

Brotherly Love eBook

Brotherly Love by Mary Martha Sherwood

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THE BROTHERS;

Or,

Be not wise in your own conceit.

It was at that time of year when leaves begin to lose their green hue, and are first tintured with a brown shade that increases rather than decreases their beauty, that Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer received a letter from a brother of Mrs. Mortimer's, at Portsmouth, requiring such immediate attention that it was thought advisable that the answer should be given in person and not in writing, and without a day's loss of time. So it was determined that Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer should leave their home, even as soon as the following morning, to visit their brother at Portsmouth, and that they then should settle the business for which they went as quickly as possible, that their absence from home need not be prolonged unnecessarily, nor indeed for any length of time. It did not take long to arrange this part of the affair, and what packing was requisite was also done quickly, but the point which required most attention and thought was, what was to become of Marten and his young brother Reuben while their papa and mamma were away. "I have never left them before," said their mamma, "and I feel somewhat anxious about their being left now."

"Anxious, dear mamma," exclaimed Marten, who had overheard the remark. "Anxious," he repeated, "why I am a great boy now, and I shall soon be a man, when I shall have to take care of myself altogether; and if I cannot take care of myself for a week, what is to become of me when I am grown up? Indeed, mamma, I think you forget how old I am. I was thirteen on the 21st of April."

"Thirteen," lisped little Reuben—"Marten thirteen—April—Oh, Marten very old mamma—very, very wise;" and Reuben opened his eyes quite wide and looked so very earnestly in his mother's face, that one would have thought he was trying to read therein what she could mean about being anxious as to leaving Marten,—the Marten who appeared so very old and so very wise to him,—to take care of himself for a few days without his parents protection. "Thirteen," repeated Mrs. Mortimer, "thirteen no doubt seems very, aye very old, to you Reuben, for you are not yet half that age; but I am more than three times that age," she added, smiling, "and that you know must make me very, very much wiser than Marten, and now once again I say I am anxious about leaving you without your father or myself, and I should be more anxious than I am if I did not believe it is our duty to go at once to Portsmouth; and that it being right for us to go, I can leave you, my boys, in God's care, who is the tenderest of fathers to his children."

"But mamma," asked Marten, "why do you fear for me? Am I not steady, mamma? Do not I like to do what you and papa tell me to do? Am I ever obstinate or rebellious to



you? Indeed, mamma, I feel quite grieved; I think it is unjust to mistrust me, mamma, really I do.”



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“If you feared for yourself, I should have less fear for you, Marten,” replied Mrs. Mortimer, “for I know well that the heart of man is by nature prone to sin, and that our thoughts and desires while we are on earth are like our natures, full of imperfections. Temptations are ever before us—they press upon us every minute, and it is not in our own strength we can resist or overcome even one of them, and while this life lasts we are not safe, unless we acknowledge their powerful influence and trust in the Divine Spirit alone to be able to withstand them.”

“I have not been thought a disobedient boy till now,” said Marten somewhat sulkily. “I think my usual conduct should plead for me.”

“Every child has temptations, Marten,” replied his mamma, “and every well behaved child, though not a pious one, resists them: and in truth these temptations are so numerous, that one scarcely thinks of them, unless we witness the conduct of a spoiled baby, as shame prevents grown up persons giving way to many things. But I want you to see that in this life we are in a state of constant trial, and as St. Paul says, if it were only for this life, a Christian is of all men most miserable; for added to these outward temptations, which assail all mankind daily and hourly, the Christian knows he must resist inward temptations, which perhaps are known to none but himself and his God. These temptations are more pressing than other temptations, on account of their peculiar nature: for the one, if indulged in, brings the displeasure or frowns of the world—the other, as I said before, is perhaps unknown to all human beings but oneself.”

“Well, but mamma,” said Marten impatiently, “I do know all this, for you have taught it me before. It is not like as if I had to learn the thing now for the first time. I think you are too severe, mamma, indeed I do; and when you come back, I believe you will say so. Trust me, mamma, and do not be anxious about me. I shall do very well, and I promise to take good care of Reuben. I will see to his lessons, and do my own, and he shall sleep with me while you are away, and I will attend carefully to him and never leave him, and when I am learning my Latin, he can be in the room with me, and we shall do very well together, I promise you. So trust me, mamma, without anxiety of any sort.”

“I will trust you,” replied Mrs. Mortimer smiling kindly, “but not with yourself Marten, for I see clearly you have a lesson to learn, my boy, and I hope you will learn it shortly, without much trouble to yourself. You think you are going to fulfil all your duties in your own strength, as they ought to be fulfilled. You will see that you cannot. Could human nature, unassisted by the Divine nature, have done so, then what need would there have been for the Son of God to have taken our form and purified our nature in himself? By grace alone are we saved, for there is none good—no, not one; but as God is holy, we must be holy, ere we



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can dwell with Him, and the work of the Divine Spirit is to make us pure; and while we are in the flesh, to uphold us in the right and straight road, till being made one with God our sanctification is accomplished. Now then is our hour of temptation. Marten—and believe me, my boy, if you attempt to withstand that temptation in your own strength, you are like one putting fire to tow, and expecting it will escape conflagration.”

Marten made no reply, for he was tired of the subject; but after Mrs. Mortimer had left the room, he said to Reuben—“Well, we shall see what we shall see, and mamma shall acknowledge I am right after all.” So the carriage came to the door next morning betimes, and Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer got into it, and Marten and Reuben stood in the coach drive to hold the gate open for the carriage to pass through; and the great dog Nero stood by them very much excited, not knowing whether to go with the carriage or to stay with the boys.

“Be sure you see Nero has a run every day, Marten,” said Mr. Mortimer, as the carriage passed through the gate—“that dog wants plenty of exercise.”

“Oh! don’t fear, papa, I shall not forget him,” replied Marten, running a step or two after the carriage; “and mamma, I will attend to your doves—you had forgotten to speak about them, had you not, mamma? I will remember them and Nero too, papa, and Reuben also. Yes, I will attend to all—I shall have plenty of time for all. Have you anything more you wish done, papa?” and Marten was obliged to stop speaking, as the carriage was now going on rapidly, and he found he could not talk and keep up with it at the same time.

“No, no, Marten,” replied Mr. Mortimer laughing—“No, no, my boy—you have got more on your hands now than will suffice you: so off with you home, and take care that when we return we do not find the doves flown, Nero lost, or Reuben with black eye or bruised leg, and yourself in some unlucky plight, my boy. Now go home, and God bless and watch over you, my sons. We hope it will not be long before we return,” and he waved his hand to bid good bye. Marten had run himself out of breath, so he was not able to answer his father, and he was not sorry to stand still an instant or two to watch the carriage out of sight, and give time for Reuben to overtake him, for the child could not keep up with his brother’s quick running. And even now Marten might have read this lesson, had he been wise enough so to do that already, he had been led away by temptation to forget his brother, and that though he had done so, Nero had been more faithful than himself; for Nero, though he could have outran Marten, yet would not forsake the child, but restrained his impatience that he might keep near the little one, who ever needed a protector by his side, for the child was young, and his mother had perhaps reared him too delicately.



Reuben had never before been separated from his mamma, and he was half inclined to cry, and perhaps fret at her absence; but Marten, who was a very kind brother, and really loved the child tenderly, contrived so to divert his attention that he soon forgot his troubles.

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Marten was so bent upon behaving well during his mamma's and papa's absence and of fulfilling every duty, that though Reuben wished to stay out all morning and play, his brother would not allow it, but persuaded him to go in with him and say his lessons, as if his mamma had been at home. But Marten had taken upon himself much more than was required of him by his parents, and it was not without difficulty, even on the first day, determined as he was upon the point, that he could fulfil all his intentions, for Marten had not taken into consideration that if he thoroughly devoted himself to Reuben, he could not spend his time in learning his own lessons, which usually occupied the best hours of the morning. The doves could be fed whilst Reuben was by his side—indeed Reuben could be very useful in this matter, for he had been accustomed to visit the aviary daily with his mamma, and the pretty birds knew him and were not as afraid of him as they were of his big brother Marten. So Reuben fed the doves himself, and stroked their soft feathers, and washed out their little tin in which the water was put for them to drink; and he placed the food for them in its right corner, and he swept out the floor of the aviary, for he was small enough to stand upright within it, and he knew how to do it without frightening the birds. So far all was well, and all was well too whilst Reuben was saying his lessons; but when Marten wanted to study his Latin exercise, the child was so restless and troublesome, that it was only by speaking very decidedly to him—indeed almost crossly—that Marten could get a moment to himself.

But even then Marten had to shut up his book somewhat hastily, for Reuben began to cry for his mamma, who never spoke sharply to him, and was always ready to attend to the little one by a kind look or tender word.

Marten was, however, so satisfied with himself in having accomplished all his plans for the day, that he did not see how he had given way to temptation in being cross when provoked; and as he put Reuben to bed, for he chose to do it himself, he could not help saying aloud, "I wish mamma could have followed me unseen all day: how pleased she would have been with me, for I have done all I meant to do, even though I was tempted more than once to leave something undone."

