I was at the foot o' the stairs met my ear. I canna speak o' it, I dare na think o' it. Them that had stood at my side the minute afore in life and strength, sent to their last account, and without the power o' a hand being stretched out to save them. I am no clear in my mind o' what happened for a while after that; but then there was a cry that the wind was no just sae strong, and that a boat had come off from the shore for the passengers for Scarborough; it was for Scarborough John was bound, to take up his abode wi' a sister, a widow-woman weel to do in the world, and he was loath to part wi' me, and leave me in sic tribulation; and the bairns they aye cried that mammy maun gang too, and I was down the side o' the ship, and in the boat wi' the wee babby in my arms afore I kent where I was, and Dash holding on again by my gown as he did afore; and how we e'er reached the shore was the gracious providence of God, for man had nought to do wi' it; and we were up in the air the one minute, and in the watery pit o' destruction the next, and no a dry stitch upon us when we were lifted out wi' scarce the breath o' life in our bodies; but all but gratitude to Heaven was forgotten when we sat that night in quietness and in comfort by that widow-woman's cheerful fire-side. And to see the bairns round the table at their tea, wi' their bit blythe faces, and ilk are wi' a jolly piece in its hand, for, as I said afore, she was well to do in the world that widow-woman, and had all things in a superior way. 'Deed it was a scene to lift the heart wi' gratitude and joy, and at night when I found myself in a quiet comfortable bed, and nae mair heizing up and down wi' all thae outlandish sounds in my ear, 'deed I could na sleep wi' very pleasure, so I took to musing on the uses o' the sea, and I could na make it weel out at all; it seemed to me as if it was a fearfu' scourge, aye ready to be let loose on our sinfu' heads, and made for naething but our destruction; but then I minded me o' the fine caller haddys, and thae herrings at ten a penny, sic a blessing for the puir, and then I thought that there might be a measure o' comfort in it after all, so wi' that I fell asleep. The next morning I thought to hae gone on my way, but they would nae hear o' it, and the bairns they aye clung to me, and said I was to stay and be their mamma. 'Deed, auld as I was, I could nae but think o' sic a proposal afore John's very face; and he, honest man, no ways willing. The day after that John set out wi' me to put me on my road, and he wrote me out a paper o' all the towns I was to gang through, and sae we parted, and I gaed on my way, thinking it wad be but a pleasant walk; but waes me, I had little thought or comprehension o' what was afore me. But I am thinking I have said enough for this present time; you will be weary wi' sic a lang tale."

"Oh no, Peggy," Leila exclaimed, "I am quite sure none of us are weary. Do go on, for we wish so much to hear how you got here at last."

"And 'deed, my bairn, that's no easy to tell, for I have but a confused thought o' all that happened. Every day I walked on and on, and when I came to the towns, I slept at big houses that they call houses o' entertainment: but 'deed it was no diversion to me, the money they aye asked frae me in the mornings; so I took to sleeping at farm-houses, and that answered better. To be sure sometimes I had but the barn or the hay-loft, and but a short word o' welcome; but others that were mair civil let me sleep in the big chair by the kitchen fire-side; and clean and comfortable mony o' the kitchens were, dishes and platters on the walls shining like silver, and big hams hanging from the roof, wi' the greatest plenty to eat and drink, and blythe bairns running about, looking sae like their meat, that it did my heart good to see them. I was aye happy when I got to a farm-house at night; but sometimes I was not just sae lucky; and what wi' paying for a night's lodgings, and for a ride in a wagon or a cart now and then, and for a loaf o' bread and a draught o' beer, my money was fast melting away, and my heart no that light; for aye when I asked if I was near London yet, they said it was a weary way, and ower far for sic an auld woman as me to compass. But it was only when the days were fast shortening, and the long nights setting in, that the like o' thae reflections crushed my spirit; yet the morning's sun made all right again and warmed my auld heart, and I felt there was a Providence abune that could make the roughest way plain and the langest way short to me. I was aye fond o' the song o' the robin, and whiles I would sit down by the side o' a hedge and hearken to them in the trees abune my



head, and then I would throw them some crumbs frae my loaf o' bread to pleasure them puir things; and the bonnie creatures would come down to the ground and look up in my face, as if I had been a kent friend. And Dash, the wise animal, he would keep his distance, and lie as if the breath o' life was out of his body, till they had ta'en their breakfast wi' comfort and discretion. From all that I hae experienced in my lang travel, I think the robins are o' the same nature as in my ain land, just as frank and as kindly. But oh, my bairns! sic a difference in the rivers; instead of the clear bonnie Esk that I had been used to, wi' the sand lying at the bottom sparkling like diamonds in some parts, and in others springing over the big stones like bairns let loose frae the school, there I came to rivers as quiet and lazy as mill-ponds, and looking as black and drumlie as if they had washed all the dishes in thae big towns in them; but 'deed it's no wise discreet in me to be making thae reflections; for if their waters are no just sae clear, surely I am come to a land flowing with milk and honey, and need na mind. But I am wandering from my road again."

"Yes, Peggy," Matilda said, "you are forgetting to tell us how your money lasted, and what you did when it was done. Oh! it must have been so dreadful when you began to be starved to death."

"'Deed, and it was no ways pleasant; but it was no just sae bad as that; and I aye keepit a thought on Him who feedeth the fowls o' the air, and was no that down-hearted; still it was a serious thought, and I was at my last shilling when the pedlar was graciously sent to me."

"The pedlar, Peggy, how was that?"

"You see, Miss Matilda, I was sitting by the road-side one morning, taking counsel wi' my ain thoughts and looking at the shilling, and turning it round and round in my hand wi' a serious countenance, nae doubt, when an honest man wi' a pack upon his back came up to me. 'Mistress,' he said, 'you are looking at that shilling as if there werena mony ahint it, and you were loath to part company.' "'Deed,' I said, 'you hae made a gude guess and are no far wrong; for it's the very last shilling I hae in the world, and a long journey, I reckon, is still afore me.' Wi' that we fell into discourse, and I telt him all my story; for he was frae my ain country, and my heart warmed to him. He said that for that day and the next our road lay in the same direction, and that he would be blythe o' my company. Was I to refuse sic a civil invitation?—by no means. So we gaed on our way thegither, and had muckle pleasant discourse; for he was far travelled, and had great learning and experience o' the world, and was, forbye, a God-fearing and civil man, and had but one fault that I could discern, he was ower fond o' beer; preserve me, but I would hae sleepit sound, and ower sound, as he, puir man, found that night, if I had ta'en all he offered me, for he was no ways niggardly; and when I spoke o' asking up-pitting for the night at a farm-house, he would na hear it; he would treat me, he said, baith to a supper and a bed, and be blythe to do so. Weel, when night came on, we turned into a comfortable-looking house by the road-side, where they selt the beer he was ower fond o'; and it was a canty scene that big kitchen, that lifted the very heart o' me. There was the mistress frying bacon on the warm red fire, and mair than one hungry man sitting on low stools, listening wi' delight to the hissing sound o' it; and a wee baby in a cradle, no thinking o' sleep, but lying so pleased, wi' the great een o' it wide open, and staring at its brothers and sisters, dancing in a corner o' the room to the music o' a blind fiddler; they were near to a table where some men were drinking, and there was a man sat there wi' a face I could no get out o' my mind at all. He had a down look and an ill look to my thought; and I noticed that though he had his tankard o' beer afore him like the rest, when he thought nae body was looking that way, he lifted the tankard that had been put down afore the puir blind fiddler, and took a lang pull out o' it. I would na hae been that sorry if it had choked him, and I felt in my mind that the man would surely come to shame and want. Aweel, when the mistress showed me the room I was to sleep in, I could na get this man's ill face out o' my mind, and I asked her if the men that were drinking at the table were to bide all night. 'Some of them might,' she said, 'and some might not; but I need not be frightened, for my friend the pedlar was to sleep in the next room to me, and there was a door through frae my room to his. You see,' she said, 'there is only a latch to it, for the key has been lost; but as he is an honest man nae doubt, and your friend, you will no mind that; but this is a decent house, and you need fear no disturbance;' and wi' that she left me. I had not been long in bed afore I heard the pedlar, honest man, snoring soundly. I was weary, weary, and yet for a lang time I could no get to sleep, for the fiddle seemed aye sounding in my ears, and the bit bairnies dancing afore me, and that man's ill face aye taking anither look at me, but after a time I heard steps passing up the stairs, and the front door was barred in, and quietness fell upon the house; and then, though it was no just sleep that came over me, it was a kind o' a dover, and how lang it lasted I canna tell, but suddenly it seemed to me as if I heard a step in the passage and some one stopping at my door,—I started up in my bed and listened; a lock turned, but it was na in my room, but in the next; and then I saw a light under the door that had the latch. I sprang up and looked through the key-hole; the ill face o' that awfu' man seemed glaring on me, I could scarcely breathe, for I felt sure he saw me, but he turned away and went straight up to the bed; he seemed to listen for a moment, bending over it, then softly lifting up a worsted plaid that was lying over a chair by the bed-side, he seized the pack which the plaid was covering, and turned to the door again. He had his back to me then; I lifted the latch and sprang in, and the next moment I had him by the throat, the ill rascal, wi' a scream that wakened the whole house. He let fall the pack, shook me off as if I had been a feather, and darted along the passage. He took me for a ghaist, nae doubt; for, for decency's sake, I had put the white sheet about me. Aweel, we looked for him all over the house, but saw naething but a window wide open, and doubtless out o' that window the ill-conditioned creature had gone on his evil way. It was na muckle sleep that either the pedlar or me got that night, I reckon, for I heard nae mair snoring."

"Oh, Peggy!" more than one voice exclaimed, "how frightful and how interesting; but go on, go on, tell us more."

"Aweel, in the morning he could na be grateful enough, honest man, for what I had done for him. 'For himself,' he said, 'he did na' fancy riding much, but it would be a rest to me; so all that day we rode thegither in a wagon like ladies and gentlemen, he treating me to the best o' every thing, and himsel' no taking just sae muckle o' the beer. The next morning after that, when we parted, he would force upon me twa bonnie white half-crowns, and telt me aye to ride when I could, for that he did not think I was that strong for sic an undertaking as I had still before me. I would fain hae refused the money, for it seemed to me like taking payment for doing only what was natural to do; but I thought also that pride might have something to do wi' refusing, and pride was na' for a Christian woman, so I took the siller. I took his advice too, for I felt that I was not that strong; so I aye rode when I could get a cart or a wagon, but it took mair money than I could weel spare. Many o' the wagoners and carters spoke a language I could na' weel make out, but they aye contrived to make it plain to me that they wanted siller. Every day my pocket got lighter and lighter, and my heart heavier; for I came to my last penny, and still a lang way lay afore me. I need na' vex your hearts wi' all I suffered wi' want and lang travel. Some of the folk were kind to me, and some were not; I dinna weel mind all that happened, I ken only that aye when I was at my last extremity, He that I serve had pity upon me; and I

aye remembered that 'He had not where to lay His head,' and took courage. One night I came to a farm-house, the door was shut, but I looked through the kitchen window, and, oh! but it was a cheerfu' canty scene. There was a cat as big and as sleek as a fat lamb lying afore the warm fire, and the mistress and the gudeman, and the bairns, and the farm servants, all round a big table at their supper, and the greatest plenty o' every thing, and sic a smoke from the big dishes o' meat and o' potatoes, and sic a speaking and laughing, that I had to tap many a time afore they heard me; but at last the mistress hersel' came to the door, and wi' her a bonnie wee lassie at her side. I was all in a tremble, and I telt her my story, and asked for a night's lodging; but the pleasant face o' her entirely changed. 'And how am I to know,' she said, 'that there is a word of truth in all this? always the story that they have lost their way, or lost their money, or some such thing. It was but last night that I gave lodging to an old woman, who looked as respectable as you do, and she was off this morning by daybreak with two of my best night-caps that were drying before the fire. No, no, you must take the road again, and be thankful you have a clear moon above your head.' 'Oh, mother, mother!' I heard the wee thing say, but she shut the door in my face. I was weary, and I was faint wi' hunger too, for I had tasted little that day; to gang on my way was no possible, for the very life seemed sinking out o' me; so I crept round by the back o' the house to seek some sheltered nook to lie down in, no wishing ever to rise again. All my desire was to lay myself down in a quiet corner and there to be found dead in the morning. I was leaning against a wall sair spent, and Dash keeping close at my side, as he aye did, striving, puir thing, to keep me warm, when a mist came afore my eyes—it cleared away, and I seemed to see my ain bonnie bairns wi' the faces o' angels beckoning to me, and I heard my husband's voice speaking words o' comfort, and then a door at the back of the house softly opened, and the bonnie lamb I had seen afore stepped out into the moonlight; she looked about her for a moment on every side, and when the light fell on the face o' her, it seemed to me as if she too was a kind spirit frae anither world. She was passing to the front o' the house when she saw me, and, oh!—but it was a sweet voice that sounded in my ear when she took my hand, and said,—'There is a sixpence and a penny for you, it is all the money I have, but maybe it will get you a bed at a house you will soon come to on the road-side; and here is some bread and cheese for your supper, for I am sure you are hungry.' I was trying to say something, when a voice cried out, 'Alice, Alice, where are you?' and the mistress hersel' came up to where we were standing. 'Oh, mother!' the dear bairn said, 'do not put her away for she looks so sorrowful and she can scarcely walk; do let her sit at the kitchen fire all night—I am sure she is an honest woman.' The mistress looked in my face. 'Well,' she said, I may have judged you wrongfully, so I will take Alice's word for it; for it's not my usual custom to turn my face from the poor of the land, so come in, old woman, and you shall have some supper.' She took me into the warm kitchen, and seated me at the fire, and the best o' every thing was set afore me, and bonnie wee Alice took a low stool and set herself down at my feet, and she aye looked up in my face wi' her kindly smile, and seemed to enjoy every morsel I put in my mouth; and she could na make enough o' Dash, and was sae pleased when the mistress hersel' set a plate o' bones afore him that might have served a king. Aweel, we took our supper wi' thanksgiving, and in a closet off the kitchen I had a clean comfortable bed to lie down on, which was a great refreshment. The mistress took to me in an uncommon way. I telt her where I was going, and all about it; and in the morning she gave me my breakfast and a white shilling out o' her ain pocket. I was fain to gie little Alice back her sixpence and the penny, but she was affronted and would na hear tell o' it; so I laid them down on the wee pillow o' her bed when she was looking anither way."

The tears were in Leila's eyes: "Oh, Peggy," she said, "what a dear little girl Alice must have been! how I wish I could thank her for being so very kind to you; but you are not to stop yet, you have more to tell us."

"Not much more, Miss Leila, for mony o' the days after that seem to have passed out o' my mind. I think it was but twice after that that I had onything like a decent bed to lie down on; it was getting darkish one day when I was passing through a village, a heap o' bairns came running past just out o' school, and a wild laddie had something tied up in a napkin, and he aye cried he was going to drown it, and they maun come and see. My mind misgave me that it was a kitten, puir thing, so I followed on to a pond that I saw afore me, and just as I got near I heard sic a wild screech, and there was a wee lassie struggling in the water; I cried loud to Dash, and he was into the pond in no time, and afore anither minute was over, the puir half-drowned thing was laid at my feet. Aweel, I took it up in my arms and turned back to the village. The mother o' it was like to go out o' her judgment wi' fright and wi' joy; I stayed to help to put the bairn into a warm bed, the puir lamb would nae be comforted. Aye when we thought that she was dropping over to sleep she started up again in an unco tremble, and crying out, 'No, no, mother, don't be angry, I will never, never go near the pond again;' and when Dash came up to the bed wagging his tail, and trying to make acquaintance wi' her, she was like to go out o' her judgment, wi' no manner o' knowledge or gratitude for what he had done for her. Aweel, she fell into a sleep at last; 'Oh, my darling,' the mother said, 'many's the time I have told her to keep away from those wicked boys, and by no means to go near that ugly pond, for my mind misgave me that something might happen; but she has been punished enough, poor thing, she will not again forget my warning;' and she leaned over the dear bairn wi' sic joy and thankfulness, and kissed her over and over again. Though it was getting late, I thought now to have gone on my way again, but though she was but a widow woman, and seemed to have naught to spare, she would na hear of it, so I stayed wi' her that night, and she did all she could to make me comfortable. The next circumstance that I remember was when I found myself in a town, and sae spent wi' hunger I could scarcely walk; I had parted wi' my warm cloak afore, and I think shame to tell you how many salt tears that had cost me, (but it was a present from my gudeman,) and I was thinking if there was onything else I could sell, and holding by the rails, for I could scarcely stand, when a decent-looking young woman, wi' a most pleasant face, came up to me. 'What is the matter, poor woman,' she said, in a kindly voice, 'you are surely ill?' I telt her I was starving. 'Waes me,' she said, 'and I have no money to give you, for I have just been disappointed myself: but come with me, you shall have something to eat at least.' She took me by the arm and helped me on, and we entered a big house, where a great many people seemed to be living, for I heard voices o' men and women, and bairns, some crying and some laughing. 'My sister and I have a room here,' she said, as we gaed up the stairs; then taking me by the hand along a dark passage, she opened a door, and I saw a young woman sitting close to the window working busily, though it was getting dark. 'Jessie,' she said, 'you will have thought me long away, and after all I have come back without the money for the shirts, for Mrs. Churchill was not at home.' 'Without the money,' Jessie repeated, 'and not a morsel in the house beyond our night's supper, and not a farthing to buy more! Oh, Ellen, this is sorrowful news. But who is this you have got with you?' Ellen told her how she had fallen in wi' me, and it was beautiful to see the kindness o' baith the sisters. There was but a small fire, but they gathered up the cinders, and made me sit close to it, and they rubbed my hands and spoke words o' comfort to me; and Ellen brought some bread and cheese out of a cupboard, and set it afore me, and baith o' them pressed me to eat. Just then there was a tap at the door. 'That will

be the nurse,' Ellen said, jumping up; 'I forgot to tell you that she said she might perhaps be able to bring the money if her mistress came home in time.' It was the nurse sure enough, and oh, sic joy as it was to the kind-hearted creatures when the nurse counted down ten bonnie shillings on the table. 'Put on the tea-kettle,' Ellen said, 'and I will be back in a moment with some tea and sugar; and, Mistress Nurse, perhaps you will stay and take a cup of tea, you have always been such a kind friend to us.' But Mistress Nurse said she could by no means stay, for her lady might want her; and she was just going away when she noticed Dash. 'Bless me,' she said, 'what a fine animal, but how thin he is; he looks half-starved; my heart is sore for the creature, tea is not just the thing for him, but if I can get hold of the stable-boy when I go home, I will send him up with a plate of scraps; he will like that better.' And she was as good as her word; Dash had such a supper as he had not seen for many a day. And how the sisters were pleased and diverted when the creature picked out the largest bone he could find in all the platter, and laid it at my feet. Aweel, we had our tea in comfort, and the best o' butter, which Ellen said was a treat by ordinar, and muckle pleasant discourse; and I telt them about you, Miss Selina, getting your speech again, and about Miss Leila in the island. They said it was like a fairy tale, and that they had naething to tell me about themselves sae romantic. They had lost baith father and mother, and they worked for their bread, and had come through great straits; sometimes they had plenty to do, and were comfortable enough, and sometimes they were sair put about, and at their last penny; but their mother had been a God-fearing woman, and had given them the best o' counsel, and they aye kept up their hearts, for there was a Providence abune, they said, that kent what was best for them. The room was clean and neat, though the furniture was scant. There was but one bed, but they borrowed a mattress from a kind neighbour, and I lay baith warm and comfortable on it. In the morning I had a sair struggle, for they would hae me to take one o' their hard-earned shillings; but I would by no means hear o' it, and I was the more positive as they had telt me that I was but a day's journey or so frae Richmond, and need na gang through that awfu' London, which was a great ease to my mind. So I took only some small change Ellen had gotten in from the tea, and gaed on my way. It was a clear bright day, but it was hard frost when night came on, and I was stiff wi' cold, and weary, weary; and I could get naething better than a barn to lie down in, for I had but a penny to offer, and they jeered at me, and said a barn was ower good for sic payment. The next morning seems all like a confused kind o' dream, I remember naething but that I crawled on and on, often stopping and feeling unco' sleepy, but aye feared to lie down lest I should ne'er waken again; but though I kent Richmond could na be far off now, I was but the mair sorrowful, for I could bear it no longer; I could na move anither step, but sunk down by the road-side. A mist came afore my eyes, I ken naething mair, but that I seemed to waken in Heaven, for when I opened my eyes again, your dear faces were all around me." Peggy ceased speaking, and clasped her hands together as if in prayer. There were tears in most eyes; even Charles, who seemed to think it unmanly to give way, had to struggle hard with his emotion.