The next morning Marten arose, perhaps not quite so earnest in his intentions as the day before, but still there was only a slight disinclination to fulfil all his duties—so slight, indeed, that he would have been very angry if any one had spoken to him about it, and hinted at the truth. In this frame of mind, though most things were done, some few were slurred over, particularly the Latin Exercise and Grammar, for Marten's papa had not set him any task, and had even said Marten might have a holiday during his absence; and at any other time the boy would have been glad of this indulgence, but now he fancied himself so good, that he believed he could do everything, and everything well.



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“I will do an exercise to-morrow, Reuben,” said Marten. “Papa does not expect any done, and if I have one for every other day to shew him, he will be very much pleased, I know.”

Reuben, as may be supposed, could not make a suitable reply to this; for all he understood about it was, that Marten was going out with him instead of staying at home to do that troublesome Latin. So Reuben was pleased and Marten was thoughtless, and out together they went and enjoyed themselves not a little, in the pleasant autumn weather.

Thus hours passed on, and the third day brought a letter from Mrs. Mortimer, which was not quite satisfactory, for it said that the business which took her and her husband from home could not be easily settled, and they feared they would be detained a whole fortnight at Portsmouth. Mrs. Mortimer, however, was not uneasy about her boys, for she knew that the servants, with whom she had left them, were quiet steady persons, who would not allow them to do what was wrong without speaking to them; and then Reuben was such an universal favourite, that she felt sure no one would be wilfully unkind to him. But above all, Mrs. Mortimer trusted her children with Him who “knoweth our frame and remembereth we are but dust.” Psal. ciii. 14.

Mrs. Mortimer had been absent about a week, and Marten was still in ignorance of the weakness of human nature, at least as far as he was himself personally concerned, when one morning Reuben came running to him in great distress, to say that the doves were missing—his mamma’s own pretty birds that she loved so much; and Reuben, whose tears were somewhat too ready, began to cry, for he feared, poor child, the cat had eaten them, or some other misfortune equally distressing had befallen them.

“Was the door of the aviary open?” asked Marten. “Are you sure it was open, Reuben? or did you open it yourself?”

“It was open,” said Reuben, “wide, wide open—so wide, Marten;” and he made his brother understand that he had gone inside without stirring it the least little bit.

“It was open, you say,” replied the elder boy, “but how could that be? You or some one have been careless, very careless, Reuben; for it is certain the birds could not open it for themselves.” Reuben was about to cry again, but Marten soothed him, for all at once Marten remembered that the careless—very careless person was none other than himself; for on the day before, whilst Reuben was sweeping out the aviary, Marten had called him hurriedly, and though the child had once proposed to return, his brother had kept him by his side for some trifling purpose, and so they had both forgotten the aviary door was open. However, the doves were gone, and they must be reclaimed, if alive, but if dead—what a sad story would there be for Mrs. Mortimer. So the books were put by, and the two boys went out in search of the birds, and Reuben, who understood their ways, took the precaution to carry with him the box in which their food was usually



placed. On this occasion there was a nice piece of cake put into the box, which was to be crumbled for the doves, and Reuben knew that they liked cake as well as he did himself, and more especially the kind of cake which cook had given him.



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Have you ever heard of a person who it is said once looked for a needle in a pottle of hay? for if so, you may picture to yourself the feelings of Marten when he started to find the ringdoves. But perhaps you will say, anyhow, the needle would lie still, unless the man who was searching for it should shake the straw too roughly, and throw it out, therefore the space of its concealment, being a limited space, supposing the pottle the very largest ever made, there would be a chance in time of its discovery, but not so the case of the birds. They had wings to fly with, and miles of lovely blue sky to fly through, and green branches to rest on, and harvest fields to alight in, that is if they were in the land of the living; but, perhaps, after all, mistress pussy had destroyed them, and their pretty feathers, perhaps their only relics left, might be so scattered by the wind, that already they might be yards and yards separated from each other. With these sad forebodings clouding his brow, Marten set off with Reuben on his search, feeling that it was a hopeless one, and not one word did the boy utter to all Reuben's lamentations as they crossed the meadow which was spread in front of their house towards a little wood, which was the home of many a bird of the pigeon or dove species, and therefore Marten thought would be the most likely place to go first to look after the strayed ones. Think, then, what must have been his joy as they entered the second meadow not far from the stile, absolutely to behold the ringdoves, his mamma's own ringdoves walking upon the grass cooing and billing, and turning about their soft eyes in this direction and the other, as if half afraid of the freedom they had acquired for themselves. As to Reuben, he was so pleased, that the little foolish fellow clapped his hands and shouted for joy, which so alarmed the doves, that they took to their wings and soared high, but flutteringly in the air, as if in their fright they did not know what they ought to do for their own safety. Marten was very angry with Reuben for his folly—very angry indeed, and I hardly know what it was he said; only this I do know, that he took the box of cake from the child's hand, and bade him stand at a particular spot—about twenty yards or so, in a direction farthest from the wood, and from the stile leading to their home; "and there," he added, "remain till I tell you you may stir, if you are so stupid as not to know that clapping your hands and shouting loud will frighten any birds, particularly timid ones like doves—tame doves, especially, who have strayed from their home."

Marten looked so cross, that Reuben did not even like to cry, for he felt he had been very silly; so the poor little fellow stood where his brother had bade him stand, half afraid to breathe, and quite afraid of moving—lest by any noise he should again drive away the doves, and Marten should again be angry. And there we will leave him to speak of how his brother set himself to work to reclaim his mother's birds.

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I have said before that he had some cake in a box in his hand, and having tossed off his hat—lest by any accident it should fall off when he was stooping forwards, he threw himself upon the grass his full length, and as he rested on his right hand; with his left he sprinkled some of the cake he had with him on the ground, to attract the doves near to him, in the hope he would catch one; and the second, he rightly guessed, would not then be long out of his power. Marten relied on the tame habits of the doves, who had been accustomed not only to eat out of his brother's hands, but also from his mother's, and occasionally of late from his own; but it is a different thing feeding birds in their own aviary, and when they have escaped half wild to their native haunts. And now, whilst the boy stretched upon the ground, was wholly occupied in the earnest desire of reclaiming the wanderers, Reuben's attention after awhile was diverted by seeing that some one was approaching towards them from a hill, in a direction farthest from their home. This person was riding at no slow pace, and as I said before, as his road led him down hill, he seemed not to spare his horse; meeting the wind, as Reuben thought gloriously, and passing along at a pace, the child considered more glorious still. "When I am a man," the little fellow said to himself, "I will ride so, I will have a horse, and I will ride very very fast,—yes,—that I will."

Now it seemed that the rider from the elevated road could look over the meadows below, and probably having good eyes, for they certainly were young and sharp ones, he soon spied out Marten and Reuben, and as it came out afterwards that Marten was the person he sought after, he caused his pony to leap over a small ditch that was in his way, and then guiding it to a gate he dismounted and fastened the animal to the post by its bridle. In leaping the ditch his hat had fallen off, and making signs to a large Newfoundland dog that had accompanied him, the noble animal was by him directed to lie down near the horse and take charge of the hat, whilst his master stepped lightly along the grass in the direction where Marten lay extended, so occupied about the doves as to regard nothing that was passing round him. The new comer was a youth of about Marten's own age, the only child of a gentleman who lived about four miles from Marten's father, and the most constant companion that Marten possessed. His name was Edward Jameson, and he shall himself say the cause of his present visit. Reuben knew Edward well, and he recognized him before he had tied his pony to the gate post, but he had not seen the fine Newfoundland dog before, and Reuben was so fond of dogs. The little fellow remembered that Marten had forbidden him to leave the tree or to speak, but he could not keep his small feet from moving up and down restlessly, nor could he scarce command himself not to call out and tell his brother of Edward's arrival. But Edward



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wanted to see what Marten was doing in the very odd attitude he had taken, so he crept noiselessly on, his head turned somewhat sideways to Reuben, and his hand held up threateningly to the child, for he saw he had been recognised, and he was afraid of some hasty word, which would cause Marten to start up, and then he feared he should not surprise his friend. Edward was able to get quite close to Marten, and even to touch him before Marten was aware of his presence; and he stepped up so quietly, that the doves were so little frightened, that they hardly stopped a moment from picking up the crumbs.

“Why Marten, old fellow, what are you doing here?” asked Edward. “Whose doves are those, I say? are they your mother’s? have you let them loose—Eh?” Edward spoke softly, but not so softly that he did not cause Marten to start at the unexpected sound of his voice; still, as the birds were at some little distance, and were accustomed to the human voice, they scarcely were alarmed, and hardly moved a step or two away from the crumbs scattered for them, and Marten recovering himself quickly, said—“Oh! Edward, do help me to catch these doves: they have escaped from their aviary, and my mother will be so vexed if they fly away.”

“To be sure I will,” replied Edward; “but my boy, who is in the habit of feeding them, for that person would best know how to catch them I should say.”

“My mother feeds them herself chiefly,” said Marten, “and Reuben sometimes attends to them when she is engaged.”

“Well, set Reuben to decoy them now, for I am in a hurry and have got something to say to you as quickly as possible, and it is very important. Anyhow, the child can watch them whilst you are attending to me.”

So Reuben was called from his station at the tree, and Marten gave him directions what he was to do; and the now little important one lay down on the grass, as Marten had done before him; and as might have been expected, the doves, accustomed to his baby voice and small figure, soon drew nearer and nearer to him, so that when the conference was over between the two elder boys, Reuben was able proudly to shew not one, but both doves, so wrapped up in his pinafore, that though they fluttered about a little, they were quite secure. “Come here a step or two from the child,” said Edward, “and don’t think of those troublesome birds just now, but tell me at once, can you come and pay me a visit for a couple of days? my cousins William Roscoe and Jane and Mary are expected at our house to night on their way to London. You know William Roscoe, Marten, and what a fine fellow he is and I have asked my father and mother, and they have allowed me to get as many young ones together as the short time would allow, and we are to have splendid fun. Won’t you come, Marten? I promise you a glorious time of it, if you will but come.”



[Illustration]

“My father is from home,” replied Marten thoughtfully, “and so is my mother, but I don’t think that matters, Edward: they have never refused my visiting you, and I do not think they would now. Indeed, I am sure they would not, if they were at home, but what am I to do with Reuben? I have taken charge of Reuben whilst mamma is away, and what can I do about him?”



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“About Reuben,” returned Edward? “can’t the servants take care of him at home? he will do very well at home, and be very contented, I know.”

“But I have undertaken the charge of him,” said Marten, “and I should not like, after what I have said, to leave him, even for a couple of days. I must either bring him with me, Edward, or stay at home with him—indeed, I must.”

“Well, then, bring the little fellow,” replied Edward kindly; “anything so as you come, Marten; and remember there will be plenty of girls invited, for Jane and Mary Roscoe, and Reuben can surely play with them, and they will take care of him, no doubt. So bring him, by all means, if that is the only hindrance; but still, I say, you would do better to leave him at home with the servants; however, that’s your business, not mine. I reckon on you to-morrow, about eleven o’clock—to stay all night, next day, and the night following, if you like; so good bye, till then. I have half the country to ride over to beat up my recruits;” and without waiting another word from his friend, Edward ran across the meadow, snatched up his hat from where the faithful dog was carefully guarding it, sprang upon his pony, and then once again leaping the ditch, he cantered off at a pace so rapid, he was soon lost to Marten’s sight.

How pleased was Reuben to shew his brother that he had caught the doves, and Marten was also pleased: for any how he need not distress himself about them, as they were secured, but he thought it advisable to take them under his own charge, as he considered he could hold them firmer than the little one. And now the boys ran home as quickly as they could, and the pretty birds were shut up in their aviary, and Marten hastened to the kitchen to find the house-maid, who was called nurse, as she had been Reuben’s nurse before she had changed her occupation in the family, the child no longer requiring a personal attendant. In the kitchen Marten learnt that she was gone out into the garden to gather some herbs for the cook, and thither he followed her to tell her that his friend Edward Jameson had been with him, and what had been the purport of his visit.

“Nurse,” said Marten, when he found her, “I am come to ask you to get mine and Reuben’s things ready to-night, for I am going to take him with me to spend a couple of days at Mr. Jameson’s; and there will be company there in the evenings, so we must have our best things, nurse, and will you be so kind as to see after the doves, and tell Thomas to loosen Nero’s chain every day, that he may have a good scamper over the fields, for papa says he should have plenty of exercise.”

“Stop, stop, master Marten,” replied nurse, “what is all this about? your things and master Reuben’s, do you say, are to be got ready for two day’s visit—and the doves fed? am I to find them before I feed them, master Marten?” and nurse laughed.



“They are found, nurse,” answered the boy, “and they are now safe in the aviary, and I will take care the door shall not be opened again while mamma is away. I mean to put a padlock on, nurse, so you see no one can let them out, and I shall keep the key myself.”



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“Oh! master Marten, master Marten!” said nurse, laughing again—“I see, if it depended upon you, we should all be in a bad way, and so the poor birds are to be locked up, are they: and master Reuben is not to be allowed to go into the aviary to talk to them, as the little one loves to do—and all for what? Give me a steady ruler, if you please—not such as you, master Marten—a fine head of a family you will make, if one may judge of your boasted management of the doves in the first part of the story, and then the leaving the aviary door open and finishing with locking them up and keeping the key yourself. Well for their happiness—mistress will soon be at home to attend to them herself; but what are you going to do with the child, my own darling? I can’t have any tricks played with him, I tell you.”

“Tricks, nurse,” repeated Marten passionately. “What? do you mean to say I would play tricks with my own brother? No one loves Reuben, I am sure, better than I do, unless it is mamma. What do you mean, nurse?”

“What do you mean, then, master Marten, by saying you are going to take the child amongst strangers, neither me nor his mamma being with him, and he never accustomed to strangers—and company in the house too—I don’t half like it—and I know I feel half inclined to say he shan’t go.”

“And pray under whose charge was he left?” asked Marten. “Your’s or mine, nurse? I should like to know.”

“It was much of a muchness,” replied the good woman. “Missis said to you, take care of your brother; but missis knew I loved the sweet darling too dearly to require even half a word on the subject. And supposing he does go with you, master Marten, who is to put the dear child to bed at nights? I must insist, indeed I must, that you see to it yourself. I know how frightened he will be amongst strangers at bed time.”

“To be sure I will, nurse,” said Marten, glad to see the good woman was so far giving in to his wishes. “I promise not only to sleep with him, but to take him to bed myself and stay with him till he is asleep.”

“Well, well, master Marten,” exclaimed nurse impatiently—“Well, well, don’t undertake too much and then do nothing; and I must say again,” she continued warming with her subject, “that the child had better be left at home where there are plenty to look after him, and not be carried off to that strange house, away from us all.”

“Oh! me go with Marten, nurse, dear nurse! me go with Marten!” said little Reuben imploringly, for the child had just joined them in time to hear nurse’s last remark. “Oh! Reuben so like to go with Marten.”

“You don’t know what is best for you, silly one,” replied nurse, “nor who is your truest friend either, but your little head is bent upon being a man soon, and you must ever be

trying to do what your brother does. But, master Marten, how can you play or go about with master Jameson, and yet attend to this child too?"



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“Oh! I can take care of Reuben, and yet have plenty of time for myself, nurse, I am sure,” said Marten.

“That’s according,” answered nurse, “for if you are always giving your company to this little one here, and she patted Reuben on the back, he will keep you smartly to it whenever he is awake, I promise you. Won’t you, my pet? Are you not a weary little fellow, darling?” she added, as she stooped to kiss him, “that is when you can get folks to be wearied with you.”

“No, nurse,” answered the child stoutly;—“no—me not weary—me not tired—me don’t want to go to bed.”

“Bless your pretty tongue,” exclaimed nurse; “but here, take this parsley to cook, and say it is the finest double parsley I can find, there’s a darling.”

As Reuben ran away on his errand, nurse addressed herself to Marten in a kind motherly manner, for nurse was not a young woman, and she was also a pious one. “Master Marten,” she said, “I am sure you will be kind to the little one—you always are—for I must say you are one of the very best brothers I know, and that is saying a deal for you—for I believe there are many good brothers and sisters in the world, and yet, pardon your old nurse, young master, when she tells you you are doing wrong, though I think your intention is good. Look to your own heart, master Marten, and ask yourself why are you dragging this poor child after you to Mr. Jameson’s. I was in the room with Missis when she was speaking to you the day before she left, and I heard what she said about temptation, and how we are tempted every hour in the day. You did not believe her, master Marten, and you do not believe her now, and you are going to try temptation to the very utmost, and you think you will stand it, and I know you won’t, for I remember what my dear lady said, that no one can resist temptation in their own strength. This is the reason why I don’t like my baby to go with you, but if you, my dear young master, will just think over what your mamma said, and ask for the approval of your Saviour and the direction of his Holy Spirit in all things—why then, as I said before, I will trust my darling with you any where, for I know that you love him dearly, and would not willingly hurt a hair of his precious little head.”

“Nurse,” exclaimed Marten indignantly, “one would imagine I had been very unkind to Reuben whilst mamma has been away; now I don’t think it is fair, and if I were to leave my brother at home and stay out a couple of days enjoying myself, papa and mamma might both justly think I had neglected him; No, I have undertaken the care of him till their return, and I mean to fulfil my undertaking: and I must say, unless you have any unkindness to charge me with, I consider you have no business to speak to me as you have done.” And Marten walked away with a heart determined to resist the wise advice of nurse.



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And now nurse had nothing for it but to get the things ready for the boys the next day, for nurse knew that Marten was always allowed, if convenient, to go to Mr. Jameson's when invited, and as the houses were about four miles apart, she also knew he was in the habit of staying there all night, if asked so to do. As regards Reuben, he too had been there once or twice to stay with his mamma, but nurse considered very wisely, that it was a very different thing, a child of the little one's age going from home with or without his mamma; but still she could not interfere more than she had done, for Reuben had certainly been put under his brother's care. She did, however, try to persuade the little one that he would be better at home with her, but any person who knows the ways of children might easily guess nurse might as well have spoken to a post as to Reuben, for all the good she did, for the boy began to cry, and begged so hard to go with his brother to play with the big boys at Mr. Jameson's, that she thought it as well to say no more on the subject.