"Leila," he said, as they returned home, "I can well understand what your grief must have been in thinking Peggy lost to you. I am going to write all her story down, it is so interesting, and it will be my first lesson in the Scotch language; I would not have missed hearing her tell it for the world."

## CHAPTER XI.

A FEW days more, and solitude and silence seemed to have fallen on Woodlands. The whole party had dispersed.

Mrs. Roberts had come back from paying a visit to her sister, and even the Stanleys had returned home. Leila had felt the parting with so many kind friends a good deal, and the holidays seemed to her now as but one bright day too quickly past. But there were alleviations; Sherborne Park, the residence of Mr. Herbert, was but an hour's ride from Woodlands; Leila could now manage Selim with ease; Charles was still to be one week more at home, and on the first Saturday after the breaking up of the party, he promised to be early at Woodlands on his pony, to escort Mr. Howard and Leila to Sherborne Park: besides this, her joy and thankfulness at having recovered Peggy and her dear Dash, bid defiance to all approaches to any depression of spirits. She was buoyant as ever, and each morning, on her way to her Aunt Stanley's, she stopped for a few moments at Peggy's cottage to say a few kind words to her, and bring joy and sunshine to the old woman's heart.

Most of the neighbouring families had called at Woodlands; amongst others, Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay, with their daughter Lydia. Leila liked Lydia's appearance; she was a pretty looking girl, remarkably well dressed, with a beautiful complexion, fine hair, and a very animated expression of face; she praised every thing she saw, was delighted with the pets, said they were happy creatures to have such a dear, pretty little mistress, and kissed Leila twice at parting, and hoped they would always be great friends. Leila was much gratified, and was tempted for the first time to think Selina might be wrong, and too hasty in her judgments. She was made very happy a few days after, by her Aunt Stanley telling her she had obtained her papa's consent to her remaining to dinner, as Mr. Mildmay, having county business with Mr. Stanley was, with his wife and daughter, to dine with them that day.

It was a very agreeable day to Leila; she liked Lydia more and more. She had now quite made up her mind to think Selina's character of her a mistaken one. Lydia seemed full of heart and affection for all of them, but apparently to prefer Selina to the others; always listening when she spoke, and always declaring that she must know best, and in all their little discussions coming over to her way of thinking. But Leila would have been the first to retract the too favourable opinion she had formed, had she been present at a conversation which took place in the school-room before tea. Lydia and Matilda were alone together, they had been talking of Leila. "Yes," Lydia said, "I don't wonder you like her, she took my fancy very much; there is some life and spirit in her. I am sure I hope Selina will not make her as prim as she is herself, for she seems to have taken quite a passion for that dear sister of yours."

Matilda's colour mounted to her forehead. "I thought you were very fond of Selina," she said, in an offended tone of voice; "I am sure you always talk to her as if you were."

"And who tells you I am not?"

"You yourself do; you would not talk in that way of one you really liked. Ah, Lydia, that is not being sincere." Selina's warning came forcibly into her mind at that moment; but she was sorry she had said so much, for Lydia seemed extremely angry; looking very red, she said,

"Matilda, that idea would never have entered your head; I know who has——" She stopped, and with a changed expression of look and tone she continued, "But this is quite foolish, we are getting angry with each other for no reason whatever, for we are quite of the same opinion on this subject; I am sure you cannot have a higher opinion of

Selina than I have. I only wish I could be more like her," and she sighed heavily; "but still you must not be angry if I love my own little Matilda even more," and she drew Matilda towards her, and kissed her cheek.

Matilda felt at this moment she would rather that she had not done so, but still she was gratified and flattered that one generally allowed to be so clever and accomplished as Lydia, and who was several years older than herself, should make quite a friend of her, and even often condescend to ask her advice. Had Matilda reflected further, she would have been aware that though she did so, she seldom or ever followed it. Lydia, in fact, always ended by taking her own way in every thing, though apparently yielding to the judgment of others. She now, as if to change the subject, observed, "What nice-looking books you have got on those shelves; your school-room always looks so cheerful and so comfortable. What a pretty book that seems to be at the top there; I should like to see it."

"Oh, that is a beautiful book," Matilda answered; "but it belongs to Mrs. Roberts. There are sketches in it which were drawn by her husband; she has the greatest value for it, and she shows it to us sometimes; but she has forbidden us ever to touch it when she is not by."

"Oh, she is afraid, I suppose, of Alfred's dirty little hands, for you know he is for ever grubbing in the earth, hunting after snails or spiders, or some such creatures; but a young lady's hands are very different," and she drew off her nice kid glove, and displayed her pretty little white hand, on which a beautiful ring sparkled which had often been Matilda's admiration. "You cannot suppose," she continued, "that she would have any objections to my looking at the book; and as she is so very obliging and good-natured, she will be quite gratified, I am sure, that I should admire her book." She drew a chair towards her and was mounting upon it.

Matilda held her back. "Oh pray don't," she said; "I don't wish to disobey Mrs. Roberts, and I promised not to touch or look at it when she was not by."

"Well, don't touch it, my little pattern miss," Lydia said; "don't touch it; put your hands behind your back, and then you can swear you did not; you need not even look at it; shut your eyes and turn your back, my pretty dear, and I will describe, to you the beautiful scenes as I turn over the pages; for I have no pleasure when it is not shared." Then changing her tone of raillery, she continued: "But what has come over my little Matilda? I scarcely know her again—she that used to be so obliging and so affectionate towards me—have I indeed lost my little friend?"

"Oh, no, no!" Matilda exclaimed, and tears were in her eyes. "I am still your little friend; don't be angry with me. You will love me again, won't you?"

Lydia's smile was that of triumph; but Matilda did not see it—she was now covering her eyes with her hands.

Lydia jumped up on the chair and took down the book; then gently removing Matilda's hands, she said,—“Come, darling, don't be foolish; let me see my sweet Matilda again; let us be friends as we have ever been.”

Poor Matilda! all her sense of what was right, all her good resolutions, vanished before Lydia's bland smile. Selina's repeated warnings, and yet more, the texts of the morning, had been entirely forgotten.—“Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.” And the answer: “Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” Alas! had she asked in sincerity to be shown His ways, to be guided in His paths? had she not leant to her own understanding, and listened to the voice of the tempter? how then could she expect that God would direct her ways when God was not in all her thoughts? She turned over the pages of the book for Lydia, she explained the sketches, and praised them extravagantly, with a confused idea that she was atoning to Mrs. Roberts in some degree by doing so, and she gave herself completely up to the enjoyment of the moment.

“Well,” Lydia said, as she turned the last page, “now we have finished; we have had our pleasure, and what the worse, I should like to know, is the pretty book of our admiration? Come, let us put it up again in the book-case.”

Matilda jumped up to assist her, and in her haste overturned an ink-glass on the table, which she herself had neglected to put into the inkstand again; a small portion of the ink fell on the beautiful binding of the book; Matilda was horror-struck.

“Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do?” she exclaimed, as she stood in helpless distress gazing upon it.

But Lydia did not lose her presence of mind for a moment; tearing out a sheet of blotting-paper from a book which lay before them, she quickly soaked up the ink, then seizing a sponge which Selina had been using for her drawing, she dipped it in a tumbler of water, and dexterously effaced almost every trace of the stain. The book was bound in white vellum, highly glazed, so that the ink had not sunk in, scarcely a trace of it was discernible.

“Now is not this well and cleverly done?” Lydia said. “Come, cheer up, Matilda, don't think of it another moment; it was awkward enough in you, to be sure; but *mum's the word*, and it never will be perceived; I must put it in the book-case again, and as far back as I can.” She was jumping up on the chair, but Matilda took the book from her hand and looked at it earnestly for a moment.

“Oh! you need not be afraid, and look so dismal; I really don't think it possible it can be found out.”

Matilda still retained the book in her hand, and rose as if about to leave the room.

“Where are you going?” Lydia impatiently asked.

“To show this to Mrs. Roberts,” Matilda answered, timidly.

“To show it to Mrs. Roberts! Are you mad, Matilda? Surely you would not be such a fool—oh! I beg your pardon for calling you so; how mamma would be shocked if she heard me talking in this vulgar manner—there is nothing she dislikes so much as vulgarity. I beg your pardon, but you did put me in such a passion.” Then changing her tone from that of anger, she continued, mournfully,—“And so you would bring me into this scrape and get me punished, I who have ever loved you, ever been your friend—I who would have stood by you till the last moment! Oh, Matilda! but go—go and leave me.”

Matilda stood irresolute. She covered her face with her hands, the tears trickled down between her fingers, but she softly repeated to herself, “Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and He shall direct thy path.” She removed her hands, she looked up, and in a firm voice she said,—“Lydia, it was I who overturned the ink, and it is I who shall bear the punishment;” and she left the room.

She found Selina and Leila with Mrs. Roberts; the expression of her face instantly arrested their attention. “What has happened, Matilda?” they both exclaimed; “what is the matter?”

She put them back with her hand, and steadily advancing to the table where Mrs. Roberts sat, she laid the book before her, and pointing to where the stain had been, she said,—“Mrs. Roberts, I spilt the ink upon your book; I am

very sorry——” She tried to say more, she could not, she was weeping.

Mrs. Roberts looked much distressed. “Matilda,” she said, “it is not on account of any injury my book has sustained that I am so distressed—and indeed I do not think I should have observed it—but you have disobeyed my express command, and you have also broken your promise to me; for it was yourself who voluntarily gave that promise—I did not ask it of you.”

“Oh! yes; I remember that quite well; I have been very, very wrong; I deserve to be punished, and I will try to bear it well.”

Selina looked earnestly at her; then throwing her arms round her neck, she whispered,—“Tell me, dear Matilda, did Lydia ask you to show her that book?”

Matilda made no answer; she kissed Selina fondly, then turning round, she said,—“Mrs. Roberts, I know I must be punished, what do I deserve?”

“Not a very severe punishment, Matilda; for you have already lessened your fault by confessing it to me; and you will still further, I am sure, atone for it by confessing it to God and imploring His forgiveness. I see that you feel it deeply and are really penitent; I shall, therefore, leave your punishment with yourself. Say, then, what it shall be.”

Matilda stood for some moments looking on the ground, her colour varying at every moment. “I had rather that you should have punished me,” she said. “But if I do not come into the room to-morrow, or next day, or the next, when you read aloud to us, will that be enough, do you think? I assure you it will be a great punishment to me.”

Mrs. Roberts was in the habit of reading out some interesting story to them for an hour every day while they were employed in working for the poor. Matilda used to call it her happy hour, and the tears again filled her eyes at the thoughts of such a banishment. Mrs. Roberts saw it would indeed be punishment enough. She assented, and taking Matilda in her arms and kissing her, she said,—“You have my forgiveness, my child; now go to your room and ask forgiveness of your heavenly Father for your Saviour’s sake, and strength from the Holy Spirit to walk more and more in His blessed ways.”

When Matilda returned to the school-room a short time afterwards, to invite Lydia to go to tea, her countenance was quite cheerful again. Lydia looked at her attentively. “Well,” she said, “I see you have got it over, and well over; I only hope you have not committed me; what did you say, Matilda? how much did you tell?”

“I told only that I had spilt the ink on the book.”

“And you did not mention my name?”

“No, I did not.”

But Lydia seemed to understand the tone and manner in which those few words were said, and hastened to efface the bad impression she had made. “You are a generous, noble girl, Matilda,” she said, “and though younger, far better than I am; you must teach me to be like you;” she twined her arms fondly round her waist, and they left the room together.

As Matilda finished reading the Bible that evening, she closed the book, and sat for some minutes in deep thought. “Am I a noble, generous girl?” she asked herself; “and does Lydia really think so? perhaps she only said it to flatter me; I wish I really knew; I wish I could ask Selina,—that would be betraying Lydia. No, I am not a noble girl—I often do wrong things; I wish I had not liked the praise so much, or believed Lydia. I wish I did not like her so; perhaps she does me no good; but it is not kind to Lydia to think so.” She knelt down and said her prayers, and fervently she asked to be forgiven for her disobedience and for having broken her promise. She asked also to have the love of praise more taken out of her heart; to be meek and lowly like Him she was taught to serve; and she got into bed more peaceful, almost happy, and soon fell asleep.

Saturday came, and Charles was faithful to his appointment. It was a bright morning, every thing looked gay in the sunshine, the ground sparkled with a light frost; but Selim was the most sure-footed of ponies. Leila rode between her papa and Charles—how could she be afraid? She was in high spirits, it was her first ride of any considerable length; she was quite elated by the dignity of her situation, and every now and then she touched Selim lightly with her whip, and sprang on a few yards before the others, and then looked back and laughed at their grave looks. By degrees she became more bold, more anxious to show off before Charles, and to prove to him that she had become quite an excellent horsewoman. She touched Selim less gently—he sprang forward, and from a brisk canter was soon at full gallop, Leila’s light figure seeming as if raised every moment into mid air.

The others held back; they knew the danger of following too closely. “Oh, my child! my child!” Mr. Howard repeatedly exclaimed. It was to both a moment of extreme agitation, for a turn in the road now hid Leila from their sight. But Leila, though much frightened at first, did not lose her presence of mind. She allowed Selim to proceed for some time without opposition, then gently checked him as Charles had instructed her to do, the obedient animal first slackened his pace, and then stood entirely still. Her papa and Charles came up, both looking much alarmed. Charles did not speak, he was extremely pale. Leila looked at them both and burst into tears. “Oh! how I have frightened and distressed you,” she said; “I have been so wrong, so silly; do forgive me papa—do not be angry—I am so sorry.”

“You have indeed been wrong, and very imprudent,” Mr. Howard answered; “and you have much reason to be grateful for the escape you have made. You are far too ignorant a horsewoman to be aware of the danger you exposed yourself to; but don’t let us talk of it any more at present; you have now got a lesson which I am sure you will not forget; keep close to us, my dear child, for you are still far too inexperienced to be trusted for a moment alone.”

They now proceeded without further interruption. Mina was watching for them at the park gate, and ran by their side all up the approach, they walking their horses that they might keep pace with her, and Leila chatting to her as gaily as ever. Mrs. Herbert’s reception of them was all that was kind and affectionate, as she welcomed Leila to her second home; and in rambling with Charles and Mina all over the grounds, the day was passed in much enjoyment. The place was extensive and kept in the most beautiful order. Leila, however, did not admire it quite so much as Woodlands; but what interested her greatly was a small picturesque-looking church which stood in the grounds and its adjoining parsonage. With this scene she was delighted; and when Charles told her the parsonage would probably one day be his future home, as he wished to take holy orders, and the living was in his father’s gift, she thought she had never seen any thing so charming.

“And it looks so comfortable,” she said, “so much nicer than a large house. How I wish Woodlands were no bigger than this parsonage!—how happy will you be, Charles, when you have such a house, and when I come to visit

here—you will often ask Mina and me to come to tea, and you will let us make tea for you, time about, won't you?—But, Charles," she continued, "you are not so merry as you used to be, and you don't say you would be happy to see us to tea—ah! I know what it is; you are angry with me."

"Angry with you, Leila?—oh, no! how can you think so?"

"Yes, because I know I deserve it; it was so foolish of me to wish you to admire me, and to think you would."

"And do you think that would be so difficult, Leila?" he asked.

"I don't know; I don't understand about that; but I know you should not—you should not admire any thing vain, and I should not wish it; and if you are to be a clergyman, you know, you should teach me to be meek and lowly in heart. I am sure my papa will be so glad when I tell him you are to be a clergyman; for he will think, as you grow taller and older, you will help him to make me better. But if you are not angry with me, Charles, why are you so grave?—you have not told me that; what can you be thinking about?—do tell us!"

"I am thinking," he answered, "how delightful all this is!" he continued; "and on Monday how the scene will be changed!"

"And why changed?" she inquired.

"Because on Monday I return to school, and there, instead of having you and Mina to talk to, I shall be surrounded by a parcel of such noisy fellows."

"And you don't like them, then?"

"O yes, I do; that is to say, some of them—some of them are excellent fellows and I like them very much; but don't let us talk of them now, let us enjoy the present; Easter will come in time, and then I shall be home again. You won't forget me, Leila? will you promise me that?"

"To be sure I will not, but it is needless to promise; do you think I could forget the only brother I have in the world? You know I have already told you, that now I do not think you too tall to be my brother; so you may grow as tall as ever you choose, and you will still always be my brother."

When Leila was alone with her papa that evening, she immediately recurred to what had taken place during the ride.

"Papa," she said, "I must have frightened you very much."

"You did, indeed, my love; I was extremely alarmed. You were not aware of what the fatal consequences might have been, and very rash indeed to urge on Selim as you did."

"Yes, and you will be more sorry, papa, when I tell you why—it was what you call the foot of pride—it entered into me, papa, and I did it all on purpose—yes, I whipped Selim on, that I might show off before Charles, and that he might admire my riding, and say how well I kept my seat: once I heard him say, that Selina kept her seat so well, and I wished him so much to say the same of me; you did not know this, papa?"

"Yes, my love, I was aware of your motive, and you may therefore suppose what my feelings must have been, when I thought my child's life might fall a sacrifice to her vanity and love of admiration."

"My life, papa?"

"Yes, my dear Leila, you might not be aware of all the risk you ran, but it was God's goodness alone that saved you; for you braved the danger, and it was great."

"O papa, how wrong I have been, and God might have punished me—He might even have taken my life, and He did not; yet He saw into my heart, and knew how vain and foolish I was—how can He love me, how can He forgive me?"