And now I must pass over some hours till the time came for John to drive the boys over in the pony carriage to Mr. Jameson's. Marten could have walked the four miles very well, or he could have rode there on his own pony, but Reuben could not have walked half so far, and thus it happened, that as John had something to do he could not leave undone, it was quite twelve o'clock before the three arrived at Mr. Jameson's house, and thus it chanced that they were almost the last comers of the party of children invited to meet the Roscoes.

It was a lovely day, and as warm as any summer day, though the autumn was just setting in, and such a group of young children were at play on the grass plat, near the house, that the like Marten nor Reuben had never seen before. It was such a very pretty sight, that John quite forgot to give out of the carriage the parcel nurse had made of the young gentlemen's clothes; and the consequence was, he had all the trouble to come back half a mile of the road, when he suddenly bethought himself of his forgetfulness. But as to the pretty sight John saw, I wish I could draw you a picture of it; if I could I would, I promise you, and I would put it in this very page for you to see. Fancy, then, a beautifully soft velvet lawn, in front of a large handsome house, upon which lawn the sun shines warmly but kindly, and the blue sky looks most pleasingly there and here, broken by white clouds that relieve the eye without obscuring the light. At the farthest end of the lawn from the house were some fine trees, under the shelter of which two girls were playing at battledore and shuttlecock, and very well they played too. A little nearer this way, that is where John and the carriage stood, in the direction of the house, was a young child seated on the turf holding a dog, whilst two other children were trying to make it jump to catch a flower, one held in her hand. There was also a big boy on

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a pony talking to a great girl, who was lying on the grass; but the prettiest group of girls were standing or kneeling round a pet lamb which they were decking with wreaths of flowers. They none of them wore bonnets nor walking dresses, and even the boy on the pony was without a hat. Why they had all agreed to uncover their heads, I cannot say exactly, but I know they had been having some joke about it before the young Mortimers arrived; and the great girl on the turf had even then got her brother's cap and had hidden it somewhere, and it was to ask her about it he had ridden up to her on his pony, as she rested on the grass.

[Illustration]

"Oh! they are all girls but one," exclaimed Marten in a disappointed tone, "and I am afraid I shall not find the boys easily, and I hate playing with girls."

"As much as we girls dislike playing with rude boys, master Mortimer," said Jane Roscoe, advancing forwards and replying to Marten's speech, which had really been addressed to John; "but understand we are the fairies of this lawn—this is our territory, and my aunt Jameson has bestowed it upon us. We take tribute if you intrude on our premises, so either be off to your own mates, or lay down your cap as owning our sway as ladies and queens of the lawn."

"I am sure I would rather go to your brother, or Edward, Miss Roscoe," replied Marten, "if you would but tell me where I should find them."

"No doubt near the stables, or at the dog kennels," she answered pertly, "so you had better go, for I tell you we don't want boys amongst us; we have had some trouble in ridding ourselves of them just now."

"And if they are all like you, I am sure I for one don't want to stay," thought Marten; and he took Reuben's hand to seek his friends, where the young lady had so uncourteously directed him to find them.

And here, before I would follow Marten to find his young friends, I would wish to remark that it is such girls as Jane Roscoe who make rude boys, and such young women that make rude men. Boys and men generally take their manners from the females with whom they associate, and when one sees a very rude boy, it does not speak well for his sisters at home, or at least for the young ladies with whom he may happen to be most intimate. As to regular schoolboys, they are rude, because schoolboys in general are famed for bad manners, and young gentlemen seem to like to bring this odium on schools, fancying rudeness is manliness, when in reality it is a decided sign of the contrary. Think of the bravest men that have been known, that is bravest in their own persons, and I will venture to say they have been gentle and courteous in female



society, for they know and feel they can dare to be so, as their credit for manly daring is known and acknowledged by every one. Take one of your rough ones, and I for one set him down as a mere bully, that hides his cowardice under blustering words. But I have wandered somewhat from my point, for I was saying rude girls make rude boys, as shewn in the case of Jane Roscoe; and civil girls make civil boys, as evinced in her sister Mary, as I am going to relate.



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“Me want to go to the pretty lamb,” said Reuben, hanging heavily on his brother:—“Me go to the lamb—me don’t like horses.”

“But you shall see the great big Newfoundland, Reuben, that you admired so much yesterday,” said his brother. “Should you not like to see the large black dog?”

“Reuben wants to go to lamb,” replied the child, and he resolutely stood still. “Pretty lamb, Reuben, go to lamb now.”

“You can’t go to the lamb, Reuben,” said his brother impatiently, “so you must be content to go with me to see the large black dog. I am not going to give up my cap to any one, I promise you; so come on now, and don’t keep me staying here all day.”

But Reuben, as nurse had said, was a weary little fellow when bent upon any thing, and now he was bent upon going to play with the lamb, so he was determined not to move, or if he did it should only be in the direction of the lawn. Marten was, however, almost as determined to go the other way, on account of Jane Roscoe, and for a moment there seemed a doubt which boy should carry the day. The elder had the most strength, and he was inclined to use it, for Miss Roscoe had offended him, and lifting the child from the ground he was about to run off with him in the direction of the stables, when Reuben, not accustomed to opposition of this description, set up a loud cry of passion, which at once drew the attention of all near to himself and his brother.

“There,” exclaimed Jane, “what are you teasing the little one so for? why not let him have his own way and come amongst us, if he will?”

“Well, go,” said Marten angrily, “go, Reuben, if you like; but I tell you I will not come with you.”

But this was not what Reuben desired, and he stood at a little distance from his brother looking, I am sorry to say, very naughty and selfish, for he was really wishing Marten to give up his own desires to attend to and humour his; and so now he stood moving neither one way nor another, his face turned towards the lamb so finely bedecked with flowers. His cry, however, had aroused the young girls from their occupation, and Mary Roscoe, whom one would have supposed had been really kissing the lamb, so close was her face to it, when Marten had first seen her; sprang from her knees, and running across the lawn to the gravel path, now stooped down to Reuben, and looking him kindly in the face—“Little boy,” she said, “what did you cry for? what did you want? tell me, little boy, and I will see what I can do. I am a fairy, little boy. We are all fairies on that turf, and I will take you with me to fairy land and shew you some fairy wonders.”

Reuben at once and without hesitation put his hand in hers, saying—“Me go see pretty lamb me go with you—me will go.”

“Then come along,” said Mary, and turning her head over her shoulder towards Marten, she added, “I will take care of him; so you may go to Edward and William if you like, and I dare say you will like it better than playing with girls.”



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“Oh! thank you, Miss Mary, thank you,” replied Marten most gratefully to the kind little girl, “thank you, I am so much obliged to you.”

But Marten spoke aloud, and thus drew Reuben’s attention to the fact that he was going to be left with strangers, and once more he raised a cry as much of passion as of fear. So Marten, to soothe him, made a step towards the lawn with the child, though Mary still held his hand, giving a private sign to Marten that he might slip away on the first opportunity.

“Your tribute, your tribute,” exclaimed Jane Roscoe: “not one step upon the grass, Master Mortimer, without giving up your cap as a sign you own us ‘The ladies of the lawn.’ Give it up, I command, or stay where you are.”

“Will you give it me again in a minute or two, as I come back,” asked Marten?

“Ask Frank Farleigh there if he has got his,” said Jane. “You shall have yours when he has found his, that is if we can hide it as securely.”

“Then you may get it as you can,” retorted Marten rudely, stepping upon the grass, and on Jane’s springing after him setting off on a race as fast as he could across the lawn, in utter defiance of the young girls. A cry was raised instantly, and all the children left their sports to pursue the boy, who had thus boldly defied their power; and lucky was it for him that he was agile and could twist and turn in his course as rapidly as a hare. But when there is at least twelve to one and a clear space, the raced has little chance, and thus it came about that the boy in self defence was forced to fly towards the stables as the only place of safety, having no leisure even to think that he was leaving his brother amongst strangers, proving himself unable to withstand temptation, even during one short hour of his visit. Marten, too, had raised a war between himself and the young girls of the party, which was not likely to be settled peacefully during the time of their stay at Mrs. Jameson’s, and thus he had, to a certain sense, separated himself either from Reuben or from the bigger boys, without intending to do so for the two parties, as might be foreseen by any experienced eye, were of too different a sort to get on hourly together, as their tastes and amusements were utterly at variance.

As my story is intended to shew that temptations hourly assail us, and that in our own strength we cannot often resist them, else wherefore did Our Lord teach his disciples to pray that they might not be led into temptation, but because he knew that man of himself never turns away from the forbidden fruit. I shall not here speak much of how after a good run hither and thither, Marten at last found Edward and his companions in an open field, most of the horses and dogs from the stables being collected together, and such a scene of excitement going on that the boy had no leisure to think of anything that was not passing before his eye; and therefore, as Reuben did not appear,



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he, like the rest being unseen, was forgotten. In excuse for Marten I must say that he first ran to the stables, and there learnt from a boy whom he found there, that Master Jameson had had permission that morning from his papa to have out one or two of the horses and ponies, on condition that Chambers, the old coachman, and Rogers, the groom, were present with the young gentlemen, and that every obedience were paid to their directions, so that if they saw anything wrong they might enforce attention to their requests.

As many of the young gentlemen too had ridden over on their ponies to Mr. Jameson's, there were a goodly collection of horses assembled together, and the races that ensued, and the leaping over low fences that followed, so quickly passed away the time that when the first bell rang, announcing that dinner would shortly be served, Marten was quite astonished to find that it was nearly three o'clock, and that almost two hours had passed since he had seen his brother. But now, as the boys were taking the horses and dogs to the stables, he hastened towards the house as fast as he could, for he saw the lawn was tenant-less, and knowing the way to the room where he usually slept when at Mrs. Jameson's, he hurried up the stairs only to find that his things had been placed there, and that Reuben's little parcel had been taken elsewhere and was probably where the child also was, for no Reuben was to be seen. As Marten could meet with no servant, he ran along the gallery trying to distinguish amongst the many voices he heard on all sides that of his brother's, but in vain, so many were the sounds that reached his ear, and as he did not like to open any of the doors, or push those farther open that were not quite closed, he raised his voice and called aloud "Reuben, Reuben, I want you—Reuben come to me in the passage—here I am—come to me Reuben."

To Marten's annoyance, instead of his brother replying to his call, Jane Roscoe stepped out into the gallery, exclaiming—"Oh! it is you, is it? Whom do you want? What are you come here for? these are the girl's rooms! those are our bedrooms, and this is our sitting room. Are you come to make an apology for your rudeness this morning? If so, I will call the rest out to hear what you have to say."

"I want my brother, Miss Roscoe," replied Marten, trying to speak civilly. "May I go into your sitting room, or would you have the goodness to tell him to come to me here."

"I shall do no such thing," answered Miss Jane, "you may get him as you can, though I do not know how you will manage to do that either; for Mary has taken such a fancy to the little fellow, that she will not give him up easily."

"Would you tell me if Reuben is content?" asked Marten, "for if so I would rather leave him with Miss Mary."



“Just pop your head inside that door,” said the rude girl, “and judge for yourself, that is, if you dare to do so—for your brother is there, and Mary and a dozen more girls. Do you dare?” she inquired mockingly, “come let me see you do it, then.”



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“Dare,” repeated Marten indignantly, “and why should I not dare—I want my brother.”

“Do it then,” said Jane, “if you are not a coward, which I strongly suspect you are;” and when was a spirited boy of thirteen so urged on that had the prudence to know where to stop with propriety to himself. Marten, choking with rage, did advance to the door pointed out, and put his head inside, and there, on beholding a group of young ladies of all ages, from eight to fourteen, and no little brother, and finding all eyes turned upon himself as an impertinent intruder, he drew his head back quickly, and was met with a loud laugh from Jane, which so annoyed him, that without stopping to think, he ran off to his own room as fast as he could. The voice of Mary Roscoe however reached him as he ran along the gallery, uttering these words: “I’ll take care of Reuben, Master Marten—I’ll take care of Reuben, he is very happy.” And so Marten allowed himself to be content, and as he knew dinner would shortly be ready, he lost no more time, but set to dress himself in his best as quickly as he could. Mr. and Mrs. Jameson did not dine with the young people, but Mrs. Jameson came in and walked round the table, and spoke to most of the young ladies and gentlemen, and asked after their papas and mammas, and she said she hoped they would be good children and enjoy themselves very much, and in the evening she and Mr. Jameson would come in to see them at play. She told Jane Roscoe she expected her and Mary to take care of the young ladies and see that they had everything they wanted, and she said much the same to her son and William Roscoe about the boys.

There was a very long dining table laid out, and, as might be expected, all the boys got together at the end where Edward sat, and all the girls got round Jane Roscoe, for it must be remembered that hostilities had begun in the morning between the boys and girls, and Jane was not the kind of girl to make peace, or desire to make peace and conduct herself as would be becoming a young lady. Frank Farleigh, indeed, crossed the barrier, and once again demanded his cap from his sister, but he pleaded in vain, and I do not know how the matter would have been settled if good-natured Mary Roscoe had not proposed that it should be considered as a forfeit, and that the cap should be cried with the other forfeits in the evening games. “And I promise you it shall be hardly won,” cried Jane, and Frank’s sister then whispered to her as if they were settling what Frank was to do for it, and then Jane laughed—her teasing laugh—and if Frank did give his sister a most cruel schoolboy pinch, I can’t but say she had only herself and her rude companion to thank for it. “I don’t care,” he said, as he joined the boys, “I can wear that old cap of Edward’s, and when I go home they *must* give it back to me.”



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During this time Marten was looking about for Reuben, and soon he saw that the little fellow was seated by Mary Roscoe, as happy as possible, for Mary was a kind-hearted girl, and loved every thing and every body, and every body loved her, and now she was taking care that the child was helped before herself, and with what he liked, and when she met Marten's eye, she kissed Reuben very earnestly, and called him a sweet darling and her own pet, and she asked the little one if he did not love Mary. Reuben returned the kiss and looked so smilingly up at Marten, that his brother could not but be contented, and having thanked Mary most heartily for her very great kindness, he was only too glad to get away once more to where the boys were seated. Poor Marten was not aware, and I do not exactly see how he should have been aware, that the easy kindness of Mary Roscoe was but too likely now to bring his brother into trouble, for Mary did not like to refuse the little fellow any thing; and as the child was hungry and more than ready for the meal, for it was past his usual dinner hour, I am obliged to confess he ate greedily of the good things set before him, one after another without moderation or discernment, pudding following meat, and cheese after pudding, and fruit after that, till quantity and diversity were so mingled together, that it was a wonder the babe endured himself as well as he did. He was, however, so satisfied and even cloyed, that towards the end of the time he contented himself with a taste of this and that, and under the easy rule of Miss Mary, the remnants of his desert were transferred to his pockets, to serve to regale him at some future moment. I have said that Marten could not have been aware of this foolish weakness of Mary Roscoe, but Marten was not free of blame in the affair, for he had started wrongly as regarded Reuben, and in his self conceit he had placed himself in circumstances where the temptations that surrounded him were more than his nature unaided could resist. Marten would not listen to those who would have taught him that our blessed Saviour verily took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham, wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour those that are tempted. Heb. ii. 16, 17, 18. But we shall soon see from Marten's story a verification of the words of St. Paul addressed to the children of God. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 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 ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. x. 12, 13.



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And now,—to return to Reuben, he had ate and ate so much, that I am almost ashamed even to think of it; and silly Mary Roscoe, who should have put a bridle on his little mouth, never once thought of doing so, and how should she, for she had never had one on her own? till the poor child felt so uncomfortable that he was half ready to cry—for, added to the over quantity he had contrived to swallow, he was very weary, for he was but a young one, and he had been out in the air all the morning and undergoing more active exercise than even he was accustomed to go through, for he had moved about at the direction of others, and not by his own voluntary will. So feeling uneasy, he was just about to raise a cry, which I believe would have recalled Marten to a sense of his duty, when the whole troop of children rose from table to amuse themselves as best they liked till six o'clock, when tea was to be served in a large room for them, and the evening was to be finished in games of whatever description they chose, Mr. and Mrs. Jameson having promised to be present.

Marten just stopped to see Mary Roscoe lead off his brother, who accompanied her very contentedly, and then I am obliged to own he thought no more of the little fellow for such a length of time, that we who take an interest in poor little Reuben must banish Marten from our thoughts and follow the child, the poor little victim of his brother's self conceit. The young ladies on leaving the dining room ascended the stairs and went to the room with which Marten had so daringly put his head in the morning, and here they divided into groups of two or three, as chance might be, and a chattering began, the like of which could never be heard again, unless under the like circumstances. It seems a cruel thing to try to put down any of the nonsense, and perhaps worse than nonsense, that was then and there talked; and I would not do so if I did not hope it would prove a warning to some girls that persons do listen to their conversation sometimes when they fancy no one hears, and that those same persons do think them very silly and ignorant, and occasionally wrong. And first, I will take a party of three girls, who all went to the same school, and these three, I am sorry to say, were talking of their governess and teachers in a way they ought never to have done. It was not Mrs. Meredith and Miss Williams, and Miss Smith, but it was "Meredith, that cross old thing," and "pretty little Smith," and that "detestable Williams." And then one asked the other if she remembered how funnily Fanny Adams had managed in the affair, of laughing at the French Master, how six of them had been sent up to their bedrooms in disgrace, and when that detestable Williams came in and found them still laughing, how she scolded them all, and how Fanny Adams put some Eau-de-Cologne to her eyes, which nearly blinded her, and made her eyes water very much, and so deceived Miss Williams that she pardoned her, though all the rest were left in disgrace.