"My Leila, God cannot love the sin, yet has He compassion on the sinner. Do you remember what St. John says—'So God loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!' and in the fourth chapter, he says, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Yes, my child, it is the righteousness of One who has never sinned, that is this propitiation, which has been procured for us. In our own strength we cannot walk; it is clad in the righteousness of our Saviour Jesus Christ alone, that we can stand in the presence of a pure and holy God; and we are also told, that 'We have not an High Priest, which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' You may meet with those who will tell you that vanity and pride are but trifling faults, mere human weaknesses; but do not listen to them—think often to what in your own case they might have led; and, above all, try to keep ever in your mind the example of Him whom you love and serve; think of His deep humility, His meekness, His lowliness of heart; for our blessed Saviour not only died for us, but He lived for us—He left the glory of His Father's kingdom, to take our nature upon Him; that we might learn of Him; He has compassion on our weaknesses, for He knew them all, and it is His example that should ever dwell in our minds, as His sacrifice should ever dwell in our inmost hearts."

"But, papa, I know this—I know that our Saviour Jesus Christ was humble and meek, and I know He can see into my heart, and yet I have been foolish and vain—it is so difficult—and then I am but a little child, how can I follow so great an example?"

"You can only do so by praying constantly for the grace of God to give you strength; He can make the hardest duty easy to you; and for your encouragement you should think also of how your blessed Saviour loved little children. Do you remember that when the disciples were disputing together who should be the greatest, our Lord set a child before them as an example of the simplicity and humility of which He approved, and which He wished them to imitate? Strive then, my dearest Leila, to become a meek and humble child, such as your Saviour loves; kneel before Him in all your weakness, and from Him you will receive strength to help in time of need."

Leila threw her arms round her father's neck, and softly whispered, "I will try, papa, and you will also pray for me."

## CHAPTER XII.

"NOW there is only one day more," Matilda exclaimed, as she darted into the school-room, (which Mrs. Roberts had just left,) and clasped Selina round the neck so tightly as almost to choke her; "only one day more, my sweet

sister *Demure*, and my punishment will be ended, and you will be, I do believe, as happy as I am; for I know you have not half enjoyed the stories without me, nor you either, Leila—now tell me, have you not missed me very much?”

Both assured her that they had.

“I knew it,” she continued, “for you are so tender-hearted; but I hope Mrs. Roberts has been tender-hearted also, and that she has not begun to read to you the account of Lavalette’s escape yet: you know she said she would abridge it for us, and last night, when I saw her writing, I was so afraid she would read it to you to-day—it would be very cruel of her if she has done so.”

“But she was not cruel,” Leila answered quickly; “I think she stopped on purpose that you might be with us—to-day she only read to us some anecdotes of cats.”

“Of cats! O I don’t care so much about cats; what could put that into Mrs. Roberts’s head?”

“I had been telling her of the sad fright Selina gave me last night, that made her think of cats.”

“And you did not tell me about Selina,” Matilda said, reproachfully; “though I don’t care much for other people’s cats, you know I always do for yours—I like every thing that you like, Leila.”

“Yes, I know you do; and you are not to look vexed now, for I don’t like that; the reason I did not like to tell you was, that we began lessons the moment I arrived, for I was later than usual to-day, because I staid to talk to Peggy Dobie about a bee-hive; I am going to get her a bee-hive; I have money for it now, and it will be ready for spring. She is so fond of bees; she says they are the best of company, an example to old and young, and the very hum of them is pleasant to her heart, and brings back her thoughts to her own land, and to days long gone by.”

“But what about Selina?” Matilda inquired.

“O yes, I was almost forgetting to tell you. She gave me such a fright. You know I am taming a linnet, for I read a story once about a little boy having tamed a linnet, and taught it to call persons by their names, and to imitate sounds, and whistle like nightingales and larks; and this linnet lived for forty years, and was only killed by an accident; so I thought if my linnet lived for forty years, it would be a comfort to me in my old age; and now I daresay it will be, for you can’t think how tame it is getting since you saw it, and it seems to love me more and more every day. Whenever I go into my room it flies to the side of the cage, and puts up its bill to kiss me, and then it hops down to the door, and stands watching till I open it and let it out. Yesterday, after I had let it out, I put a saucer of water on the table, that it might wash itself, for it likes so much to splash about in the water; and then I went into the drawing-room for a book. I staid a little, for I had opened the book at an interesting place, and I began to read, and forgot my dear little Mimi. Suddenly I heard something rush past me—it was Selina with my bird in her mouth. She darted under the sofa quite out of sight; I did not dare to lift up the cover of the sofa, for I thought I should see Mimi torn to pieces. I covered my face with my hands, and was trembling to hear it scream. Oh, I was so frightened! and so dreadfully angry, if I had had a stick, I believe I could have killed Selina. Think only if I had done it! My own Selina! I looked up and saw a strange cat with large eyes glaring at me: I flew at it, and dashed it out of the room in a great rage, and then Selina came softly out from below the sofa, and gently laid down Mimi quite safe at my feet. It was to save it from this strange cat that Selina had run away with it.”<sup>[A]</sup>

[A] A fact.

“Oh, what a dear creature!” Matilda exclaimed; “I do think no cat in the whole world can be so delightful as Selina. What a comfort that you did not hurt her. I was wishing so for a stick when you were telling it, I would have dashed her to pieces in a moment; and even if I had not had one, I think I would have trailed her out from below the sofa in some way or other. What a dreadful thing it would have been if I had killed her. But you see, Cousin Leila, we are a little like in some things, we both wished for sticks.”

“Yes, indeed, that is quite true; and I am sure you need never call me good. Only the day before yesterday I almost lost my life, because I was foolish and vain, and yesterday I might have killed a cat.”

“But you did not.”

“No, I did not; but I made papa very grieved, and he spoke to me a great deal about it, and said that when these fits of anger were not restrained in youth, they often led to the most dreadful crimes. He put me in mind of how I snatched my work out of Nurse’s hands, and danced upon it; and he said it grieved him to see that the same spirit of anger often possessed me, that though I was so much older now——”

“Well, don’t let us talk about that,” Matilda said. “Did Mrs. Roberts read to you any thing interesting about cats, any thing worth telling? Selina, you have such a good memory, I daresay you can remember something worth telling me.”

“Yes, she read us several anecdotes that I think you would have liked. She read to us about a favourite cat that belonged to a Madame Helvetius. It never touched the birds which she kept, almost constantly lay at her feet, and seemed to be always watching over her, and would never take any food but what she gave it. When Madame Helvetius died, the poor cat was removed from her chamber, but it made its way there next morning, got upon her bed, then upon her chair, slowly and mournfully passed over her toilet, and cried most piteously, as if lamenting her poor mistress; it refused all food, and after the funeral it was found stretched out on the grave quite dead.”

“Oh, dear, what a melancholy story; I don’t think I would have cared much to hear that. Did Mrs. Roberts read you nothing better than that? nothing merry about cats?”

“She read us also an anecdote which we thought interesting. A lady went to visit a friend in the country, and this friend had a favourite cat and dog; they were very fond of each other, ate together from the same plate, and slept on the same rug. Puss had kittens while the lady was staying with her friend, and Pincher went regularly every day to visit the kittens, whose nursery was at the top of the house. One morning there was a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning; Pincher was in the drawing-room, and the cat was watching her little family in the garret. Pincher seemed quite frightened by the bright flashes of lightning, and trembled all over; and just as he had crept close to the visitor, and laid himself down at her feet, (as if for protection,) some one came into the drawing-room, followed by puss, who walked in with a most disturbed air, and mewing with all her might, came up to Pincher, rubbed her face against his cheek, touched him gently with her paw, and then walked to the door, stopped, looked back, mewed again, and seemed to say, as plainly as words could have done, ‘Do come with me, Pincher;’ but Pincher was too much frightened himself to give any comfort to poor puss, and took not the least notice of her invitation. She came back and renewed her request with increased mewing. But the hard-hearted Pincher was immovable, though he



seemed perfectly to understand her meaning, for he turned away his head with a conscious guilty look, and crept still closer to the lady; and pussy, finding all her entreaties useless, left the room. But soon after her mewling became so very piteous, that the lady could no longer resist going to see what was the matter. She met the cat at the top of the stairs, close to her bed-room; she ran to her, rubbed herself against her, and then went into the room, and crept under the wardrobe. A mewling was then heard as if from two voices, and the lady discovered that she had brought down one of her kittens and hidden it there for safety; but her mind being in an unhappy state of anxiety for the kittens above, and this little one below, she had wished Pincher to have the kindness to watch by this one while she went for the others. She seemed to trust, however, to having now found a better friend, for she came out from below the wardrobe and hastily left the room. The lady followed, carrying with her the kitten, placed it with the others, and moved their little bed further from the window, through which the lightning had flashed so brightly as to alarm poor pussy, who then lay down beside them quite happy, and the lady remained in the room till the sun shone out again, and all was quite calm. Next morning, to the lady's surprise, she found pussy waiting for her at the door of her bed-room; she went down with her, sat by her, and caressed her in every possible way. Before that she had always been in the habit of going down to breakfast with the lady of the house, but on this morning she had resisted all her coaxing, and would not move a step with her. As soon as breakfast was over, she returned to her family in the garret; and she never did this again. She seemed to think she had shown her gratitude and done her duty. But for a long time after she took very little notice of Pincher, and always looked distant and huffy when he came near her."

"Well," Matilda said, "this anecdote is interesting; I should have liked very much to hear Mrs. Roberts read it. But I am glad it is only about animals that she is reading to you now, for it interests me much more to hear about men and women, and, above all, about children, especially when they get into scrapes."

### CHAPTER XIII.

IT was a beautiful morning; Selina and Matilda had been allowed to breakfast at Woodlands, and were to return to Elmgrove with Leila after a visit to Peggy Dobie's cottage, for the old gardener had promised to be there by ten o'clock with the bee-hive, and he was faithful to his word, for, as they reached the cottage, they found Peggy opening the little wicket-gate leading to the garden, to admit him and his precious burden; the hive was safely placed in a sunny, sheltered corner, close to the green turf seat which Leila had erected for Peggy, and to witness her joy with the whole arrangement was delightful. She placed herself on the turf seat, and with her hands clasped firmly together on her knees, she kept gazing on the hive in a perfect ecstasy of delight.

"Weel, my bairns," she exclaimed, "you hae surely entered into a compact to spoil the auld woman all thegither. If there was a wish in my heart, amang all the grand things, and the wonderfu' blessings that surround me, it was for a bee's skep; it is no' to be told the love I hae for thae creatures, they will be friends to me, and company to me, and example too, for they are a weel principled, upright set, never leaving their ain house, but for the useful work o' the day; and sae blythe and contented, for a constant singing that bonnie sang amang the flowers, that's just music to my ears. Can ony mortal man, or woman either, hae a pleasanter employment than just to sit down afore a bee's skep, and tak observation o' their wonderfu' ways? and is there nae honourable mention made o' the work o' their hands in the very Bible itsel', Deuteronomy thirty-second chapter, thirteenth verse: 'He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the incense of the fields, and he made him to suck honey out of the rock.' And in the eighty-second Psalm, sixteenth verse: 'He should have fed them also with the finest of wheat, and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.' Na, na, it's no thae jams and jellies, and sic articles o' man's contrivance, that ye hear tell o' them, but it's the handiwork o' thae wonderfu' creatures that's had in honour; and I maun just end, as I began, and say to you, my dear bairns, that you could na hae given me a greater compliment than this bonnie bee's skep."

"But, Peggy," Matilda observed, "we did not give it you, it was Cousin Leila; she saved up her money to buy it for you; we only came to see your joy."

"Oh, but it is a dear bairn," Peggy said, looking fondly at Leila, "and sae generous, and sae thoughtfu' for her years. Weel, I am no just the woman I was, for my head's often unco confused now, and my memory's no o' the best since that fearfu' journey; but surely I'll forget my ainsel, afore I forget all she has done for me."

"Don't say that," Leila said anxiously, "don't say you are not just the same; you are looking as well as you ever did now, and you must be quite happy and cheery,—I don't like to see you look grave. We have never been grave since you came back, every day as merry and cheery as can be; and you have never told us yet if you saw all your friends in comfort before you came away from Scotland, and if you enjoyed yourself with them very much."

"And did I no', Miss Leila? 'Deed, 'tis no possible to say the pleasant tea drinkings I had afore I came away; but the very pleasantest of all was the last night but ane afore I got into the awfu' ship. It was at my cousin, Mrs Brown's, and nae strangers but my ain kith and kind. There was, forby hersel, just four o' us. There was mysel, that's ane; and there was the twa Dobies, that's twa; and there was Johnny, man, that's three; tuts, but there was four o' us. There was Johnny, man, that's ane; and there was the twa Dobies, that's twa; and there was mysel, that's three,—but there *was* four o' us; weel, I'll begin wi' mysel this time. There was mysel, that's ane; and the twa Dobies, that's twa; and Johnny, man, that's three; preserve me, for I am clean stupid all thegither! There was Johnny, man, that's ane; and there was the twa Dobies, that's twa; and there was mysel, that's three,—and if I am no at mysel again. Weel, and I maun gie it up all thegither; but I am morally certain there was just four of us."

The young people were in such fits of laughter that they could give Peggy no assistance whatever in this mysterious calculation; and Peggy herself joined heartily in the laugh, only remarking that they might see now that sometimes she was no just sae clear as she used to be, but that ony way it was a most pleasant party, and that there *was just four o' them*.

They could have remained for ever talking with her, and, as Matilda observed, had received most useful instruction in arithmetic, a far better way of adding up than she had been taught; but there were other lessons to be attended to, and most unwillingly they bid good-bye to Peggy, and proceeded on their way home. Leila, however, observed that it would be almost as near to return by the village; she wished, so much, she said, to ask Dame Burton how Lizzy was going on, and it was so pleasant to see the little things running to meet them; besides, she added, as they had a half holiday, they would still be home in time—so to the village they went. By the time they reached Dame



Burton's cottage they had quite a little troop of rosy, laughing children following them, quite eager to be talked to and noticed; but Lizzy was not among them, nor did they see her with her mother on entering the house. Leila inquired for her, and hoped she had been going on well. Dame Burton shook her head. "Oh, Miss Howard," she said, "Lizzy gives me much vexation of spirit, and I don't know what course to take with that child. I have a kind neighbour, who did much for me in a long illness, and it's well my part to be kind to her now; she has an old mother, who is not able to get up very early, and at times, when this friend of mine has any work to do which takes her out of her house, I send in Lizzy to help the old woman on with her clothes, and to be company to her; I will not say that she is a very kindly old woman, she may give a sharp enough answer now and then to the children, but is that an excuse for what Lizzy did, and for the sight I saw?"

"But what did you see?" Matilda eagerly inquired. "You have not told us."

"What did I see, miss? I saw the poor old woman sitting shaking on her chair with indignation and rage, her flannel petticoat tied round her neck, she neither able to stir hand or foot, and Lizzy off to her play!"

They all felt this act to be of a most atrocious nature, but the picture of the old woman tied up, as it were, in a flannel bag was too much, and the difficulty of restraining their laughter was very great; Leila struggled hard for composure: "It was very dreadful," she said; "but where is Lizzy now?"

"She is not far off," Dame Burton answered, in a loud tone, as if she wished to be overheard by some one; "not far off, young ladies, and she is experiencing (as you shall see) a little of what she made other people suffer; but she is young, I tell her, and better able to bear it." She threw open the door of the adjoining room, and there sat little Lizzy, propped up on a high stool in the middle of the floor, her little flannel petticoat tied round her neck, and her little face no longer dimpled with its accustomed smiles, but swelled with weeping; her look of shame and helpless distress, when she saw them enter, was too much; Leila could not stand it, she covered her face with her hands.

Selina spoke aside for a few minutes to Dame Burton; "You will not forget to send her to Elmgrove," they heard her say.

"No, Miss Stanley; and I hope you may be able to make more impression on her than I can," was her answer. Selina, then turning round to where the little culprit sat, undid the string of the little flannel petticoat, took it off, wiped Lizzy's eyes gently with her pocket-handkerchief, and lifting her down from the high stool, led her to her mother. The poor child was weeping bitterly. She appeared most penitent, and as it seemed better that she should at that moment be left alone with her mother, the young people quitted the cottage.

In giving her old nurse an account of her day, which was Leila's general custom, she mentioned what had taken place with regard to Lizzy, and Amy, who was present, almost started off her chair with astonishment and indignation. "And is it possible," she said, "that she could treat an old woman in that way? Oh, how very dreadful!"

"Yes," Nurse answered, "you may well be surprised and shocked, Amy, for it would be long before you would act in such a manner. You have always had a becoming respect for your elders, and shown a quietness and discretion above your years. And now, Miss Leila, this should be an awful warning to you; you see to what the love of play may lead, and must understand now why I always tried to root the evil out of your heart, and to settle you down to your work with serious reflection; and you are far from what I could wish yet, you still give me many an anxious thought. There it was but the other day, when I gave you that collar to trim; any well brought up young lady would have taken an interest in having such a beautiful edging to sew on, and would have arranged it properly in quarters, and pinned it before her hand, but there were you rumpling it on as if it were a rag, putting all the fulness in the middle, not a thought of how you were to turn the corners. Did it ever strike you that *that* collar never could have been ironed? Oh, Miss Leila, try to think more deeply of those things, before it is too late."

"But, Nurse," Leila said, in a deprecating tone of voice, "though I am not very fond of work, I am sure I never would have tied you up in a flannel *bag!*"

Nurse drew up her little fat round figure in a dignified manner. "Look at me, Miss Leila, am I the sort of person to be tied up in a flannel *bag?*"

Leila thought it would be difficult.

Nurse continued,—"No, Miss Leila, I have always brought you up in proper habits of respect; but it was not of flannel bags we were talking, but of that want of serious reflection when you take a piece of work into your hands; there, about that *very* collar, you had been quiet for a time, and I thought had settled down to it, when you suddenly broke out with—'Oh, Nurse! look at those clouds; did you ever see any thing so beautiful? they are like magnificent mountains, bathed in golden light.' What sort of nonsense was that, Miss Leila, to be seeing mountains in the clouds, instead of the work that was before you; and do you remember when I made you turn your back to the window, and sit with your face opposite to me, how you kept tapping your foot on the ground with anger and indignation? but I am not wishing to vex you at this moment, for I am sure the awful lesson of this day will make a proper impression; so sit down and let me see how quickly and how nicely you will stitch round this pocket that I have cut out for you, for you know I have no opinion of the new fangled way of bringing up young ladies not to wear pockets, and with every thing belonging to them to be hunted for all over the house."

"Yes, Nurse," Leila answered, "give it me, and you shall see how nicely I will do it; but when I told Lydia Mildmay that to wear a pocket was highly respectable, she laughed at me very much."

"And did she really, Miss Leila? then I am sure she is a most improper and dangerous companion for you; and, indeed, I thought as much that day I saw her sailing about, sweeping all the carpets with those long flounces of hers. Now here is your work; sit down, and let me see how busy you can be."

Leila seated herself. After a few minutes' silence, she said, rather doubtfully,—"But, Nurse, would not bags be better?"

"Bags!" Nurse repeated in a displeased tone; "bags, Miss Leila, seem to run strangely in your head to-day. And why should bags be better?"

"Because," Leila answered, "long ago they made use of bags."

"*They?* of whom are you speaking. *Who* made use of bags?"

"The people of Nineveh. I saw them—they were little square bags; it was more than three thousand years ago."

Nurse looked up with a startled expression. "Saw the people of Nineveh! three thousand years ago! Oh, Miss Leila! speak to me again; what are you talking of? Do you feel any thing particular? what is the matter with you?"

Leila burst into a fit of laughter. "Why should I feel any thing particular because I saw the people of Nineveh and they had bags? I saw them on the bas reliefs."

"Bas leaf!" Nurse repeated, still more frightened. "Oh, Amy! she is not speaking English! What has come over the dear child?"

Leila struggled hard to regain her composure, for she saw her good old nurse was really getting seriously alarmed. "Nurse," she said, "don't be frightened; I know quite well what I am saying. I saw the figures of the people of Nineveh, carved on stones, at the British Museum. You know papa took me there, and he told me these stones had lain in the earth more than three thousand years. You know Nineveh was overthrown. Do you remember the prophecy in the Bible? it says, 'Nineveh is laid waste, who will bemoan her?' And it was laid waste—it was overthrown—they are digging it up again now."

"Well, Miss Leila, I may not be a good judge of such matters, but I think they had better let that alone, and not be bringing their evil deeds to light again. You know the Bible also says,—'Woe to the bloody city, it is full of lies and robbery;' and we are told to flee from it."

"Then I am afraid you will not like to go there and see those wonderful things, and I asked papa if you might take Amy there."

"No, Miss Leila, I would rather not; and I can't help thinking that the less she knows of the people of Nineveh the better; she can learn no good lesson from them."

"But, Nurse, there are a great many other things to be seen at the Museum besides—I am sure you would like to see the wild beasts and the birds. Oh! the birds are so beautiful; how Amy would admire the little humming-birds—they are scarcely bigger than the wild bees we had in the island; they have such lovely feathers, purple, and green, and scarlet, and all beautiful bright colours. Papa says that when they are flitting about amongst the flowers, they are quite splendid and dazzling to the eye; and they shoot those dear little birds with little guns loaded with water; the water does not injure their feathers by wounding them, it only frightens them, and then they fall down and die. There were no humming-birds in the island. I wish there had been—I would not have shot them, even with water, but I would have tried to catch them in some way without hurting them, and would have tamed them as I did my other birds; I do hope you will go to the Museum, Nurse, and take Amy, she will be so surprised, for I don't think there is a bird in the whole world that is not there; and I am sure you would like to see the owls, for you like wise birds, and they look so wise; there were large owls, and little owls, and every kind, and one little owl near the corner of the glass case had such a pretty face. Then there were beautiful pheasants—and the argus-pheasant with its thousand eyes; oh! you must go; Amy, would not you like it so much?"

"Yes, Miss Leila, I would like it; but a bird with a thousand eyes, I think it would frighten me."

"No, it would not," Leila answered, smiling; "for it has not really a thousand eyes, it has only spots on its feathers; but it is a poetical way of speaking that—"

Nurse looked very grave. "How often have I told you, Miss Leila, that I do not like a poetical way of speaking, and now you see the bad effects of it; from my experience, I knew that no bird had a thousand eyes, but Amy did not; you should speak to her in a way she can understand; but you do run on so. Is there no possibility of making you think of what you are about? I see clearly that pocket never will be finished."

Leila was silent for a moment, then jumping up from her seat, she held the pocket up in the air in a triumphant manner, exclaiming,—"Now, Nurse, look if I cannot both talk and stitch; see, it is quite finished, and beautifully done; and now I must go and sing to papa."

"She is a dear child," Nurse observed, as she looked up for a moment from her work and followed Leila's light steps with affectionate interest; "and she is far from being a bad needle-woman either, though I should like well to see her more steady, and taking a greater interest in it; but, Amy, though Miss Leila in most things sets you a most superior example, you must never talk as she does sometimes—you must never be what she calls poetical. I would rather that she were not so either; but that is a matter for her papa to decide, not me."

## CHAPTER XIV.

WEEKS and months glided on. Spring, with its soft, tender, green, and many blossoms, was spreading life and gladness over the earth, and Leila thought Woodlands a second Eden. The conservatory bloomed with plants of the richest fragrance, and the balcony was gay with flowers of the brightest hue; various beautiful creepers, with the sweet-scented honeysuckle, forming arches over head; and Leila herself looked as fresh and blooming as the flowers, and as joyful as the skylark, as it soared with its glad song into the blue vault of Heaven. She was never weary of admiring the beautiful scenery by which she was surrounded, for early habit had made the beauties of nature to her as a continual feast. Several of her birds were now in full song, and she spent many of her spare minutes in the conservatory. The precious seeds had come up all but one, and she had now three thriving plants of Clara's flower. Charles had not returned at Easter to mark their progress—he had gone into a distant country to visit an uncle, a brother of Mr. Herbert's, but by Midsummer he would surely visit home, and she hoped they would be in full flower by that time, which would be for him a still greater pleasure. Leila had, besides all this, other interests to occupy her. She frequently visited the school with her Aunt Stanley and her cousins, and assisted the younger girls in the preparation of their tasks, and she paid frequent visits to Peggy Dobie's cottage, and to the village, where she made herself acquainted with all the wishes and wants of its various inmates. The Saturdays were generally spent by Selina and Matilda at Woodlands, when, during part of the morning, they assisted Leila in giving instruction to many of the village children in church music, for though Selina's voice was not yet strong, her knowledge in music made her a most useful assistant. They also now took daily walks with Mrs. Roberts in the fields, and generally returned loaded with wild flowers. Leila had become most successful in drying flowers so as to preserve their bright colours. The field flowers, assisted by her papa, she arranged in books in botanical order; but with the flowers from the conservatory and the garden she often ornamented screens, producing a wonderfully fine effect, superior to any painting, fixing them on with gum, and grouping them together in a most beautiful manner. Matilda often tried to imitate Leila in this, but she did not succeed, her flowers always lost their bright tints, they grew white, or they grew black, but they never grew beautiful; the stalks never would bend gracefully, they would always stick straight up; the

gum would always go on in patches, never smoothly, and she complained that though she put on a great deal of gum, some of the leaves would not stick at all, so she generally ended by getting into a rage, and dashing her hair pencil all over the paper.

"Do tell me, Leila, how you manage so well," she said one morning, as she stood admiring a couple of fine screens which Leila had just finished for Mrs. Herbert. "Those different coloured geraniums seem to me to look brighter even than when they were in the conservatory; and how gracefully the stalks are bent, and the flowers hanging down so nicely, just as if they were still growing; and those leaves and ferns are of such a beautiful green, and look so well mixed with the bright colour of the flowers. My green leaves always turn a dull yellow, or brown, or something abominable; and as to the blue convolvulus, that provokes me more than any thing. Look at yours, they are as bright as when they grew in the garden, and when I try to dry them, the colour goes away altogether, and they get to be a dirty white. I cannot get any thing to do well but yellow buttercups, and that is such a common flower. All this provokes me so, I have no patience for it. No one will ever give me a sovereign for the poor,<sup>[B]</sup> for a couple of screens, as they did to you, and I wish so much that they would."

[B] A fact.

"But you know," Leila answered, "that was only because it was a sale of ladies' work for the poor. My screens were not worth that."

"I don't know; they were most beautiful, and I heard every one saying so, for I stood near the counter where they were that I might hear them praised; and when that gentleman with the nice face took them up and the lady told them they were done by a little girl, he said that little girl deserved to be encouraged, and he paid down the sovereign in a minute. Oh! I was so glad; but though I cannot earn a sovereign, I might earn something if you would only tell me what I must do to dry them as you do."

"Yes, I will tell you every thing I can; but I think the great matter is being very patient."

"But, Cousin Leila, I am sure you are not very patient."

"Yes, I know that; papa often says I am too impetuous."

"Well," Matilda observed, "and does not that just mean that you have no patience?"

Leila coloured. "I suppose it does," she said; "but in some things I have patience, I am always very patient about flowers; to be sure, that is not wonderful, for in the island they were like friends to me. I used to visit them two or three times in the day to see how they were getting on, and to talk to them, as if they were alive, and I often knew the hour of the day by their opening and shutting."

"And do any of the flowers here open and shut at certain hours?" Matilda inquired.

"Yes, some of them do; but I don't know the flowers here so well; one kind of evening primrose opens its flowers every day a quarter of an hour before sunset; and the chickweed, which you see me so often gathering for my birds, seems to me to open both leaves and flowers every morning at nine o'clock, and closes its flowers again for some time at twelve, and will not open them at all if it rains; then in the evening it always seems to be making itself comfortable for the night, for the leaves all down the stalk shut up to cover the young shoots, just as if it were putting a great many night-caps on them to keep them warm."

"How very curious," Matilda said; "but, Leila, we are forgetting that you were to tell me more about drying flowers. I know I need never try to gain a sovereign like you; but if I could even gain half-a-crown or even a shilling sometimes, it would be such a comfort, for I am always getting into such scrapes about my money for the poor; somehow it always melts away; both you and Selina contrive to save a little every week."

"But I have more pocket-money than you have."

"Yes, you have; but still I know I ought to save something, and often I cannot; it is all the fault of those trumpery shops. When I go to Richmond there are so many pretty things which I wish for; and then I am so often hungry and must have some buns, you know,—how do you manage so well?"

"I don't manage very well—I often buy buns also; but when I wish for pretty things which cost much, I remember that Nurse says 'I should turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,' and then I try not to look at them, but very often I do. You know the other day when I saw that beautiful basket I did not turn away. I looked at it so long, and then I took it in my hand and turned it round and round, and thought it so beautiful, that I could not resist buying it. And now I don't like it at all; for it cost so much that I shall not be able to save any of my pocket-money this week."

"Well, that was wrong, to be sure, and just what I should have done myself; but don't be melancholy about it now, for you have always money beforehand, so it does not much signify for one week; so do tell me how I am to earn half-a-crown, and how I am to dry flowers in a most beautiful manner; you say patience is the chief thing. Will patience make them keep their colour? now do tell me that."

"Yes," Leila answered, "it will; and I will tell you how. Very often when it clears up after rain, and the flowers look very bright, you wish to gather them for drying—I always tell you that it is a bad time, but still you often try to do it—and they get quite dim and discoloured, and you are obliged to throw them away. Now when I wish to dry them, I wait till it has been quite fair for several days, and when it is bright and sunny, and there is no damp in the air, I gather the flowers. I always choose those that are very bright and fully blown, but before they have begun to fade in the slightest degree. If they have a decayed speck no bigger than the head of a pin, do not gather them, for they will not be bright when dried."

"And what more do you do?"

"I put them between folds of close smooth writing-paper, never into blotting-paper."

"But Lydia told me it should be blotting-paper."

"No, I have tried that; but the blotting-paper seems to suck the colour out of them. Well, I place those papers between the leaves of a book, and tie it tight up with a ribbon, and put it under a weight; if it is a very tender flower, such as the blue convolvulus, for instance, then you must not put a very heavy weight, the weight must be in proportion to the tenderness of the flower. Next day I change the papers that there may be no damp about them, for nothing spoils their colour so much as damp. Now all this, you see, takes patience; for sometimes I have to change the papers more than once."

"Yes," Matilda observed, "and such patience, that I am sure I shall never be able to do it. And this is all then?"

"No; in putting the flowers into dry bits of paper you must do it very gently, that they may lie quite smooth; for much of their beauty depends on their looking smooth, and not shrivelled up in any way; and I forgot to tell you that sometimes before putting them in at all, I bend the stalks a little to make them lie gracefully. The stalks of the geraniums are so stiff and straight, that I am obliged to take off the flower-heads, and put them in papers by themselves, and then I flatten the stalks and bend them a little before I begin to dry them. The ferns, which you like so much, grow so gracefully, that I seldom have to bend them at all, but just to lay them on paper as they grow. The young ferns of a bright tender green do best: indeed, all green leaves should be dried when they first come out, before they have got to be a deep colour, for green is a very difficult colour to dry well; most yellow flowers do very well, the yellow crocus keeps very bright; indeed, some scarlet and rose-coloured geraniums dry beautifully, and other scarlets won't dry at all,—you must just get acquainted with those that do well, and with those that don't."

Matilda groaned. "My hopes are quite dying away; half-a-crown!—I don't think I shall be able to earn sixpence even;—but it is sunny and bright now, we might go into the garden, and you could gather some of the flowers which do best, and show me how you lay them on the paper—I think I have seen you working away with a long pin; but if I were to take a pin in my hand, I should be sure to run it through the flowers if they would not lie the right way, for I should be so provoked."

"Well, that is why I say that the chief thing is patience; you would quite spoil the flower if you even scratched it with the pin. I take the pin to help me to guide the leaves to lie right; for sometimes when I lay down the branch on the paper, all the leaves get crowded together, and I have to separate them, and sometimes to pluck off one or two."

"It is most horribly difficult, I can see that; however, let us go into the garden; perhaps, if I see you do it, I might still try."

"But, Matilda, it won't do to gather flowers to dry to-day; you forget that it rained in the night, and that this morning even there was a slight shower."

Matilda shrugged her shoulders. "What a business! better give it up altogether, and especially if I am to bear in mind every time it rains. When the rain is over, I am too glad to forget it,—who ever thinks of rain when the sun is shining? not I—I always feel sure it is never to rain again; and so all my little plans for goodness must be given up, and I must just go on buying bunnis till I am older, and then perhaps I shall not be so hungry, and shall not care for them so much."

Leila smiled but shook her head. "Now don't talk in that way, Matilda, for you know very well it is not right, and you do not mean to go on spending all your money on bunnis; you could not be happy if you did; you only say so to make me laugh; but come, let us go into the garden, and I can show you what flowers do best for drying, and then when it is fine we can gather them, and I will help you to put them in paper. I am sure *you* also could make money by it."

"Oh, you are a darling!" Matilda exclaimed; "and again my hopes are rising, *rising*—sixpence—a shilling—half-a-crown. Oh! there will be no counting the money I shall make. I shall have quite too much for the poor, and be able to treat you all with bunnis into the bargain; now that is what I call generous."

They found Mrs. Roberts and Alfred in the garden, Alfred flying at full speed as if in pursuit of something. "Don't stop me, Matilda, don't. Now it is going to settle on that rosebush—no, it is not—yes, it is hovering—now don't move, don't make a noise; now I have him;"—and he held up a large dragon-fly between his fingers.

Matilda screamed. "Oh! let him go, Alfred—do let him go—he will sting you; only see how he is putting out that long frightful sting. I see his sting quite plain."

"No, Matilda, you need not be afraid, he cannot hurt me, for he has no sting. Mrs. Roberts told me that was a vulgar error."

"Did you tell Alfred that?" Matilda inquired, turning to Mrs. Roberts; "but how can that be when I see it? and he is pushing it out every moment in a most frightful manner; only look, Mrs. Roberts."

"Yes, I see what you mean, Matilda; but that movement in its body is only the effort the poor dragon-fly is making to escape; it is a perfectly harmless insect, for it has no instrument with which it can sting."

"Then if you are quite sure of that," Matilda said, eagerly, "I should like to look at him nearer. Stop, Alfred, and let me see. Oh! what a beautiful creature he is, and with four such lovely wings; when the sun shines upon them they seem to change colour like mother-of-pearl. Now that I know he has no sting I think him a perfect beauty, and before I used to run away from a dragon-fly as if it had been a wild beast; and they do look rather fierce though they are beautiful, for they have such a way of darting down so suddenly. Sometimes I have watched them flying across the pond at the bottom of the garden, and they dart down so low, they seem as if they were dropping into the water."

"Yes," Mrs. Roberts observed, "that is because they chiefly live upon water insects; with those large eyes they can discern their prey at a great distance, and then dart down upon it; but it is a bold insect and a voracious one also, and I have seen it sometimes attack a butterfly fully as large as itself and tear it to pieces. It lives, however, chiefly on small water insects, and seizes upon them as they skim along the surface of the water; but another reason why one so often sees dragon-flies in the neighbourhood of ponds and ditches is, that the dragon-fly itself passes its young state in the water, and those small ones which you have often seen near ponds are those which have just left their former state and become winged insects."

"Yes, I know all about that," Alfred said; "Mrs. Roberts told me about the larva and about the pupa skin, like a little box, that they crawl out of, and then fly off; it was very interesting. Now I will let this one fly away, and show you what she has made for me, I hid it behind that big flower-pot till I required it again; see, it is a little net of coarse muslin, sewed round this circle of wire, and I fixed the pole to it myself; it is for fishing in the pond for larva. Mrs. Roberts, might we go now and try for some, and then you could tell Cousin Leila and Matilda more about it?"



LEILA AT HOME, Page 202.

Mrs. Roberts gave a willing assent, and to the pond they all proceeded.

"Now, Alfred," Matilda said, "do give me the net; I daresay you have had it for a long time to-day, and I should like so much to fish for larva, for I want so much to know what larva is."

Alfred looked a little disappointed, but yielded up the net, saying only, "Now, Matilda, do take care of it, please, for it will be easily broken."

"Never fear, little man, you are so easily frightened; do you think I don't know how to take care of a fishing-net? Now stand aside a little and you shall see." She plunged it vigorously into the pond, the net filled with mud, she could scarcely draw it out again; little Alfred became very red, and was near getting into a passion, but a look from Mrs. Roberts, as she pronounced his name, restrained him; he took the net from Matilda, and having washed it out carefully, put it into Leila's hands, saying, "Now it is your turn, Cousin Leila, to try for larva."

Leila did try, but she was not much more successful than Matilda, the net still came up half filled with mud, for she plunged it down too hastily; besides, the water had been much disturbed.

Matilda clapped her hands. "How glad I am!" she exclaimed.

Mrs. Roberts looked towards her; but a look, however impressive, was seldom sufficient for Matilda.

"Yes," she continued, "I am glad; for it is a comfort to me that though Cousin Leila is so patient about flowers, she is not in the least patient about larva."

Leila coloured, but said nothing.

Matilda looked at her for a moment, then throwing her arms round her neck, she said,—“Oh! I am a wretch to vex you, and just at the very moment too when you have been so kind to me about the flowers; but kiss me, Leila, and don't let us think any more about it; there, Alfred, do you wash out the net again, and dip it in the right way, and let us see the larva and talk about it.”

Alfred obeyed, and having gone to the other side of the pond where the water had not been disturbed, he dipped the net very gently in, and soon brought up a large muddy-looking insect.

Mrs. Roberts looked at it attentively. "You have been in good luck, Alfred," she said, "for you have got the larva of the great dragon-fly, the very same species you caught in the garden. This species is fond of concealing itself in the mud, and lies in wait there till it pounces on any insect that comes in its way."

"But it seems to move so slowly," Matilda observed, "that I should think that if the other insects were the least bit clever, they could easily get out of its way. They must stand still, silly things, to be devoured."

"No, Matilda, you are deciding too hastily. The poor insects are in much greater danger than you are aware of. This slow-looking gentleman has a most curious apparatus at his command that you are not yet acquainted with. He has very large jaws which are covered with a kind of mask. Look at this horny substance which covers its face."

"So much the better that it does cover its face," Matilda said; "for I am sure it must be a frightfully ugly one. But what more does it do?"

"When it pleases it can let down this mask, which has claws at the end, similar, though on so small a scale, to the claws of a lobster. When it sees its prey within reach, it darts out these claws, and in a moment conveys the poor insect to its mouth. Then it has a way of bringing the insects nearer to itself. Do you see those five sharp little points at the tail? it has the power of drawing in and pushing out the water by opening and shutting them; this produces a slight current in the water, which floats the small insects within its reach."