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And here, because there was no better disposed person to speak to these poor girls upon their light and improper discourse, I would just say one word:—My dear school boys and school girls, our Saviour says, “Love thy neighbour as thyself.” Let me then ask you, do you in any way follow this kind command when you so treat your teachers and governors? Think you, for an instant, of the labour, the anxiety, the perpetual self-denial, the patience required by an instructor of childhood, even when the children do their best; but when deceit, hypocrisy, and hardness of heart is also added to the giddiness and thoughtlessness of youth, what must be the teacher’s suffering?

Remember that our Lord himself was subject to his parents. Luke ii. 57. Though what could they, poor human creatures, have taught him? Then follow, as a loving child should do, his holy example, and remember his precept, of “love thy neighbour as thyself,” and inquire of yourself how would I like to be treated as I treat my governess or tutor?

But perhaps you would wish to listen to another couple of girls, who soon drew a larger party round them, and what folly were they about, you would ask? Why, one child, who was very vain about her figure, must needs get a piece of string, or tape, and begin to measure her companion’s wrist, thumb, neck, waist, and height, saying—“Twice round the thumb, once round the wrist, twice round the wrist, once round the neck, twice round the neck, once round the waist, and twice round the waist, once the height.” As Louisa Manners well knew of old that this measurement suited herself, she was always disposed to try any young girl by her rule, knowing well her own turn would come, and that she would be able to appear with satisfaction to herself; and here again I would say, was our Lord’s precept followed, of love thy neighbour as thyself? did Louisa desire a rival? This couple, as I said, soon drew a party round them, and after the measurement, which lasted some time and led to a discussion of dress, most of the frocks and sashes coming in for notice, one of the three school girls, mentioned at first, named some new step in dancing, just introduced at her school the last dancing day, and then such a practising and trying of this step commenced amongst the young ladies as made a pretty sight to look on, the young ladies being all nicely dressed, and for the nonce thinking more of their occupation than of themselves.

In the meanwhile Reuben had been supplied with something that served the purpose of a plaything by Mary Roscoe, and being seated in a corner of the room away from harm or interference, the little fellow shortly became so drowsy, that before long, notwithstanding the noise and chattering about him, his head drooped on his bosom, and he was so sound asleep that he was unconscious of his uncomfortable position. He had slept full a quarter of an hour when he was discovered by one of the elder girls, who proposed that they should



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lift him from his seat and take him to a bed in an adjoining chamber, where he would be more comfortable. And here I must again remark, for want of some one else to do so, that of the twelve or fourteen girls there assembled, there was not one present who would have been unkind to the little fellow intentionally; but yet I am afraid, that with the exception of the good-natured Mary Roscoe, there was hardly one who would have put themselves out of the way on his account, or have given up a pleasure or amusement of even five or ten minutes to comfort the boy, who ought in truth never to have been amongst them, so little had he been accustomed to the ways of other children, even of his own age.

Reuben slept on, and that so soundly, that when tea was ready he was not awake, and he would probably have been wholly forgotten if the young ladies on their way down stairs had not made so much noise by the door of his room, that startled and alarmed, he began to cry violently, and his good friend Mary could not easily appease him. However, the child was really refreshed from his sleep, and the kind girl having washed his face and hands herself, and smoothed his pretty curling hair, led him down with her to the room where the tea was served, and provided him with all he wanted, and withal with such a large lump of sugar, the like of which he had never perhaps, not even in his dreams, possessed before. Whoever has read of Mrs. Indulgence in "The Infant's Progress" may have some idea of Mary's management of Reuben, but if the little one could have spoken or reasoned on the point, how heartily would he have said that he pined for his own dear mamma's judicious kindness and controul, under which he used to sport all day happy and joyful as a butterfly on a bright summer's morning.

After tea, which did not last very long, the tables were cleared away and the plays began—the elder children, as might be expected, taking the lead, and for awhile all was order and propriety. Fortunately for the young ones they had no lights near them from which they could be in danger, for the lamp hung from the ceiling and the fire was allowed to go out in the grate. The tables, as I said before, were moved away, and the seats were piled one above another so that a good space was left in the room for the games, and only two chairs were kept for Mr. and Mrs. Jameson, who had sent word to say they were coming down to see the sport, and as they were very fond of a dance, they expressed a wish that the evening's amusement should begin in that way.

The boys were somewhat annoyed at this, as they wanted more active games, and Frank Farleigh absolutely proposed to change the dance to leap-frog; however, as Mrs. Jameson wished for dancing, no one was bold enough openly to speak against it, and Miss Farleigh and Jane Roscoe, who were intimate friends, played a duet together very nicely, to which the rest danced.



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And now it was that Mary Roscoe first felt the annoyance she had incurred by her kindness to Reuben, for the child did not wish to leave her, and seeing all were dancing, or jumping to the music as he thought, he believed he could do the same, and clinging to her she found that to appease him she must take him for her partner, and thus this really good-natured girl was unable to dance with any pleasure to herself, as the little one was unable to make his way alone. However, Mary was truly kind-hearted, and not one cloud was on her fair brow when the dance was finished, and she told her little partner to sit down amidst the piled up chairs at one end of the room. But as nurse had said Reuben was a weary little fellow, and Mary little knew the truth, if she thought she was so easily to get rid of him, for the child was half alarmed at the numbers of strange faces thronging around him; he was not well, too, with the many sweet things and fruits he had eaten, and now it was approaching his usual bed-time, and though he had had a sleep, yet he had been roused from it suddenly and improperly, fed with sweet cake since, and any experienced person present might know that shortly the child would get so excited in the scene before him, it would be no easy matter to soothe or calm him.

Now it happened that Marten, feeling exceedingly obliged to Mary for her kindness to his brother, and equally disliking her sister, and Miss Farleigh and some of the other young ladies, was very anxious to dance with Mary, to thank her for her kindness to Reuben, but he little thought that by doing so, the child finding both his friends together must insist upon being with them, and the second set of quadrilles was danced by poor Mary as the first had been, the little fellow clinging to her, for both Marten and Mary were afraid of a burst of tears if they opposed the child in this matter. Marten, however, spoke somewhat sharply to him, saying he was teasing Miss Mary, and if they allowed him to dance this time, he must promise to sit still afterwards, and not be troublesome again. Reuben knew that he must obey his brother, so when that dance was finished he went and sat himself down, as directed, though his young heart was very sad, as he longed to be jumping about with the other children. Mary was now able to enjoy herself, and I do not hesitate to say she was very glad to get rid of Reuben and be at liberty to run about where she would, for she was a happy girl, and this evening she was the happiest of the happy, for she was a favourite of all.

After the dancing had continued some time, a game was fixed upon, which game being one that kept the children seated, they soon got tired of it, and blindman's buff was proposed and entered into with great spirit, though, as will presently be seen, this spirit, for want of some less indulgent to controul it, became at last almost unbearable.



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It was whilst Edward Jameson was blindfolded that the first rudeness began, for Miss Jane seized hold of a newspaper and began rustling it so about Edward's head, that being blindfolded he became so annoyed by it, that he began to toss his arms about, making such rushes hither and thither, that the girls had to run away, lest they should be struck. Whilst Jane was teasing Edward, one of the boys seized hold of the handkerchief that blindfolded him, and another boy made a thrust at him in front, and it was only a wonder that Mr. and Mrs. Jameson, who were sitting by, did not speak to the children, to advise a little more quietness in the play. But there were a party of young girls whispering together behind Jane, and when Edward turned in her direction, though she escaped, he fell amongst these girls, and, as might be expected, such a romping scene ensued, as may often be seen at blindman's buff. Just at this moment a servant came in to say a gentleman had called on some business, and both Mr. and Mrs. Jameson left the room together, to see this gentleman. They were scarcely gone before the noise increased to such an extent, that one or two of the servants came to the parlour door; and well was it, as we shall shew presently, that they did so, but Mr. and Mrs. Jameson being gone to another part of the house, were not disturbed by the sounds. So, as I said, Edward found himself amongst the group of young girls, who all struggled to get away from him; and then such a scene of running and screaming, and shouting and romping followed, as the like of which I have no desire to see. Every one ran, and no one knew whither they were going, and it so chanced that some ran in the direction of where Reuben had been seated by Marten, amidst the piled-up chairs. The child, who had been sitting there sometime, and who did not understand the game, for he had never seen it before, was doubtful whether to be frightened or not; but as Edward, whom he knew so well, and who was always kind to him, was the pursuer, and as the children were laughing, he thought he might laugh too, and not liking sitting still when all were running and jumping round him, he slid down from his high seat and joined the group that had fled to that end of the room from Edward. As ill luck would have it, Edward turned in that direction somewhat suddenly, and there was a loud cry of one and all to run, and instantly all did run, Reuben too obeying the call, and setting off as fast as his little legs would let him.

As might have been expected, the elder children escaped, and Edward caught the boy, whom he instantly named, and tearing off the handkerchief from his eyes, he was going to tie it round those of Reuben, when Marten interposed, and said "he would not understand the game." Edward was, however, tired of being blinded and of being buffeted about, and not thinking how very young Reuben was, for he knew very little about children, as he had no little brothers nor sisters of his own, he only said he had caught



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the child, and that it was but fair he should be blinded, as he was caught and had absolutely prevented him from catching one of the others when they were close to him. As Reuben himself thought it was manly to be blinded, and believed all he had to do was to run about with the handkerchief round his head, he was very anxious to do as Edward had done, and Mary, to whom he pleaded for permission so to do, blinded him herself, and as she tied the handkerchief round him she said, "Now, young gentlemen, don't hurt the little fellow, pray be gentle with him, for he's very young."