"It is a cunning, cruel wretch," Matilda said, "and I don't understand how such a horrid creature as that can ever become that beautiful harmless dragon-fly; but did you ever see it in its pupa state? does it begin to grow good then?"

"Why, as to that, Matilda, it moves and eats in its pupa state just as it does now. I am afraid you would not think there was much improvement; but it is from instinct, not cruelty, that it makes use of those means to procure food. You forget that we too take the life of many animals to procure our food, and often, I am afraid, in an unjustifiably cruel manner. But you ask me if I have ever seen the dragon-fly in its pupa state. I did once, and it was very curious indeed."

"Do tell us about it; how I wish I could see it too. I hope it was not so ugly as this larva creature."

"It certainly was more curious than beautiful; it was attached to the branch of a shrub, and at first it seemed to

me as an insect with two bodies, with the head and eyes of a dragon-fly."

"What a monster," Matilda exclaimed, "worse even than the larva."

"No; on looking at it more attentively, I saw it was on the point of escaping from its pupa case, so I sat down and watched it for some time. Its wings were folded up on its back in a wonderfully small space. At first they looked quite short, but as it cleared itself from its pupa skin, the wings gradually expanded; it seemed, however, too weak to fly. It slowly crawled to another branch of the shrub, and there remained, as if resting from its labours."

"And did you not see it fly?"

"No; I was obliged soon after to leave the garden, and when I returned it was gone, probably enjoying in the air its new state of existence. The pupa case alone remained, and was not the least broken or injured by the dragon-fly having made its escape. It looked quite transparent; on trying to remove it, I found it was attached to the branch by two little claws which projected from that part of the case which covered each leg."

"Oh, how beautiful, and how wonderful!" Leila exclaimed, her whole countenance beaming with intelligence.

Matilda, while Mrs. Roberts was giving them this account, had looked at Leila once or twice with some anxiety; their eyes now met; Leila's sunny smile quite reassured Matilda, and she whispered in her ear, "You dear one, you are more beautiful to me than a hundred dragon-flies; and I am so glad that you have not wings, and that you cannot fly away from me."

"Now, Alfred," Mrs. Roberts said, "put by your net carefully."

"May I not fish just once more, and try for the larva of the gnats and caddis worms which you promised to tell me about?"

"No, not to-day; at another time you shall do so."

Mrs. Roberts took Alfred by the hand and turned towards the house, while Leila and Matilda took their way to the flower beds; Matilda with most sanguine anticipations of the money she was about to make.

## CHAPTER XV.

ON the following Saturday, Nurse, having some commissions to execute in Richmond, and the weather being uncommonly fine, Leila and her cousins were allowed to accompany her. Matilda had for some days before been pursuing most actively her new method of drying flowers, and had already tied up and placed in all sorts of odd corners half the books in her possession filled with them; and as they had all received that morning their weekly allowance of pocket-money, she felt quite elated, not only by the riches of which she was in actual possession, but by the countless sums she now felt sure of acquiring.

In this dangerous state of mind poor Matilda was ill prepared for the trial which awaited her, for some of Nurse's commissions were to be executed in the very shop which had so often proved a scene of temptation to her. She entered it with many good resolutions. Reels of cotton were wanted by the whole party, and reels of cotton *only* Matilda was determined to buy. Leila and Selina each selected a pretty little box filled with them; but Matilda's eyes wandered all over the counter. Alas! that so many bright little eyes should so often wander over forbidden ground. A most tempting, and a much more beautiful box than those selected stood open before Matilda; in addition to reels of cotton it had also scissors and a thimble. It was not at all too large, and it was not at all dear; indeed, she thought it most wonderfully cheap, and she opened and shut it again several times in great admiration.

Selina whispered, "You had better put it away, Matilda; you know it is only reels of cotton you require."

"No, Selina," she said, "you are quite mistaken; you forget that I could not find my thimble this morning; I looked every where for it, and lost so much of my time; and see only how I have hurt my finger with sewing without one, it is quite red; you would not wish me to do that again, I am sure; so I must buy a thimble, and it is only the scissors in addition, you know."

"But, Matilda, your thimble is only mislaid; it will be found I am sure. I saw it on your finger yesterday."

"But you did not see it to-day, Selina, and I tell you it is quite lost; I looked a long time for it."

"But do consider, Matilda," Selina said, very gently; "to buy this work-box will require almost all the money you have. Only twopence will remain."

Matilda coloured. Only twopence. She seemed to hesitate, and pushed the box a little way from her; but suddenly brightening up, and drawing it towards her again, she said, "Selina, you quite forget the money I am now quite sure of making, for I dare say I have now near a hundred flowers, which I know quite well will be beautiful."

"But you cannot be sure, Matilda, that you will be able to make money in that way."

"And why should I not be sure? You are so prudent, Selina, that it just provokes me. Why should I not be able to make money as well as Leila, if my flowers are beautiful? I am sure I have taken trouble enough with them, and patience too; you might praise me, I think, a little for that, instead of wishing to take all my pleasures from me in this way; and it is such a useful thing to buy, and when I tell you too that I have lost my thimble; but don't say any more about it, for I am determined to buy it. It is not as if I were buying a foolish thing; this box will be most useful to me." She took it up as she spoke, and moved to another corner of the shop.

The work-box was soon carefully wrapped up in paper and paid for, and they all proceeded on their way. Having executed several other commissions, Nurse proposed that they should rest for a little in a baker's shop, where each might have a bunn, as the hour of luncheon would have passed before they could return home. This they all thought an excellent plan.

They were soon seated and enjoying their bunn, and Matilda had just declared that she meant to be prudent now, and though she was very hungry indeed, she would only allow herself one bunn, and would keep the other penny in case of accidents, when a little girl, carrying a basket tied over with a napkin, entered the shop. She looked very pale and thin, and her clothes, though neither dirty nor ragged, were scanty and much patched. As the baker was at the moment serving a customer, she rested the basket on the ground as if much fatigued, and stood silently waiting by the counter. A broken piece of roll lay upon it. She gathered up a few stray crumbs, which she put in her mouth, and they saw her then stretch out her thin little hand as if to take the roll also, but she did *not*; on the contrary, she pushed it further from her and turned away. The baker seemed to have perceived the action, for he



said, pushing it towards her, "You may have that piece of roll if you are hungry."

The child's eyes glistened, she seized the roll and began eagerly to eat it; suddenly she stopped, and looked anxiously at what remained, and put it in her pocket. By this time Leila's attention was much excited. The child, pointing to the basket, spoke aside to the baker, who was now disengaged, but in so low a tone she could not make out what she said. The man shook his head as he replied, though also in a low tone, as if unwilling to be overheard by them, "No, no, we never buy cats; take it away; it is out of the question."

The child spoke again, and with a look of much entreaty; Leila thought she could distinguish the words, *loaf*—starving.

"Well," the man said, "I don't know as to a loaf; let me see, its skin might be worth that;" and he put out his hand as if to take the basket.

The child shuddered violently, and snatching it hastily up, she proceeded towards the door. She stopped, hesitated, and turning back, she pushed the basket towards him, saying in an excited voice, "Take it out, don't let me see it; its legs are tied, give me the loaf." She turned from him, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

The young people all rose, and in a moment were around her. Matilda pushed aside the napkin which covered the basket, and there lay a beautiful large cat, with its legs tied together in a most pitiable manner.

"Oh, how cruel," Leila exclaimed, "to tie its legs!—and why, little girl, did you wish to sell your cat?—who did you say was starving?"

The child made no answer; she was sobbing violently.

"Poor little girl," Leila said, in her soothing, gentle voice, "compose yourself! Don't cry; we are not angry with you; we are sure you have done nothing wrong—do speak to us;—who did you say was starving?"

"My mother and all of us," she gasped out; "we have not a morsel of food in the house; we have had no breakfast; oh, give me the loaf, and let me go home!"

Leila looked at her with a distressed and agitated countenance; "I have frightened her," she said; "I spoke harshly to her. What can we do for her, Selina?—do tell me!"

They spoke together aside for a few minutes. "Yes," Leila continued, turning towards the little girl again, "I am sure that is the best thing to be done; Nurse always says tea is so refreshing. Don't cry, little girl, pray don't!—your cat is not to be sold, and your mother and all of you are to have a nice breakfast; we are going to buy tea, and sugar, and butter, and everything that is good; and the baker will give us two large loaves; we have plenty of money to pay for every thing."

While this conversation was going on, Matilda had stood beside the little girl, feeding her with what remained of her own bunn; stuffing piece after piece into her mouth, and almost choking her.

"And this is all I can do," she said; "and I cannot help you, Leila and Selina, in buying butter, and tea, and sugar; I have nothing left but this abominable penny;"—and she threw it on the ground in uncontrolled distress—"oh, what a hard-hearted, extravagant, sinful, wretched, horrid girl I have been!"

Leila lifted the poor rejected penny from the ground, and whispered in her ear, "Don't be in such a state, Matilda; try to bear it; you know I did just the same about the basket. We have both been very wrong, but we can both repent. You know that is the right thing to do. And this penny can still do a little good; take it, Matilda; you might buy a bunn with it for the mother; I am sure she would like a bunn better than the bread."

But Matilda was not to be comforted; she bought the bunn, and wrapped it carefully up in paper; but as she got into the street, she entreated Nurse to go back with her to the shop where she had purchased the work-box. She wished, she said, to ask the man to take it again, and give her back the money. Nurse thought it very doubtful that this would be agreed to; but she yielded to Matilda's entreaties, and they went back to the shop. The master was very civil; he said they never took back goods that had been paid for, they were obliged to make a rule not to do so; he seemed, however, in this instance, to be inclined to yield, and Matilda's eyes sparkled with joy, when he took the work-box from her hand, and undid the paper; but on seeing it he shook his head—"I was anxious to oblige you, young lady," he said, "but in this case it is impossible—this work-box has been injured, it has got a fall."

"Yes, sir," Nurse answered, (for poor Matilda was now unable to speak,) "it did get a fall; I told Miss Matilda she had better not undo the paper in the street, but we cannot expect young people to be wise all at once; but I am quite sure of one thing, she did not know it had been injured, for we both examined it, and were not aware it had been scratched at all."

"No, of course not; no need of an apology, madam;" and as he spoke, he carefully wrapped the unfortunate box up in a fresh piece of paper, and, with a low bow, put it into Matilda's hands.

Poor Matilda, she could scarcely articulate, as turning from the shop she said,—“And it was my own fault, I would take it out of the paper; oh, what a day of misfortunes, surely no one was ever so unfortunate as I am!”

Leila whispered, "You forget, Matilda, about Rosamond and the purple jar."

"Oh, but that was not half so bad, don't say it was, Cousin Leila; she had only holes in her shoes to vex her; she had not a whole houseful of starving people—no, no,—no one was ever so unfortunate as I am; don't try to comfort me, it makes me much worse."

The scene which presented itself on entering the house to which the little girl conducted them, was certainly not calculated to lessen her sorrow. All within the house bore the marks of extreme poverty. A pale, emaciated woman was seated on a low stool, endeavouring to lull to sleep a sickly-looking infant; a girl, apparently some years older than the child who accompanied them, sat on the side of a miserable-looking bed, (the only one the room contained,) knitting busily: her features were pretty, but she kept her eyes cast down; and though she seemed to listen eagerly to what was said, she took no further notice of their entrance. The woman had risen, and was endeavouring to silence three clamorous little urchins, who all ran towards the door when it opened, loudly exclaiming, "Why did you take away Tiny—what have you done with her?—have you brought no bread as you promised? we have had no breakfast yet!" They shrank back on seeing the strangers.

Nurse gave a glance around the room; its contents were not numerous. A small tea-kettle stood by the almost empty grate, in which a few sparks of fire still lingered. She went out, taking the eldest of the little boys with her, and soon returned with a supply of wood. A fire was kindled, and in a wonderfully short space of time, (for Leila and her cousins assisted,) a few cups and bowls were collected together, and the children were all assembled round a

small table, devouring bread and butter as fast as it could be prepared for them, and anticipating the delight of having warm tea. The eldest girl was also seated at the table, but still kept her eyes cast down. The mother, observing the inquiring glances which were cast towards her, explained that she was blind; but she added, "My poor Susan is of the greatest assistance to me; ever since her father's death, she has worked late and early; her knitting has been our chief support, and when I can get a day's work at a time, she keeps the poor baby: but she is sorely changed, her health is suffering; she is not like the same girl she was when times were better with us, for we were well to do in the world, till the fever came amongst us, and he that was always help and comfort to us all, was taken away."

"And was poor Susan always blind?" Leila inquired.

"No, my young lady; your own eyes were not brighter than hers were for the first seven years of her life; but she took the small-pox—for, alas! I had neglected to have her vaccinated—indeed I had a prejudice against it, and many and many a bitter thought that prejudice has cost me."

The tears were running down poor Susan's face, as her mother gave this recital. They all looked at her with much interest; suddenly their attention was arrested by one of the little boys sliding down from his stool, and exclaiming, as he ran round the table and took the hand of each of them in succession, "Thank you, good ladies, for our nice breakfast;"—but as he approached Matilda, she pushed him from her—"O no, no," she said, "do not thank me; I can bear it no longer!"—and she ran out of the room. Selina followed her.

In a few minutes they both returned, Matilda looking quite composed, though sorrowful: she went up to the blind girl, and, in a low voice, tried to enter into conversation with her; but it was the greatest possible relief to Matilda, when, soon after, Nurse said it was time to return home; assuring the poor woman, at the same time, she would speak to her master about her, and she was sure he would give her some assistance.

On entering the house, on their return, Matilda followed Leila to her room. "Leila," she said, "you must keep this work-box for me, and put it out of my sight, for I cannot bear to look at it. This has been a sad day for me; I don't think I ever was so unhappy before, as when I saw that blind girl knitting so fast with her poor thin fingers, and looking so starved: and when I thought I had given all my money for this work-box, and bought it though Selina so often told me not to do it, and that I would repent—O I am a monster!—don't you think so, Leila?"

"No, Matilda; don't say so; a monster is a wild beast—you are not the least like one—and you are repenting; you cannot do more now than that, and you should be thankful you are not a wild beast, for then you could not repent."

"And then to eat that bunn in such good spirits, what do you say to that?"

"But you did not eat in very good spirits; you were sorrowful before the end, and gave half away."

"Yes, half; but what is that, and a whole houseful of people starving—six children and a mother, you know. O don't try to comfort me, it makes me much worse: I would rather you had said I had been as bad as possible."

"No, Matilda, I cannot say that, though you have been very wrong; but how can I blame you even for that, when I was as bad? You are forgetting about my buying this basket," and she pointed to a small table on which the basket was placed; "a little girl might have come with a cat to sell, and then it would have been just the same thing."

"No, not the same thing; for you had more money which you had saved, so you could spare it;—but I must say one thing, Cousin Leila, I do wonder how you can put this basket on the table before your very eyes; I can't bear even to look at this box, I am so sorry; and you said we had both done wrong, and should both repent. I don't think this looks very like repenting."

Leila coloured, and the tears came into her eyes as she said in a very low voice, "I did it to make me repent."

"To make you repent, I don't understand what you mean; you liked the basket, I suppose?"

"No, I did not; I could not bear it; I felt just the same as you did; and at first I hid it in the corner behind that high chair; but then I thought it would be my punishment if I saw it always before me, and that it would keep me in mind not to buy useless things again."

"And I have been thinking you wrong," Matilda exclaimed, "when all the time you were most excellent; oh, Leila, I never can be like you—no, not a hope of it; I do believe I am turning out quite worthless;—first, I would spend all my money for my own pleasure; then I would open the parcel, and let it fall; and after all this, I tried to think you as bad as I am; but I know what you are thinking now, and I can at least do that—you are thinking that I should take home this work-box, and put it on a table before my eyes; and I *will* do it." She tore the paper from the work-box as she spoke, and looked at it steadily. "O yes, abominable box," she said, "I just hate you!—but no, it is not the work-box that is wrong,"—and she shook her head;—"but we won't talk any more about it now; let us go into the conservatory, and see the dear little birds, they are singing so cheerily, and they don't know any thing about repentance, or what I have been doing."

## CHAPTER XVI.

MANY weeks now passed on tranquilly and without any marked event. The poor widow Barlow and her family had been frequently visited. Mr. Howard had been liberal in rendering her assistance, and Leila and her cousins had employed many of their leisure hours in working for the children, who were now comfortably clothed, and the elder ones put to school. Matilda had most cheerfully contributed her share, both in money and in work, and Mrs. Roberts gave a favourable report of her general improvement; her constant association with Selina and Leila was certainly producing a favourable effect on her character, but she was still easily misled by bad example, and often unprepared to meet the hour of trial; present gratification was generally yielded to, and though in most cases deep repentance followed, her feelings were as yet stronger than her principles, and the many good resolutions made in the hour of sorrow too often gave way before fresh temptation.

It was now nearly Midsummer; the precious seeds had not only sprung up into three healthy plants, but each plant presented flower-buds of promising appearance. The old gardener, however, would not hear of their being transplanted into separate pots till the autumn, assuring Leila that were he to do so sooner it would prevent the flower-buds from opening, and in every way retard the growth of the plant. This was a disappointment; but she consoled herself by having the flower-pot removed into her own room and placed on a flower-stand before the window, that she might watch the opening of the blossoms, having resolved to gather the first-blown flower for Mrs.



Herbert.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, with Selina and Matilda, were now passing a few days at Woodlands, and Leila had obtained permission from her papa to invite Lydia Mildmay to spend the following day with them, as it was Matilda's birthday, and she knew it would give her pleasure.

A brilliant sun awoke the sisters at an early hour, yet they found that Leila must have already visited them, for their pretty white bed was strewn with fresh flowers. The dew of the morning was still upon them, and Matilda thought no flowers before had ever smelt so sweet; she sprang up to rush into Leila's room to thank her, when her steps were arrested by seeing a little table placed by her bed-side, over which a covering of embroidered muslin was thrown.

"This is Cousin Leila again," she exclaimed, as she hastily lifted the white drapery, which proved to be an embroidered apron, worked by Leila for this happy occasion. On the table was placed a pretty little writing-desk, a present from her papa and mamma, a case in mother-of-pearl, with pens, pencil, sealing-wax, &c., from her Uncle Herbert, and a beautiful purse worked by Selina. Matilda was in ecstasies; how she got dressed she never very well knew; she had no distinct remembrance but of being half smothered with heat from being closely wrapped up in a shawl and carried back to her room by Nurse, who looked unutterable things. How she longed for twelve o'clock, the hour at which her friend was to arrive; for to show all those beauties to Lydia Mildmay would be such a renewal of her pleasure!