Mary then took his hand, and leading him into the centre of the room she slightly directed him where to go. It must be understood that Reuben knew no one in the room but Marten, Edward, and Mary, and as he did not know the rules of the game, the elder boys and girls, soon wearied of the little fellow running hither and thither, for they did not wish to hurt the child, and so they ceased for awhile their boisterous play; but, as might be expected, this would not last long, and Marten stepping forwards on the little one laying hold of some boy near him, said, "My brother does not know any one here by name, is it not enough that he has caught some one? He does not know, I am sure, who his hand is upon, even if he were unblinded."

"Oh! it is a boy," replied Reuben. "Me know it is a boy, and a large boy. Yes, it is a large boy."

"That is enough, is it not?" asked Marten, looking round, "surely that's enough;" and he unbound Reuben, telling; the child he had done very well.

No one seemed inclined to dispute the point, for all saw the child was too young to play with them; and William Stewart, the boy caught, and who was desirous of being blindfolded, was quite pleased to have the handkerchief tied round his head, and now the play became more boisterous than ever, owing to the cessation before, and probably all would have gone on well if little Reuben, elated by his brother's telling him he had done very well, had not chosen to join in the play, saying over and over again to any one who would listen to him, "Me knew it was a boy—a large boy—me knew it was a boy—me said a large boy—yes, me felt his coat—me knew it was a large boy." This too might have passed, and the child might have repeated his story over and over again without much harm if he could have got a listener, or he even might have been content without one, if he had not fancied he understood the game as well as the oldest present, so he entered into it with all his little spirit, and intruded his small person where others could not go—now here, now there, till excited and heated and confused by those around him flying in all directions, he was thrown down, and as he did not fall alone, the poor little fellow was rather severely hurt. And now in that one moment of downfall was assembled all the troubles of the day,—weary, excited, hurt, and overfed, he began to cry, and that so violently,



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that those who lifted him up trusted to his being not really injured by the very noise he made in his distress. Marten and Mary ran to him, but they were as strangers to him, for his eyes were dimmed by tears, and his ears closed by his own wailings; and luckily for all three one of the servants, for, as I said before, they had come to see the young people at play, and who was a motherly kind of woman, advanced into the room and offered to take the charge of the child and comfort him before she put him to bed. Marten was most thankful for this offer, and you may be sure Mary was not sorry to part with the sobbing boy, and thus Marten put it out of his own power to keep his voluntary boast to Nurse at home about sleeping with his brother, for when the riotous evening closed, for it was a very riotous evening, Reuben had been asleep some hours, and in a quarter of the house appropriated to the use of the young ladies where beds were as plentiful as requisite on an occasion like the present. Marten then had nothing for it but to beg Mary to see after his brother, which the young lady as thoughtlessly promised to do, and then he accompanied his young companions to that department of the house appropriated to the use of the boys, where, as might be expected after a little more rude sport, he fell into a sleep so profound and long, that every thought of Reuben was banished from his mind. And now, to return to the poor baby, the victim of mismanagement, or of his brother's self-conceit. Sobbing and roaring he was carried or dragged up stairs, undressed, and put to bed, where the extreme violence of his grief proved its own relief, for he fell asleep with the tear in his eye, and long long after the cause of sorrow was forgotten, his sobs might be heard proclaiming that the effect even now had not passed away. By and bye, however, the calm of sleep restored him more to himself again, and before the motherly woman who had taken pity on him left the chamber, he was sleeping the refreshing sleep of childhood.

As the young people had gone to bed so late the evening before, for it was quite twelve o'clock, and the next day was also to be a day of indulgence, it was nearly half-past eight before Marten awoke, and what with one thing and another it was quite nine before he had an opportunity of asking any one after Reuben, or indeed of discovering that no one knew anything of the little one farther than that he had awoke at his usual hour, seven o'clock; that the kind woman who had attended him the night before had helped to wash and dress him, and having told him to be quiet, lest he should awake the children asleep in his bed room, she left him as she thought safe in the young ladies' sitting room, to amuse himself as best he might. Two hours nearly had passed since then, and no further information could be obtained of the little boy; but he was gone, that was certain for he was nowhere to be found in any part of Mr. Jameson's large house. It so



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happened that breakfast had commenced, and Marten and some of the bigger boys had nearly finished the meal before all the young ladies came down, and as Mary Roscoe chanced to be late, for this good natured girl had been helping others as usual, Marten did not discover the absence of his brother till she entered the room and seated herself at the table. Then he stepped round to her and asked if Reuben would soon be down. "Oh! dear little fellow," exclaimed Mary, starting up, "He did not sleep in my room, so I know nothing about him; but now I will run to find him to bring him to breakfast. I dare say he has overslept himself, or I should have heard of him before now."

"If you are speaking of the little boy who cried so bitterly at blindman's buff, Mary," said a Miss Lomax, "he was put to sleep in a little bed by himself in our room. Maria and myself noticed how soundly he slept through all the noise we made when we went to our rooms, but when we got up this morning the little fellow was gone, and we wondered who had drest him and taken him away so quietly as not to disturb us."

"Oh! then I'll find him in a minute," said Mary, "if he has been drest so long he must be sadly in want of his breakfast, poor little darling," and Mary was half way up stairs before she had finished her speech.

And now how shall I describe what a fearful state the whole house was in before ten minutes more had passed away: the child was lost, the fearful question of where and how he might be found was on everybody's lips. Poor Marten, it was dreadful to see his terror and grief, and Mary, oh! how negligent Mary felt herself, for had she not assisted greatly to his loss by taking him from his brother, and had she not promised that brother the evening before to see him in his bed and look after him, which she had forgotten to do. Jenkins, too, the motherly female who had so kindly attended the little one the night before, how did she blame herself for not taking the child with her after she had dressed him, when she was obliged to go to her work, which was much increased that morning by the state in which the young people had left the room, the scene of the last night's revels.

And here I would make a remark, which I must beg no one to reject, without well weighing the idea. The most amiable females of the party assembled at Mrs. Jameson's, Mary Roscoe and Jenkins, who had put themselves most out of their way, and had really acted the kindest by the child, were those who felt the most in the affair, and most blamed themselves for their own conduct, whereas if all had tried their best, as they did, the little fellow would have ever had some kind heart beside him to soothe and comfort him, and some one might have anticipated his uneasiness at finding himself alone amongst strangers. Anyhow they would not have been as strangers to him, for he afterwards acknowledged, on being questioned, that had Miss Mary been sleeping in the room, he should

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not have done as he did. But now to my remark, those who strive to do best have the most tender consciences, and the more one strives after right the more scrupulous and tender does the conscience become, and the more does it aspire after noble feelings and honourable thoughts and actions. This is a work of the Divine Spirit and of no mortal power, and it is a training for glory, purifying our hearts for a divine home, obtained for us through our Saviour's death and righteousness, and in familiar language we will liken it after this manner. Supposing two children stand side by side in the open street, one is the child of a king, nicely drest and delicately clean, as would be expected from his noble birth and expectation, the other is the little hedge-side vagrant, to whose young face water or cleansing has probably been unknown. Imagine, then, ought passing these two children, which could pollute their persons, what would be their feelings? the one might even laugh at the filth or mud that bespattered him, the other would shrink with loathing or disgust, and would not be easy or comfortable till every effort was taken to remove the stain. And we are children of the King of kings, we are washed and clothed by Him, and the more our garments are fitted for our future station, the fairer are our inward persons; the more do we feel annoyed and grieved by any foul spot, which could sully their purity and disfigure their beauty. My young readers remember this, and smile no more at sin; aye, and shun carefully its stains that would pollute you, and when they do alight upon you, remember whose blood alone it is can purge away their slightest trace.