Twelve o'clock came at last; but Matilda was disappointed when Lydia saw her pretty bed, (for Matilda had carefully preserved the flowers upon it,) she only shrugged her shoulders, exclaiming, "How vastly poetical we are." And though she said all that was civil when she saw the presents, her admiration fell far short of what had been expected; and all, that but the moment before had appeared so beautiful in Matilda's eyes, fell considerably in her estimation, when Lydia, with an affected air of indifference, observed, "This seems a day for showing presents, so perhaps you would like to see a little trifle which my godmother presented to me some little time ago; at first I thought it rather pretty, though now I don't think much of it;" and she took from her reticule a beautiful little *etui* of the most finished workmanship. It was a walnut-shell, bound and lined with gold, containing scissors, bodkin, and thimble, with small tablets of mother-of-pearl, and a gold pencil-case with an amethyst top. Matilda gazed in speechless admiration. If Lydia's intention was to mortify her, she might have been satisfied with the look with which Matilda now contemplated all that had before given her so much pleasure; but after a little time she rallied again, and whispering to Leila that if her presents were not quite so beautiful, they were at least far more useful, she quite brightened up, and proposed that they should go into the conservatory to visit the parrots, and then into the garden.

The day seemed to pass very pleasantly to all; for though Lydia and Matilda were always going off by themselves, the hours never seemed long when Selina and Leila were together. Immediately after dinner the carriage was sent for. Lydia, to convey her home, as there was a large dinner party, and her mamma wished her to be present in the drawing-room. Matilda seemed quite unhappy in parting with her; indeed, having this intelligence communicated to her just as they were sitting down to dinner seemed quite to upset her. She held her hand at parting, and looked anxiously up in her face, then followed her a few steps as she was leaving the room, and for some minutes they whispered together. When Matilda returned, Leila observed that her eyes were full of tears. She went up to her, and took her kindly by the hand, but Matilda hastily pushed her away, and ran out of the room.

"What can be the matter with Matilda?" Leila inquired; "did you observe, Selina, she appeared quite angry with me? Do you think it is only that she is sorry Lydia has gone away, or have I done any thing to offend her? Should I go and ask her, do you think?"

"No, Leila, I think you had better not. You have done nothing to make her angry. I am sure it is not that. Matilda is never the better of being alone with Lydia Mildmay; I am quite sorry now we left them so much together; but I so dislike appearing to watch them; I fear something has happened, for I know the expression of Matilda's face so well—it was not only at the moment of parting she was so much upset. Did you not observe her at dinner?"

"No, I did not look at her much, but I think she was in good spirits then; I remember now she laughed two or three times."

"Yes, she tried to laugh; but she looked very unhappy; and it was only when she saw me looking at her that she laughed. At one time she kept crumbling all her bread down on the carpet, as if she did not know what she was about, and once or twice she could scarcely swallow. Then mamma said something to her, and she grew very red, and seemed to wish to hide her hands under the table."

"O I can tell you what made her grow red then. I heard Aunt Stanley tell her that she must have forgotten to wash her hands before dinner; and, to be sure, her nails were quite as black as if she had been grubbing in the earth like little Alfred."

Selina shook her head. "I don't understand it," she said; "but I fear Matilda has done something wrong."

"Then I am sure it must be Lydia's fault if she has," Leila said eagerly: "for Mrs. Roberts says she improved so much of late. I am so sorry I invited Lydia, and papa advised me not; he said he thought we three would be quite happy together. I wish he had said steadily, 'No, Leila, I don't wish it;' but he very seldom now tells me I am not to do a thing, as he used to do in the island; he says now that I am older I should learn to govern myself, and that in most cases he wishes only to advise. So it is my fault also if Matilda has done wrong, for I invited Lydia."

"But, Leila, we must not blame Lydia without knowing. How can we but—" She was interrupted by Matilda looking into the room, she drew hastily back, but on Selina calling to her, she advanced a few steps, hesitated, and looking anxiously in Leila's face for a moment, again left the room. They both observed that her eyes were swollen with weeping, and Selina, now seriously alarmed, said she must go into the drawing-room, and find out if her mamma was aware if any thing was wrong. She thought now she should speak to her mamma, and she would come up into Leila's room and tell her what she had heard.

Selina had not been in the drawing-room many minutes when the door opened, and Leila darted in, exclaiming, "Oh! Selina, my flowers, my precious flowers! Clara's flowers are dying."

They all followed her into her room—every thing seemed in perfect order, and the flower-pot stood exactly where Leila had placed it; but two of the plants seemed withered, and when Mrs. Stanley touched them they fell from her hand on the carpet, they evidently had been broken off and carefully stuck into the earth again.

"Who can have done this?" Mrs. Stanley exclaimed, and her eyes fell upon Selina, who had become very pale.

"Selina," she said, "do you know any thing of this?"

"No, mamma, I do not."

"But I see you suspect," Mrs. Stanley said. "Where is Matilda?"

At that moment Amy entered the room, but seeing it occupied was retreating again, when Mrs. Stanley called to her. "Amy," she said, "come here. Do you know any thing of this? did you overturn that flower-pot?"

"Miss Leila's favourite flowers! O no, no, I did not. I was not aware it had been overturned."

Her look of perfect truthfulness it was impossible to doubt.

When the flowers fell to the ground, Leila had hidden her face on her papa's shoulder, and was struggling with her emotion; she now looked up, and turning to Mrs. Stanley, she said, "Aunt, there is still one plant left, and it must have been an accident. O don't say any thing more about it."

But Mrs. Stanley would not yield to this. "No, my love," she said, "it is quite necessary that I should endeavour to discover the truth. The overturning of the flower-pot might have been an accident, but the attempt to deceive, the replanting the flowers in the earth, could not have been accidental. Now, Amy, recollect yourself, and tell me if you have seen any one leaving this room lately?"

Amy was silent.

"I insist upon knowing," Mrs. Stanley said.

"I saw Miss Matilda come out of the room, ma'am," Amy answered in a trembling voice.

"Was it before Miss Mildmay went home, or after?" Mrs. Stanley inquired.

"It was after, ma'am."

"And did you observe any thing particular in Miss Matilda's appearance? Did she look distressed?"

Amy was again silent.

"Speak out, Amy, I desire you," Mrs. Stanley said.

"Miss Matilda was crying, ma'am."

"You may go, Amy, and send Miss Matilda to me."

Amy left the room. Mr. Howard also rose and quitted the room just as Matilda was entering it; she came in trembling excessively, and looking very pale, but the moment Mrs. Stanley placed the flower-pot before her and said, "Matilda, do you know any thing of this?" the deepest colour suffused her face, and mounted to her temples. She remained silent.

"You were in your cousin's room after dinner, were you not?" Mrs. Stanley inquired.

"Yes, mamma." The words were scarcely audible.

Mrs. Stanley fixed her eyes upon her face. "Matilda," she said, "I happened to be in your cousin's room immediately before dinner; I went to look for a book. The flowers then looked perfectly fresh; you must have overturned the flower-pot when Amy saw you coming out of the room this evening."

Matilda's agitation increased; she tried to speak, but Mrs. Stanley with difficulty could make out the words, "No, mamma."

Mrs. Stanley herself now became much agitated. "Oh, Matilda," she said, "I conjure you to speak out, and tell me clearly what did happen; do not let me have the pain of feeling that my child has not only shown duplicity in the attempt to conceal what at first was probably only an accident, but is now adding falsehood to her fault; tell me distinctly, did you or did you not overthrow that flower-pot and break those flowers?"

There was no answer.

Leila went up to her and whispered, "Matilda, dear Matilda, speak the truth, don't be afraid; I am not angry, I don't care now for the flowers, that is, I don't care very much, I am not so sorry for them now, indeed I am not. But say you did it, O do say it; don't make God angry with you. O pray that this temptation may be taken from you; He will give you strength."

Matilda was still silent, but the piteous look she cast on Leila was heart-rending.

Mrs. Stanley again spoke. "Matilda," she said, "I see it is vain to prolong this scene. Go to your room, and on your knees pray earnestly to your heavenly Father to touch your sinful heart; when you have asked forgiveness of Him, and have resolved to make a full and free confession of your fault, send for me, I will be ready to come to you at any moment."

Matilda left the room; Mrs. Stanley soon after followed. Selina and Leila were left alone; Selina was silently weeping. Neither of them spoke for several minutes. Leila then said, "Selina, we cannot be quite certain that Matilda is deceiving us; Lydia may have done this."

Selina shook her head. "O that I could think so, but I cannot. I know the expression of Matilda's face too well. I always know when she has done wrong; and you forget, Leila, that mamma saw the flowers just before dinner, and they looked quite fresh then; and Lydia was not in your room after dinner, you know we were all with her till the moment she went away. When did you last observe them yourself? You must have been in the room when you were changing your dress for dinner."

Leila looked much distressed as she answered, "Yes, I saw them, and they did look fresh; I remember it, because I observed drops of water on the leaves, and the earth looked wet, and I knew that Amy must have watered them—she often does so when the day has been warm; Amy was very fond of my poor flowers." She had no sooner uttered the words than she coloured. "It was very wrong in me to say this, and to make you more sorry, for indeed it is not the flowers I am thinking most of now: and you know, Selina, I have still three more seeds to sow. How wise it was of papa to advise me to keep them in case of accidents, and not to risk all at once. O if I would always take papa's advice, every thing would be well; if I had taken his advice about Lydia, and had not invited her, Matilda would have been with us as usual during the whole time, and this would not have happened. And yet papa says I must learn to judge for myself, I must not lean too much on others; how difficult all this is. Do you think we should go to Matilda now?"

"No, I think mamma wished her to be alone."

"Then let us go into the garden, I feel so unhappy; I don't like sitting still."

The door of Matilda's room they saw was not entirely shut as they passed.

"Perhaps she might speak to me," Selina said. She advanced a few steps into the room; Matilda had thrown herself upon the bed. The flowers with which it had been so lately decked now lay scattered on the floor. Matilda evidently saw her, for she looked up for a moment, but she did not speak, and they passed on to the garden.

The whole evening wore slowly away, and no message came from Matilda; every time the drawing-room door opened, Selina and Leila were in anxious expectation—but still no message came. The young people went early to bed: how brightly had the morning dawned upon them, and now all was turned to sorrow. The first thing which struck Leila on entering her room was the muslin apron which she had embroidered for Matilda folded up and laid upon her bed; had she looked into her aunt's room, she would have seen the writing-desk also returned, and placed upon the table. Had Matilda done this? had she felt that she was unworthy of retaining those gifts which had been given her as marks of love and affection? Leila prayed earnestly for Matilda, but it was long before she could compose herself to sleep; the piteous look which Matilda had cast upon her haunted her imagination.

Meanwhile poor Selina was not less unhappy. On entering the bed-room, she found Matilda seated at the table writing a letter. She looked much fluttered when Selina entered, and hastily threw her pocket-handkerchief over something on the table. Selina felt almost certain it was the *etui* which Matilda had admired so much. Matilda seemed unwilling to begin to undress; after a short time she said, making a visible effort to speak calmly, "Selina, do go to bed, and go quickly. I can't come just yet; don't ask me why."

Selina began to undress. She then took her Bible to read as usual before saying her prayers. "Matilda," she said, after a few minutes, "may I read you this text which I have turned up?"

There seemed a silent assent.

Selina read, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it." "Yes," Selina said, "and it is by praying to God that we shall obtain His assistance," and she knelt down by the side of her bed.

For some time after she had lain down, all was still in the room. Selina had turned her face from her sister, that she might not seem to watch her. After some time Matilda rose; she stood for a moment by the bed, then put something very gently below the pillow; she started when Selina said, "Matilda, I am not asleep;" but she knelt down, said her prayers, and then got into bed.

"How very cold you are, dear Matilda," Selina said; "and how you tremble. O why will you not tell me all?"

Matilda pressed her hand. "Good night, dearest; try to sleep."

Matilda seemed more composed; Selina felt comfort, she knew not why. After a considerable time Selina did sleep. She was awakened early by the bright morning sun, but when she opened her eyes she saw Matilda was not there. She called to her, there was no answer. Much alarmed, she sprang out of bed and flew to the window. She saw Matilda fully dressed, standing below a tree speaking to the gardener's boy; she put a small packet into his hand, and pointed across the lawn in the direction of Mr. Mildmay's. The packet was larger than a letter, Selina felt sure it was the *etui*. She retreated from the window, and when Matilda returned, took no notice of what she had seen. At the breakfast-table there was no Matilda with her smiling face. All the morning she continued in her room, seated by the window; she had her work in her hand, but was generally looking out along the approach as if she expected some one. About the middle of the day a servant in livery was seen approaching; he held a letter in his hand; as he stopped below her window, she strained her eyes to catch the address, but could not. Poor Matilda! how her heart beat, and how her colour went and came; but no one entered her room—the letter then could not have been for her. She called to Amy, who said she believed the servant had brought a letter for Mrs. Stanley. At that moment Selina came running in. "Matilda," she said, "Mrs. Mildmay has written to say that Lydia has lost her ruby ring, and she begs it may be carefully looked for; she returned home, she says, with only one glove, and Mrs. Mildmay thinks she may have pulled it off in the glove, and trusts we may be able to find it."

Selina looked earnestly at Matilda, but her expression she could not make out; she had brightened up considerably at first, but now there was only agitation visible, and she made no effort to assist in looking for the lost glove. It was not to be found in Matilda's room; the drawing-room and dining-room had already been searched. They now proceeded to Leila's apartment. Here they were equally unsuccessful: under the bed, under every chair, they searched in vain. Suddenly it struck Selina that it was at dinner, while Lydia was still there, that her mamma had observed that Matilda's nails were black. There was a small window in one corner of Leila's room which looked out upon the court; she threw open this window and gazed eagerly out; she saw something lying which might be a glove. Amy ran down into the court, and returned with the glove in her hand. The ring was sticking in one of the fingers, but the pale kid glove was much stained with earth, and could not have been used again. A new light seemed to dawn on Mrs. Stanley; "Amy," she said, "go to the coachman, and tell him I shall require the carriage as quickly as possible, I must drive over to Mrs. Mildmay's." Then turning to Selina, she whispered, "I wish Matilda to return to her room, and let no one question her."

The hour of Mrs. Stanley's absence was an anxious hour to all. Selina and Leila were both with Matilda when the carriage was seen returning; when it stopped before the door Matilda seemed scarcely able to breathe. Mrs. Stanley entered and took her in her arms. "My poor child," she said, "you have been very, very wrong; but, thank God, you have not told an untruth. O Matilda, how you have been injured by bad example, and how far the evil might have spread, had I not discovered Lydia's artful character! Mrs. Mildmay told me she suspected something was wrong when she found you had written to Lydia, and sent back her *etui*; and even before I went she had extracted from her a sort of half confession. Unhappy girl! but she now seems completely penitent." Then turning to Leila and Selina, she continued, "She seemed anxious to tell me all; she said that she had insisted on going into Leila's room, as she wished to see her books and some pretty ornaments she had observed on the mantel-piece; that when she overturned the flower-stand, Matilda had wished her immediately to confess it, but she would not; that she had stuck the flowers into the earth and watered them, in the hope of keeping them fresh as long as she remained, and that she had bribed Matilda to perfect silence by offering her the *etui*; that Matilda at first refused, but afterwards yielded, and that Lydia had made her promise that she was to answer no questions, that she was not on any account to say she had not done it. Alas! my child, how you grieved the Holy Spirit when you took that wicked bribe; but deeply have you suffered, and I will inflict no further punishment upon you, than that you should remain in your room during the day. Think deeply of all that has passed, and of the misery you have endured, and pray earnestly to God

for his forgiveness, and for strength to resist future temptation. Also you must give me your promise to give up all intimacy with Lydia Mildmay, and never to trust yourself alone with her again, unless in after years I give you leave to do so."

Matilda threw herself again into her mamma's arms, but she could not speak. She then slowly left the room.

"Selina," she said, when soon after she was alone with her sister, "you can never know how unhappy I have been. I cannot tell it you. O it was so dreadful when mamma questioned me, and I dared not tell! And when I thought you all believed I was telling untruths, and that you could never love me again, I thought my heart would break. I did not know what was right and what was wrong, and for a long time I could not pray. But then I did, and God seemed to put it into my heart to send back the *etui*, and ask leave to tell; and I was a little happier after that. But when you took my hand in bed, and asked me again to tell, I grew worse again. I could not sleep; (only now and then a little;) my best time was when I stood under the tree, and saw the gardener's boy running across the lawn with my letter, the air was so fresh, and the birds were singing, and the sun made every thing so beautiful. I felt quite happy then."

The tears were running down Selina's cheeks.

"I am making you sorry," she continued; "I will not tell you any more. You know I am happy now, O so happy! and I will not forget this time, I am sure—no, I never, never will forget. Now go, dearest, to Leila, for I think mamma wishes me to be alone; but come in sometimes, with cousin Leila, and just kiss me and go away again."

## CHAPTER XVII.

FROM this time the improvement in Matilda's character was much more steady; her warm affection for her sister and Leila daily increased, and she seemed now to have no wish beyond the enjoyment of their society. They were a most happy little trio; but days of trial were at hand, and sorrow about to visit their young hearts in an unexpected form. Charles was now at home for the Midsummer holidays, and had come over to pass the Saturday at Woodlands; he certainly was somewhat taller than before, but Leila seemed rather to think it an improvement, and she met him with all the frank gladness of her happy age. There was so little of the rough school-boy in Charles, and so much of the gentle kind friend, that Leila had learnt to look up to him with a feeling of happy security; he never flattered her in asking advice; she was always sure of hearing the truth from him unbiassed by any previous opinion expressed on her side. She told him that an accident had happened to the precious plant intended for him; but she entered into no details, and he promised to be patient, and to await the coming up of the other seeds. They had not been long together when he inquired for his friend Peggy Dobie, and Leila proposed that they should cross the lawn together and visit her at her cottage; they were sure of finding her in her garden, she said, for Peggy had told her that her bees were about to swarm, and that she must watch them closely.

Never had Leila looked more joyous than when she tied on her bonnet to accompany Charles; her cheeks were glowing with health, her eyes bright with intelligence, and the feelings of hopeful, trusting, happy youth were visible in every expression of her sweet countenance.

It had been the loveliest of summer mornings, and at first so elastic was Leila's step, that she seemed to tread on air; she proposed to lengthen their walk by first mounting one of the high fields from which the view was particularly fine; but by the time they had gained the height, they felt the heat of the sun overcoming, and in descending were glad to avail themselves of the shelter of the wood. The bright sunshine, however, which they had wished to avoid, now suddenly gave way to dark lurid clouds; the air became very close and oppressive; there was a dull moaning sound amongst the trees, as if the wind were about to rise, and as they entered the wood the sweet singing of the birds was hushed; they were darting rapidly to and fro amongst the branches in constant uneasy motion, as if danger were at hand. Charles looked anxiously at the great masses of fiery-looking clouds which were now driven along by a strong current of upper air. Leila caught the anxious expression of his face.

"Why do you look so frightened, Charles?" she said. "I like these sudden changes, they are very good; don't walk so quick,—let us stop for a moment and watch those magnificent clouds."

"No, Leila, no; let us hasten home; I fear we shall have a storm."

"A storm!" she repeated; "O do then let us make haste. I am not frightened—that is, I am not much frightened, though a storm always makes me think of melancholy things; but papa, I know, will be anxious about us; let us walk very quick."

They hastened on, but Leila suddenly paused for a moment to listen to the sound of distant thunder. "The storm has begun," she said, in a tone of alarm; "that is thunder;" then quickening her steps, she proceeded more rapidly than before. A second and louder peal succeeded to the first; again and again it lightened, and the thunder seemed every moment to be approaching nearer. Leila trembled all over, and clung to Charles in speechless terror.

"Let us get out of the wood," Charles hastily exclaimed, "we shall be safer in the open field," and seizing her arm he hurried her forward.

At that moment the whole wood seemed lighted up as if on fire; the lightning ran along the ground, a great branch from a tree fell with a loud crash at their feet, and Leila screamed, "Charles, where are you, Charles? I cannot see you—I am blind!"

O that moment of inexpressible agony, as he stooped and gazed into her dear face! It was unscathed, but the eyes were shut. "Open your eyes, dear, dear Leila; O do not say you cannot open them. Merciful God, it cannot be!"

Alas! it was too true. She tried in vain to raise her eyelids.

"I shall never see my papa again," she almost shrieked out, as she sank upon the ground at Charles's feet. He lifted her gently in his arms, her head fell upon his shoulder; she became still, he thought she had fainted, but soon he heard her whisper, "It is God who has done it. He loves me, I am His child, and He can comfort my dear, dear papa."

Charles continued to carry her in his arms, but his knees trembled so much he could scarcely get along, and Leila felt a tear drop upon her cheek.

"Charles," she said, "you are weeping. O do not weep for me; God can comfort me, and he *does*. I cannot tell you what I feel now, it seems as if angels were whispering to me." Then after a little she said again, "But it is for my

papa, my own papa. Charles, do not carry me to him at first; carry me to my own room."

She was obeyed. He stole up stairs unperceived by any one, and Leila knelt down by the side of her bed and prayed earnestly.

"Now take me to my papa," she said, as she arose from her knees. "Where are you, Charles?" she exclaimed, as she tried to grasp the empty air.

Charles had been watching at the door; he too had offered up a silent earnest prayer; he was now by her side in a moment, and led her to her papa's room. She tapped at his door.

"Come in, my little woman," Mr. Howard said, in a glad voice, but without raising his eyes from his book. "I am so relieved to hear your little tap; I have been seeking you, Leila. Where have you been during this frightful storm? Why don't you come in, love?"



LEILA AT HOME. Page 248.

"Come to the door, dear papa, but do not open it, till I speak to you."

Mr. Howard rose. "What pleasant little surprise are you preparing for me, my child?" he said, as he stood with his hand upon the lock.

"Papa, dear papa, it is not a pleasant surprise; but you will try to bear it."

The sound of her voice startled him, and Mr. Howard opened the door in the greatest alarm. Leila fell into his arms.

"Papa," she said, as she clung to him and repeatedly kissed his cheek, "papa, you will bear it; God has done it. He knows best. He has struck me blind!"

Mr. Howard groaned aloud; he clasped Leila more closely in his arms—he looked upon her face—he could not speak.

Charles, in a trembling voice, related all that had taken place.

Mr. Howard rallied, and seemed to regain his usual firmness; he turned to Charles,—“Send immediately to Richmond,” he said, “for Dr. B——, and let the coachman get ready to ride to London, I will give him a note. Leila, my own heroic child, I must leave you a moment with Nurse.”

The poor woman and Amy were already in the room, both sobbing bitterly; but upon Mr. Howard speaking aside to Nurse, and telling her of the necessity there was for self-command for Leila's sake, she made a wonderful effort for composure, and seating herself on the couch, she took Leila in her arms, and laid her head gently upon her shoulder, as she used to do when she was a little child. Amy stood by her side, her hands clasped together, and with an expression of the deepest woe, while tears still ran silently down her cheeks.

Leila was now quite composed. They heard her whisper, “The worst is over now, my papa knows it all;” and she pressed Nurse's hand repeatedly, and said she felt better, then drawing Amy towards her, she whispered very low in her ear,—“You will be a good girl, Amy, and not cry, and you will be a great comfort to me—you will lead me every where.”

Charles had himself gone off to Richmond on Leila's pony, but returned unsuccessful; both Dr. B—— and another to whom he applied were from home. The agony of suspense to all was very great; and though Charles strove hard to restrain his emotion, the tones of his voice betrayed his feelings to Leila every time he tried to address her.

Mr. Howard spoke to him aside—he thought it better he should return home. It was a great trial to him, but he instantly obeyed, and stole out of the room without even a word of adieu, he felt that all additional agitation must be carefully avoided.

As he went out Leila raised her head and listened. “Some one has left the room,” she said, “it must be Charles. Where has he gone to?”

Mr. Howard explained that he had returned home, he thought it better he should do so.

“Ah, papa, I know why: it is because I agitate myself so much. I know it is very wrong, and I will try to be quite

calm, and to comfort you more, papa; but I cannot always do it, though sometimes for a moment it seems quite easy, and I only feel that God has done it for my good, and has sent me this great trial because he loves me and wishes to make me better, and that perhaps he has shut my eyes on the world that I may think more of my beautiful home in heaven; for, papa, do you not know how much I had begun to love the world; the love of it was creeping into me, and you did not know it; ever since we came into it I have loved it every day more and more—the people, the flowers, this house, every thing. Yes, I have loved the world better than the island, where I thought so much more of God. And I used to like so much to hear Bill and Susan call me their little mistress,—all this was very wrong, and I dare say this is why God has shut it all out, the trees, the green fields, the beautiful flowing river, and even your face, my own papa—and for *ever!*—oh, that is the part I cannot bear.”

“Hush, my child, my own Leila;—do not say there is any thing you cannot bear. He who has sent the trial will give you strength. Remember, we are told, that ‘If we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with sons, for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?’—and though for the present it is very grievous to you, He will, when His own righteous purposes have been fulfilled, bring to your heart that sweet peace ‘which the world cannot know;’—but, my child, you are exciting yourself in talking too much, and I am most anxious that you should keep very quiet now, and try to get a little sleep.”

“Well, papa, I will. Do you remember that day, papa, when you said to me, ‘Leila, remember, duties are ours, but events are in the hands of God?’ I am glad I have thought of this now, for it comforts me—it tells me it is my duty to be patient and to trust it all to God—now I will try to sleep.”

She did try, but soon she started up again, and clasped her papa’s hand more tightly. “Papa,” she said, “there is something I wish to say to you; and then I think I could sleep;—will you write to Aunt Stanley, and tell her every thing, and beg her to come here to-day as soon as possible, and bring them all with her. I shall be better when I have seen them all”—(she stopped and shuddered)—“I shall be better when they are here, I mean; and bid aunt tell Selina not to be very sorry, and to remember how God comforted her when she was dumb, and gave her strength to bear it; and He is giving me strength also, dear papa.”

Mr. Howard seated himself at the table and began to write, and before he had finished his note Leila was asleep—it seemed a troubled sleep, she started often, and called out repeatedly, as if in extreme terror, for the shock on her nervous system had been severe; but before she awoke to perfect consciousness again, her uncle, aunt, and all of them, stood gazing upon her. They all struggled hard to control their sorrow, but it was Matilda’s and Alfred’s sobs that awakened Leila. I will not further distress my young readers by dwelling on this scene. Leila herself was the first to obtain composure, and after some time she was able to converse calmly with Selina.

She showed so much unwillingness to part with them again, that Mr. Howard arranged that they should all come over for some weeks to Woodlands, Leila having promised that she would be satisfied with exactly as much of the society of her cousins as was thought good for her; but the knowledge that they were in the house, she said, would be the greatest comfort to her; and it was further arranged that Selina was not to go home that evening, but remain till the others joined her.

This mournful day wore heavily on, and still Dr. B—— had not arrived. It were difficult to say what they all expected would be the result of his anxiously expected visit; but when at last the sound of horses’ hoofs was heard upon the gravel, the agitation of the whole party was extreme. Mr. Howard became very pale, and withdrew his hand from Leila’s that she might not be aware how he trembled; but she had heard the sound, and seemed aware of his motive, for she said, “Do not be afraid of me, papa; I know what Dr. B—— will say, and I can bear it; hold my hand again, it makes me feel strong.”

Dr. B—— entered; the look he cast on all around was full of deep sympathy, for Charles’s note had made him aware of what had happened. His eyes rested mournfully on Leila, who lay on the sofa looking pale and agitated; but as he approached, she hastily brushed a tear from her long, dark eyelashes, and the brightest colour dyed her cheeks. He paused in evident emotion; then seating himself by her, he looked at her attentively, took the hand Mr. Howard had been holding, and felt her pulse; her hand was deadly cold; again all colour had now left her cheek, and she lay like a bruised lily, shrinking from his touch.

“Try to compose yourself, my dear young lady,” he said gently; “I am not going to hurt you; but it is necessary that I should examine your eyes more closely.” As he spoke, he turned her face more fully to the light. Mr. Howard was bending over her. Dr. B—— gently raised one of her eyelids, and Leila, in a voice of rapture, exclaimed, “My papa, I see him?”

Who can express Mr. Howard’s feelings at that moment. “Thank God!” the kind-hearted physician exclaimed, “the sight of the eye in this dear child is not destroyed;” and on examining the other, the result was equally satisfactory. “This is not so bad as we dreaded,” he said; but he whispered something to Mr. Howard, and seemed about to quit the room. He had asked to speak to him alone.

Leila had not caught the words, but she suspected something; and springing up she said, “Do let him tell me every thing, papa, I am quite able to bear it. Does Dr. B—— think I shall still be blind?—do let him speak out the truth.”

Mr. Howard assented. The good doctor was much affected. “My dear young lady,” he said, “I hope and trust that you will not always be blind; but I am not prepared to say that you certainly will recover the power of raising your eyelids—there have been frequent instances of the nerves never recovering their powers; but you are young, and in good health; your well-turned mind, and your power of commanding your feelings, (and I am sure from the highest motives,) is much in your favour, and with God nothing is impossible. And now I will take my leave for to-day. I have only one caution to give, and I address it to all,—agitation of every kind must as much as possible be avoided.”

It was no unnecessary caution, for the lively joy expressed by Matilda and Alfred when Dr. B—— pronounced his opinion, Leila felt more difficult to bear than their former sorrow; and Mr. Howard now expressed a wish, which was immediately complied with, that Leila should be left alone with him for the rest of the evening.

Before night the oculist from London also arrived. He confirmed all that the physician had said; he could pronounce nothing positive as to Leila’s recovering her sight, but he had hope; and he enforced still more strictly, if possible, that every thing should be done to strengthen her general health, and agitation and excitement of every kind carefully avoided. “Don’t let any one be with her,” he said, “who is likely to agitate her; there is an old woman in the passage in such a state of distress; she is clamorous for admittance, but it must not be yielded to.” This was

spoken aside to Mr. Howard, but Leila caught the words, "old woman." "It is Peggy Dobie," she said, "my dear Peggy; oh, papa, let her come in for a moment, only one moment, papa, and then I shall keep myself quite still, and not be agitated again."

Mr. Howard thought she ought to be gratified; he knew better than the oculist the command which Leila could maintain over herself: he spoke to Peggy himself—she came in, knelt down by Leila's bed, took her hand, and with a voice which trembled with emotion, she said, "My dear, dear bairn, your poor old Peggy will pray for you, and there is a merciful God above." Her voice sank to a whisper; she seemed unable to add another word; but Leila seemed calmed and comforted. Poor Peggy left the room, but she lingered till a late hour in the house, and was back again in the first dawn of the morning.

The sad news had spread rapidly through the village: Leila was so beloved by old and young, that the inquiries during the whole day had been numerous. The children of the village, as well as her little scholars, came in troops, and Amy had many a sorrowful scene to go through with them. Nurse sat by Leila's side during the whole night, and Mr. Howard visited her every hour. Her sleep was very broken, and next day she was so feverish that no one but her papa and Nurse were allowed to see her—not even Selina; but by another day, the feverish symptoms entirely left her; she felt weak and easily fluttered, but was generally quite calm, and at times even cheerful. For some days Matilda, though in the house, was only allowed to come into the room at short intervals. Matilda had not sufficient control over her feelings, and the warm expression of an affection, which was now greater than ever, was too much for poor Leila. She was desired to be as much as possible in the open air, and she was carried out every day into the garden, and sat for hours in the shade, taking a little turn now and then, leaning upon her papa. The first time she went out was a great trial to her, and for some time she wept silently; then taking her papa's hand as they sat together under a tree in the garden, she said:—

"Papa, I have made you more sorry, but it is over now; it was just at first—indeed I could not help it, for the air brought to me the sweet smell of the flowers which I can no longer see, and from the feeling on my eyelids I know the sun must be shining gloriously. O, how I used to like to gaze on the rising sun, and to watch the soft grey of the morning fading before his golden light! and it brought grand feelings to my mind, and good feelings too, papa, for it made me think of Him who is more glorious than the sun."

"Yes, my child, but that feeling can still be yours, and even in a higher degree, for this trial may lead you to raise your mind more constantly to Him in whose presence there is everlasting light."

"Yes, papa, I know it, and I will pray for this. Do you remember the text in Isaiah which says, 'I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.' And God may do this to me, papa; He may open the eyes of my mind, and make it all more light to me. And I have many pleasures yet, you know: I have you, papa; and that is more than a pleasure, it is my happiness. O you don't know what I feel when you are near me; I am not melancholy then; indeed I am never so melancholy as I thought I should be; I know when it is light and when it is dark quite well; and once you know I saw your face for a moment; I think I should be quite happy if I got leave to see you for a moment every day, but Dr. B—— says I must not—why, papa?"

"Because, my love, nothing must be done to increase the injury on the nerves; therefore you must not try to force your eyelids up."

"Well, papa, I will try to be patient; but I may hope not to be always blind. You know Jesus Christ opened the eyes of many that were blind: He was full of pity, and I may pray to Him to open my eyes,—that is, if He thinks it good for me."

"Yes, my child, such prayers, leaving all to Him, cannot fail to be acceptable in His sight. He has loved you, Leila, from your birth, with more than an earthly love; and never more, I feel sure, than at this moment, when you are bowing meekly to His will. His deathless love is around, and above you, even now; He can wipe all tears from your eyes with a hand that never comforted in vain; He can give you happy dreams of green pastures and still waters, and brighter and brighter hopes of that dear home, where no darkness, no grief, no fear can enter; only the eternal shining of a light divine, and joy unspeakable! Now, sweet one, we must walk a little, I must not talk to you too much."

"But, papa, such talk as this!"

"No, not even such talk as this; I must not strain your mind in any way, my Leila."

"Then, papa, take me to the bee-hives, I think I should like to hear the bees humming."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

MORE than a fortnight had passed away, and Leila's general health was greatly strengthened, though she had had many agitating scenes to go through. The meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Herbert and Mina had at first affected her much, but she had now great pleasure in their society, and they came frequently, and spent the whole day, for Leila clung more to Mrs. Herbert than ever. It was a great pleasure to her to lie on the sofa with her knitting, and to listen to general conversation; and Mr. Howard was most desirous in every way to promote her cheerfulness. Charles's visits had been almost daily; though he had been permitted to see Leila only for a few minutes at a time. He was now, however, frequently allowed to lead her on Selim for a short ride, and Leila assured her papa that each time she felt her courage increase so much, that she was sure before long she should be able to ride out with him as usual.

"Yes, papa," she said, "you must not be melancholy about me, for I am not unhappy. Nurse sometimes thinks I am, but indeed I am not; she fancies it, I believe, because I do not speak so much now; I like to think and be still; you know, papa, my world is more within me now—I do not see its beautiful sunsets, its woods, its flowers; its broad river with its green banks, which I used to love so much; and so I picture them in my own mind, and seem to dream of them, though I am awake. It is that which makes me often still, papa; and I like those dreams, they make me happy now."

"Yes, my own Leila, I can understand all this; but those day-dreams must not be too much indulged in; there might be danger then of your finding your pleasures in life more in reverie, than in useful exertion and in active duty;



for you must not fancy, my dear child, that you have not the same duties to perform now as you formerly had; as your health strengthens, I should wish you to return as much as possible to your former habits."

"But, papa, I can do so little now."

"Not so, my love; in a very short time you will be surprised to find how much you can do, and how independent you have become. Do you remember, at first you were afraid to move across the room, and now you seem to walk fearlessly over almost every part of the house."

"Yes, papa, I am not the least afraid now, and since I have been blind, God seems to have opened my ears more and more; before, I always knew your footstep, and it made me glad; but now, I know the step of every one in the house, and yours though ever so far off; and when you are quite still, I know your breathing, and I like to listen to it so much. O, I have many pleasures—why do you sigh, papa?—you must not do that, it makes me sorry; Selina often sighs when I talk to her, and even Matilda; and sometimes when Matilda begins to laugh, she stops herself quite suddenly—I wish she would not, I like to hear her laugh. Papa, I have never heard you laugh since *that day*; my own papa, you must try—you must be merry with me again;"—and she held out her hand.

Mr. Howard pressed it fondly. "My Leila, my precious one!" was all he could say.

"Yes, your precious one; how I like you to call me that! Come, let me sing to you; now don't say, 'Another day, Leila, not now,'—for it is not to be another day, I am quite able for it now—so let your precious one have her guitar again."

She rose to search for it in its accustomed corner: Mr. Howard had had it removed, but he placed it in her hands again, and she seated herself by his side, and began to sing one of his most favourite airs. At first her voice was weak and tremulous; but gradually it acquired more firmness, though there was so much of unusual melancholy in its rich and liquid tones, that filled Mr. Howard's eyes with tears. She evidently found it a great effort to continue, and her next choice was a more lively air.

"Now, papa," she said, as the second song was ended, "I hope I have cheered you again; I should not have tried to sing that melancholy song."

Alas! dear child, she could not see that her second attempt had only increased Mr. Howard's agitation; but hastily brushing his hand across his eyes, he said, in a steady and even cheerful voice, "No more at present, my sweet child; but now every day you shall sing to your papa as usual, and cheer him as you have ever done; but what does Amy want?—this is the second time she has looked into the room."

"Oh, I know," Leila answered. "Yes, Amy, I am coming presently—I know, papa, what she wants; at this hour she always takes me to visit my pets, and they are getting quite fond of me again, which makes me so happy. At first they did not like me so much, because I was blind; they fluttered about, and seemed afraid of me—not Dash nor Selina, they were always kind; Selina seems getting quite young again, for she frisks about me always, jumps up when I am passing by, and paws so loud, that I am afraid she will make herself quite hoarse; and as to Dash, you don't know what a dog he is—wherever I am now, he lies outside the door, and the moment I go out he follows; he does not think it is enough that I should be alone with Amy, and looks at her she says quite suspiciously;—when you are there he does not follow me quite so close, but when I am alone with her he is touching me the whole time. Yesterday he pulled me aside by my dress; Amy said it was because there was a stone in my path, and he was afraid I might strike my foot against it; and another day he seized a large branch of a tree in his mouth, (which had fallen down,) and threw it aside with such indignation, and looked at her quite angrily, as if she were leading me into danger. Poor Dash, he does not know how very kind Amy is to me, papa; I cannot persuade her yet to return to her own room at night; she still lies on that little hard mattress at the foot of my bed, and when I tell her not to do it, it makes her sorry."

"Yes, my child, I know she does; and I am sure she prefers doing so."

"I think so too, papa, and for many days I am sure she never slept, for always when I awoke I found her standing by my bed, ready to give me my lemonade, or to rub my feet, or do whatever I wished, to make me sleep again. Papa, if this trial had not come to me, I never should have known the love that is in many hearts for me; I cannot speak about Selina, I cannot tell you what she is to me; and Matilda, so gentle to me and so kind; and Mrs. Roberts also; then Mrs. Herbert, Charles, and Mina; but it would take me all the day to tell you of all the kindnesses to me,—and I am forgetting that Amy is waiting, for I could chat away with you, papa, for ever; but now I must go and chat a little to my parrots, or they will be quite jealous. And then Amy has to give me my lesson of flowers; she is teaching me to know them all by the touch, for you know it is better to be prepared for what *may be*. I hope you are not looking melancholy because I am saying this. Good-bye, dear papa." She was gone, or a long and deep-drawn sigh would have reached her ear.

Weeks and months passed on, and though Leila had no fixed complaint, her health was not what it had been before, and the prospect of her recovering her sight seemed gradually to be becoming more uncertain. It was well for her, dear child, that she could not see the mournful looks with which her papa often now regarded her, as she, with increased anxiety to acquire habits of independence, performed her daily duties.

It was evident that Leila was preparing her mind to meet, not only with resignation, but with cheerfulness, what but a few short months before would have weighed her to the ground. How deeply had she felt poor Susan's state; how often had she looked at the sightless eyes of the blind girl, and said to herself, "How can she bear it? O any trial but this!" And this trial was now hers; it came upon her in a moment. Suddenly was the whole face of nature shut out from her sight; yet, after the first natural anguish was over, there came also to her young heart that faith, that reliance, which shed peace and light on her darkest moments.

Her little scholars now came to her as usual; they daily read the Bible to her, and also other books suited to their age, and in this occupation she took much interest. Susan also came frequently, and either Selina or Matilda read to her while Leila listened.

"I wish Susan were nearer us," she said one morning to Selina, as Susan left the room; "how kind in you both to take such pains with her; she says it is her happiest time when she is with us; and do you know what I have been wishing for a long time, and making a little plan in my own mind about? I have been wishing that we could find a house in our village for Susan's mother, and then poor Susan would come oftener, for she would not have so far to walk; and yesterday I spoke to papa about it; he said he did not quite see how it could be managed, but that he would turn it in his mind. When papa says he will turn it in his mind, he is sure to turn and twist it into the right thing."



"But how," Matilda inquired, "can Uncle Howard twist Susan's mother and all her five brothers and sisters into a house in the village, when there is not one empty, and all the people quite healthy, not the least likely to die? He must twist them out first, and that would not be civil."

"I don't know, Matilda, but I am sure my papa will not do any thing unkind, and yet I think he will manage it; I knew by the sound of his voice that he thought it possible, and I have been thinking a great deal of all I could do for Susan to make her happier; for she has not all my comforts and pleasures, and she has not a Selina and a Matilda to be eyes to her, and to make every thing cheerful to her, and even light; for when I am with you, I scarcely feel that I am blind at all."

Selina sighed deeply, but did not answer.

"Now, why do you sigh, Selina? that must not be. Do not pity me; you must get reconciled as I am doing—you must, both of you, help me to be cheerful; and you, Matilda, must try to laugh a great deal more than you do now, for I like so much to hear you merry. And look, Selina, what a pretty nosegay I am tying up for you; is it not very well arranged for a little blind girl? Amy says I am improving every day now; you see I arrange the green leaves and the different colours of the flowers, so as to have a grand effect. At first they used to be all higgledy piggledy, as Peggie Dobie would say. What excellent words Peggie Dobie has; don't you think *higgledy piggledy* delightful? I am sure any one must know it means confusion. And I shall teach Susan to make nosegays, for I hope there will be a garden to the cottage."

"And what would Susan do with so many nosegays?" Matilda inquired.

"Perhaps she might sell the nosegays at Richmond, and make a little more money for her mother, which would make her so happy. She might sit under the trees on the terrace early in the mornings before she came to us, and she could knit all the time, and be as busy as if she were at home. I daresay every one would like to buy nosegays from a blind girl, I am sure I should; and I think Nurse would perhaps allow me to give her my second best bonnet, to keep the hot sun off her eyelids; I am sure it must be looking very old now, though I am afraid Nurse does not think so, for she makes me stretch out the strings every day, and says it is wonderful how long things will look respectable with proper management."

"Yes," Matilda said, "and you are so terribly conscientious, Leila, and stretch away so every morning, that I am afraid your strings never will look respectable; if I were you I would begin to crumple them a little now. Do begin to-morrow."

Selina looked up. "How you talk, Matilda; you know very well you would not do so now."

"Then you do think me a little improved, Selina?"

"Not a little, but a great deal improved."

"O, I am so glad; and you, Cousin Leila, should be glad also, for it is all owing to you. When I saw you so good and patient, and trying always to bear your trial so well, I prayed a great deal to be made good and patient too, for you know I have my little trials; always the holding up my head, and the never putting my elbows on the table, or being the least comfortable, all those hundred little botherations that used to put me wild; I do think I bear them a little better now. But you will be rewarded for bearing your great trials as you do, for I am sure God must love you so much; that very soon now He will open your eyes, and you will see as well as we do. O what joy then—what joy!"

"Hush! Matilda, hush! do not say it," Leila hastily answered. "God does love me, I feel He does, for He gives me sweet, peaceful feelings now, and makes me happy; but His ways are different. He does what is best for me, and I am making up my mind, for I feel as if I were to be always blind. Selina knows it, for I have told her; and now that I have told you, I shall be happier. I wish I could speak about it to papa too, but I can't just yet. Don't cry, Matilda, don't, my own dear Matilda." She threw her arms round her and kissed her fondly. "Now there is a dear one; you will be good, you will be patient, and say it is all quite, quite right. You know, Matilda it must be so." Her soft soothing voice was silent; she gently disengaged herself from Matilda, and left the room.

And it was really so; Leila had struggled hard with herself, and had all but conquered. She now strongly felt that entire dependence on her heavenly Father's love which she had so fervently prayed for; the idea that she was to be for ever blind had taken strong possession of her, and she was resigned. Yet one earthly wish was still unsubdued: it was to gaze once more upon her father's face. "Yes," she said to herself, "once, only once again, and then I feel I shall be able to say from my very heart, 'Thy will be done.' "

But how was this to be accomplished? She felt she could never tell her father that she wished to see him for the last time; she could never give him that bitter pang. And there were other difficulties. She could see him only when looking down upon him; how was this to be managed? She thought of it constantly; no way presented itself. Yet time pressed, for she felt as if every day her eyelids were getting more stiff and depressed; in fact, the struggle in her mind was affecting her general health. Circumstances, however, favoured her unexpectedly. Mr. Howard had spent a whole forenoon in London; Leila had for hours expected him, and he returned fatigued and dispirited. He had been to arrange a consultation for the following day with regard to Leila's health, which was now daily giving him much uneasiness. Leila immediately became aware that he was out of spirits.

"Dear papa," she said, "I am sure you are feeling unwell, you have over-fatigued yourself. Do let me take care of you and make you better. You shall lie down on the sofa, and I will sing you to sleep. Sleep is the very thing you want. Now, there is a dear papa, stretch yourself out; now then let me arrange the pillows comfortably." She passed her little hand below her papa's head, and raised it gently, "There now,—so; is not that comfortable? Now I shall take my guitar, and sing you a sweet lullaby; but you must shut your dear eyes first. Are you shutting them, papa?" She passed her hand across Mr. Howard's eyes. "O you naughty papa, they are wide open."

They were indeed open, they were earnestly fixed upon the pale countenance of his child. Softly drawing down his eyelids, she drew a chair close to the sofa, and striking a few chords, she began to sing in a sweet low voice, and after a little while Mr. Howard dropped asleep. Leila was immediately aware of this; she continued singing for a few minutes, as she watched his regular breathing; by degrees her voice sunk to the lowest whisper, then altogether ceased. For a moment she bent over him and listened. "Now is the time," she said; and mounting upon the chair on which she had been seated, she gently raised her eyelids, and stood gazing down upon him.

Was she looking upon that much loved face for the last time? She felt as if it were so. "O my Father in Heaven," she said, "give me of thy strength! I thought I had been resigned; O pardon a poor weak child, and make me strong!"

A deep sigh awoke Mr. Howard; he opened his eyes. Was it a deep spirit from a world unseen, who stood gazing

upon him with a look of more than earthly love, or was it indeed his child? He started up, and Leila threw herself into his arms.

"Forgive me, dearest papa," she said, "I could not help it; once more to see your face, papa, only once more;" then gradually becoming more calm, she entered fully on the subject, and poured out all that had been so long struggling in her heart. "And now, papa, I feel that God will strengthen me to be resigned. You know He says, —'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the fire kindle upon thee.' And has it not come true with me, papa? He saved me in the waters, and in the fire; and shall I not trust in Him? I feel now as if He did not mean to open my eyes, but it must be right."

Mr. Howard did not attempt to conceal from Leila that of late he too had felt less sanguine as to her recovering her eyesight, but still he said that he felt it a duty to employ every human means; and he informed her of the meeting he had appointed for next day. She struggled to conceal her emotion from him; but it was evident that this intelligence made the effort still more difficult.

The consultation took place as had been appointed, and the result was more favourable than either Mr. Howard or Leila had dared to hope. The physicians by no means despaired of Leila recovering the power of raising her eyelids. They thought that the weakened state of her general health, and the excitement of her too sensitive mind in the continual effort she had made to conceal her feelings, had probably hitherto retarded her recovery. They recommended her instantly being removed to Brighton, with only her papa and Selina, and that sea-baths and galvanism should be tried. Poor Matilda! what a trial was this separation to her. How often did she resolve to bear it heroically, and how often did her good resolutions give way to tears and lamentations! In vain Selina reminded her that she had resolved to bear her trials well. "My little trials," she answered, "but a great trial like this! No, no, Selina; how can you be so unreasonable? I said nothing about a great one, and I am not like Leila, or you, I must cry, and I should."

Yet even in her most sorrowful moments Matilda kept constantly saying she felt sure Leila would get quite well. She had always thought so, and now she saw those excellent wise physicians thought so too, and Leila would return to them seeing as well as she ever had done.

## CHAPTER XIX.

MATILDA'S bright anticipations were realized. We pass over many weary weeks and months, for Leila's recovery was tedious, and there were many fluctuations, but she did recover; and towards the end of April she returned to Woodlands in all the joy of restored sight, and once more did she lift her eyes to the rising sun stealing over the glad earth with steps of light, awakening all nature with the spirit of gladness and of life! How more than ever beautiful was the soft fresh green of spring to her delighted eyes! One universal garden seemed to bloom beneath her feet; one universal hymn of praise was in the song of the bird, in the murmur of the stream, and, above all, in her own grateful, devoted heart. And what was Matilda's joy, what was the joy of Charles and Mina, and of all those many friends of high and low degree who loved her dearly? for all were there to welcome her return. Peggy Dobie pressing forward amongst the first to bless her dear, dear bairn, with a glow upon her cheeks which made her look young again.

Matilda, capering around her at one moment, in the next holding her in her arms, looking into her eyes with tearful joy, and exclaiming,—"Your dear one, you more than darling! and with your eyes so bright, so open—only at times the slightest little beautiful droop, just to remind us of what has been. Did I not tell you how it would be? did I not say you would again see better than any of us?"

And Charles, what did he say? *Nothing*. He stood gazing into Leila's eyes as if he could have looked into them for ever, then raising her hand, he pressed it to his lips.

"Charles," she said, "how strange you are. Amy does that sometimes to me; she says it is from love and respect; it is from love and respect, eh, Charles?"

The happiness of this happy day seemed every hour to increase. In the evening they all walked to the village, and what did Leila see just before entering it? A pretty cottage in a lovely little garden, blooming with flowers, roses and honeysuckles trained on its white walls, a green turf seat by the side of its little porch, and a bee-hive in a sheltered corner. And this was Mr. Howard's glad surprise for Leila; this was a cottage he had directed should be built during their absence for Susan's mother, and in two days, on the first of May, she was to take possession of it.

There were others who looked forward to May-day with eager expectation; for an old custom was to be revived, a youthful queen was to be chosen. Leila herself, though at a distance, had for some time been all anxiety on this subject, revolving in her mind the different merits of her little scholars, and scarcely knowing which most to wish should obtain the promised honour. And she had returned to witness this; returned able to *see* and to enjoy it all. What happiness, what deep gratitude was hers!

Next day all was joyful bustle and activity. The village children were up with the sun, and while the dew still lay upon the grass, the crystal drops sparkled on every tree and shrub, their merry voices mingled with the song of the skylark, and, like the bee, they were darting from flower to flower, wandering far and wide amidst banks of primroses, lilies of the valley, and dark blue harebells. Long did they pursue their pleasant toil, and in the evening they returned to it again, and not till twilight shades had fallen on the lovely valley, and the silver moon had risen to guide them on their way, were they to be seen trooping homewards, laden with green boughs and heaps of blooming flowers. It was but a short repose that lulled any of them to forgetfulness that night; they were up by the first streak of day to weave the garlands for their youthful queen, and the morning rose fair and bright upon their pleasant labours. Matilda for some time past had been giving them instructions in the art of weaving garlands, and many of them did great credit to their little mistress. She had a few days before constructed for them a crown which they were to imitate, and so well did they now succeed, that it seemed an equal grief to old and young that any thing so beautiful should ever fade.

Selina had returned to her own home; but it had been arranged that Matilda and she were to be early at Woodlands on May morning, to accompany Leila to the village, that they might all be there when the queen was

chosen. Leila's own repose was also somewhat broken on the eve of this eventful day, and having risen early, dressed herself and offered up her prayer and grateful praise, she seated herself at the open window to watch for the expected summons. The morning breeze blew softly on her blooming cheek, her whole heart was full of sweet emotions; again there was joy to her in every rural sight and sound. Often she listened eagerly, and fancied she could hear the joyful hum of many voices from the distant village. Again she listened; was it the sound of distant music she heard? It went, and came again, and she could now hear distinctly a chorus of youthful voices rising on the passing breeze, and could distinguish at intervals, wending their way through the wood, a group of the village children, dressed in white, carrying garlands and green boughs. As they emerged into the open lawn, the group divided, and she saw, surrounded by this youthful band, her beautiful Selim, led by Charles, and followed by Mina, Selina, and Matilda. Selim was decked with flowers, and on the pretty saddle-cloth was placed the crown. They all advanced, still singing; and, in breathless surprise, Leila listened to the following words:—

“The sun has risen on high  
With bright and cheerful ray,  
To greet with loving eye  
Our Leila, queen of May!

“The little birds of air  
Join in our simple lay,  
To greet thee, lady fair,  
Our gentle queen of May!

“The sweetest flowers of spring  
Bloom round thy path to-day,  
A woodland wreath we bring,  
To crown thee queen of May!

“Bright sun, gay birds, fair flowers,  
Speak not alone to-day,  
From these full hearts of ours,  
We hail thee, queen of May!”

Yes, with the universal assent of all their loving hearts, Leila was chosen queen of the May! Wreathed with garlands, she was soon seated on her beautiful favourite, and the procession wound its way, the children singing and scattering flowers, to the village green; there, all unknown to her, her papa, and all the elders of the party were assembled, and under the Maypole was placed the throne, where, amidst all she loved, and cheers from old and young, was Leila crowned and proclaimed Queen of the May!

“Did I no' aye tell ye that peerless jewel o' a bairn was fit to grace a crown?” was Peggy Dobie's observation.

THE END.

---

PUBLISHED BY C. S. FRANCIS & CO., NEW YORK.

---



## **MOTHER GOOSE'S MELODIES.**

THE ONLY PURE EDITION,

CONTAINING  
ALL THAT EVER CAME TO LIGHT OF HER  
MEMORABLE WRITINGS;

TOGETHER WITH  
THOSE WHICH HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED AMONG THE MSS. OF  
HERCULANEUM;

LIKEWISE,  
EVERY ONE RECENTLY FOUND IN THE SAME STONE BOX  
WHICH HOLDS THE GOLDEN PLATES OF  
THE BOOK OF MORMON.

THE WHOLE  
COMPARED, REVISED, AND SANCTIONED,

BY ONE OF THE ANNOTATORS OF THE GOOSE FAMILY.

Improved Edition, with many New Engravings.  
*Paper, 18 cents; with colored pictures, flexible cloth, 37½ cents.*

PUBLISHED BY C. S. FRANCIS & CO., NEW YORK.



## Evenings at Home;

OR,

THE JUVENILE BUDGET OPENED.

By Dr. Aikin and Mrs. Barbauld.

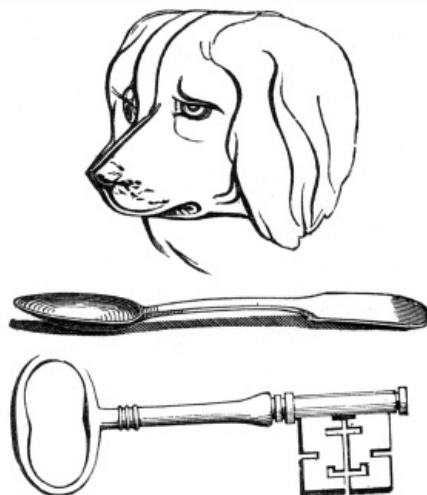
NEWLY REVISED AND CORRECTED.

*ILLUSTRATED WITH FINE ENGRAVINGS.*

87½ cents.

The Publishers present a new, revised, and improved edition of this excellent book, whose well-earned and long-established popularity render it a necessary portion of every juvenile library; and they here present, as far as regards paper and print, binding and pictorial illustration, a *Gift Book* for any season, worthy the acceptance of their young friends.

PUBLISHED BY C. S. FRANCIS & CO., NEW YORK.



## DRAWING

FOR

YOUNG CHILDREN.

CONTAINING  
*ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY PROGRESSIVE DRAWING  
COPIES AND NUMEROUS EXERCISES.*

WITH  
AN INTRODUCTION  
AND DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER.

Bound in cloth, 50 Cents.

PUBLISHED BY C. S. FRANCIS & CO., NEW YORK.



FAR FAMED TALES  
FROM THE  
**Arabian Nights' Entertainments**

CONTAINING  
THE MOST POPULAR STORIES, AND THOSE BEST ADAPTED  
TO FAMILY READING, THE WHOLE OF EACH  
STORY BEING GIVEN FROM THE  
ORIGINAL,  
WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT.

CAREFULLY REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH SOME ADDITIONAL  
AMENDMENTS AND ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES FROM  
LANE'S EDITION.

Illustrated by Numerous Engravings.  
In one volume. \$1.25.

**Typographical errors corrected by the etext transcriber:**

place had **throw** a heavy gloom=> place had thrown a heavy gloom {pg 66}

you need not shake **you** head=> you need not shake your head {pg 70}

the sudden impulses by which your are governed=> the sudden impulses by which you are governed {pg 77}

his beaming **couutenance**=> his beaming countenance {pg 97}

it will be my first lesson in the Scotch **languabe**=> it will be my first lesson in the Scotch language {pg 147}

**you** know I have already told you=> You know I have already told you {pg 164}

**be** said, "but in this case it is impossible"=> he said, "but in this case it is impossible {pg 216}

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LEILA AT HOME \*\*\*

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

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

by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

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

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic

work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

## 1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.



1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.