Poor Mary had no breakfast that morning, nor no comfort nor rest either, for after searching for the child all over the house, she must needs look for him in the gardens, the pleasure grounds, the lawn, behind each tree and shrub, and even in the stables and offices, but no Reuben was to be met with, and the dear little girl, when wearied out with searching sat down to weep and lament herself, starting up occasionally when some fresh place came to her mind, and running to it, but to meet with disappointment and increased alarm. But Mary was not alone in the search, for both Mr. and Mrs. Jameson were full of anxiety respecting the child, and trusty men were sent in all directions to look after the lost one; and when Mr. Jameson spoke to his lady on the imprudence of having invited so young a child, she replied, that having given permission to their son to ask a certain number of young people, she had not attended to him when he named the bidden guests, taking it for granted that a boy of thirteen would prefer companions of his own size to a child of Reuben's tender age. And now it came out from Edward how Marten had refused to come without his brother, and that Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer were from home, and this, as might be expected, added not a little to the distress of Mr. and Mrs. Jameson, for hitherto they had thought the child had



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visited them with the permission of his parents, and now that they heard that those parents were at Portsmouth, they were more and more uneasy, and they blamed themselves not a little for having been so indulgent in their direction to Edward. "But, indeed," said Mrs. Jameson, "one could not have foreseen these circumstances, and when I saw little Reuben seated by Mary at the dinner table, though I wondered at his presence, yet he seemed so happy I believed all was right with him." But the lesson was not lost upon Mr. and Mrs. Jameson, nor on Edward, and I am happy to say, in future the latter was more ready to ask advice of his parents than before this affair, for he too was very uneasy about Reuben. As to Marten, without thinking of his hat, on learning that the child could not be found in the house nor in the pleasure grounds, he told one of the men who was sent with him by Mr. Jameson, that he should go home as fast as he could to see if his brother might not have made his way there, or at least be met with upon the road. The distance from one house to the other was, as I said before, four miles, and though poor Marten had little expectation that the tender child could find his way so far, even if he knew the right road, yet he understood the little one so well, that he felt convinced he would at least attempt to get to his home, so that he considered it useless to look for him in any other direction. And now we must leave the unhappy and alarmed brother to speak of little Reuben, who was left, as we mentioned, by Jenkins in the sitting-room with a few toys near him. Never had Reuben been so left to himself before, but still for a short time, though it was for a very short time he was content, then came a wish for his breakfast, and with it the remembrance that if his mamma had been with him he would even then be in her dressing-room. She would be listening to his prattle, or he would be occupied in doing something for her which he considered was useful, but which in reality she could herself have done with half the time that she was obliged to give to her baby boy. The thoughts of his mamma made the forlorn one cry, and call upon her name, but no one heard his sobs or saw his tears, and with it came a recollection of the sorrows of yesterday, and he suddenly thought "Where is Marten? Where can Marten be? Is he gone? Has he left Reuben?" The idea was not to be borne by the poor child in a state of quietness, he rose from his seat, dropped his toys from his lap, and without looking back he went to the door, which being ajar he opened wider and passed through into the gallery. His friends, he believed, had left him; they were at home. His mamma, too, he thought, might be there with his papa and Marten, and, anyhow, he was sure Nurse was there, Nurse who loved him so, and whom he loved so dearly. So down the stairs stepped the sorrowing baby, holding the banisters with both small hands, for it was necessary for him in descending the steps to have both feet at one time on each, and



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noiselessly almost did he proceed, for his fairy tread made no sound, and his sobs were tried to be suppressed, in the earnest determination to attempt to find his way to his home. And now he reached the last step, and lightly did he run across the hall to the great door, which was open, and with some difficulty, for there were more steps; he arrived at the carriage drive between the house and lawn, whereon he had seen the lamb the day before.

And now would I could picture the little one, as he stood in his short red frock, blown by the breeze which showed his dimpled knee, for his white sock did not extend much above his shoe. His arms, neck, and head were without covering, and his pretty curls played around his face in graceful confusion. Calling on his mamma and upon Marten, he took the carriage drive towards the gates, so far not having a doubt he was in the direction of his home, and unseen by any one, he passed through a small gate into the high road. Here he might have been puzzled which way to take, if it had not been for a clump of eight elm trees on the left hand road, and he had often heard John and Marten talk of those elm trees, for they were called the "Nine Elms," and yet Marten had said there were only eight now, and whenever he had gone to Mr. Jameson's with his papa and mamma, and John who drove them, John had kept the carriage waiting under the elms, and he used to put Reuben out of the carriage amidst the trees, to run in and out amongst them, touching one after the other, whilst John taught him to count them, saying one, two, three, four, and so on. So Reuben knew he must pass the elm trees, and as he was just awake, and the morning fresh and pleasant, his small feet carried him along some way nicely, and even swiftly, and for a few minutes, they were not many, all seemed promising, and the inexperienced one believed he should soon be at his home. After the clump of trees, the baby so confidently considered he was in the right way, that when he came to a place where two roads joined the one up which he had ran, he never looked about him, fancying they must both go to his home, and not yet being weary, he took, as might be feared, the wrong turn, and soon he heard distinctly the roaring of a cascade, much famed in those parts, as it dashed over the rocks in the direction in which he was going. Now Reuben knew the sound of the cascade, for he had lived near it all his young life, and he knew it was not far from his home; but he did not consider that he never passed it on his way from his father's house to Mr. Jameson's, but still, not mistrusting the road he was going, he ran along till he suddenly found by a turn of the lane, that he was in full front of the stream. The child however was not disconcerted by this, and the fresh air meeting him, and for the moment raising his spirits, he stepped on over the loose stones brought down at different times by the waters, boldly, and even gaily, though his course was



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impeded by the unevenness of the way. He must have stepped on some distance, when all of a sudden he was unable to proceed farther along the path, by the jutting out of a rock into the stream, for the water was pouring down rapidly and more profusely than was general, for there had been heavy rains in the mountains, and thus the bed of the torrent was fully covered, its width being very inconsiderable beneath the rock. The spot was one wholly unknown to the child, and surely it was a terrible sight to meet the eye of a babe, who hitherto had not known what it was to be left without a mother's or nurse's care. The place was in the heart of a mountain gorge, famed for its rare beauty, and the cascade came dashing from the rocks, which were very bold and picturesque in the little creek or gully where the child stood. The water, as I said, was pouring down white with foam, and majestically pursuing its course, shaking the earth around with its terrible roarings.

Fancy our little forlorn one then standing under the shelter of the rock, which, hanging over him in rough masses, threatened to fall and crush his baby form, the stream rushing impetuously at his feet, and one little place beneath the rock, in fact part of the rock itself being somewhat elevated from the bed of the stream below, forming his only secure and dry resting place. I have said before, he had no covering on fit for walking attire, his arms, neck, and head being fully exposed to the breezes which now blew cruelly on his young figure, so that he could scarcely keep his feet, and glad was he to creep under the shelter of the threatening rock. There he stood looking around him in wild despair, for he had raised his voice to cry for pity, and its infant tones were not heard amidst the roaring waters; again and again he looked round him, but no help was there, and he trembled more from fear than cold. He was frightened at the roaring waters, for they seemed to him to be approaching, and wholly overcome with fear and wretchedness, and quite incapable of contending against his unhappy situation, he crouched beneath the threatening rock, too miserable to shed a tear. "Mamma, mamma," he said,— "Mamma, mamma," and that weak cry was repeated again and again, though no human ear could hear his sorrows or soothe his cries. Poor baby, what availed it then? your earthly father was the tenderest of parents—he could not have foreseen this trouble, and therefore he could not have been armed against it, but your heavenly Father's eye was on you, little one, and his eyes are ever on infants, the loveliest beings of his creation, and he who spared Nineveh, because there were in that wicked city more than six score thousand souls, who knew not their right hands from their left, still watches over his babies now, for has he not said of "Such is the kingdom of heaven."



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But observe the little one, what makes his cry of 'Mamma, Mamma,' cease? the babe has heard a sound, a pleasant sound, and he forgets his trouble. It is the sweet song of a bird upon a branch of a tree on the rock above him, and the bird likes the morning air and the sound of the waters, and he is singing his song of joy, and Reuben listened to him and was pleased, and then the little bird hopped down from his high perch and came lower and lower till he was quite close to the child, so close that the little one held out his hand, which frightened away the pretty bird, and Reuben was once more alone again, and commenced his cry of "Mamma, Mamma, come to Reuben, Mamma." But the bird had come to the rock because it had seen some bright berries on the bushes there, and before it had began its song it had pecked off one or two with its bill, or perhaps it might have been that other birds had pecked them off, and then rejected them, or the wind might have blown them from the parent bush; be that as it may, there were about as many as a dozen red berries scattered on the ground, where the little bird had hopped, and Reuben had seen them in looking at the bird, and now he began to collect them, looking here and there to find some more, and he thought if he put them into a nice heap together, their bright red colour would draw thither another singing bird to visit him. So he collected his berries, and tried to pile them together, and thus more time passed, for whilst doing so, every little thing seemed to divert his attention—a skeleton leaf, a small flower, a smooth pebble, a drop of water sparkling in the sunshine, all attracted his infant eye, and thus, as we might say, his heavenly Father watched over the boy and soothed him from the real sorrows of his situation, till the time of his deliverance was at hand. And are we not children of a large growth? are not our sorrows soothed and relieved by our Creator's mercies? and are not innocent pleasures and consolations put in the way of every child of God? and it is our own fault, yes, our own fault, and very much are we to blame when we reject the blessings of consolations offered us. "When our Saviour left us, he promised to send us a comforter to abide with us for ever." John xiv. 16; and as the Divine Spirit never fails in his fulfilment of his promises, be assured, you mourners, if you are not comforted, it is because you will not accept the consolation offered to you; for he has said, "I will not leave you comfortless, for he shall dwell with you, and shall be in you." John xiv. 17 and 18.

But why does little Reuben suddenly move his curls from off his cheek? why does he listen, as he never listened before? and why does a merry little laugh escape his lips? and then he listens again, and now he does not laugh, but springing to his feet, with arms extended, he calls out "Nero, Nero." It is not that Nero hears that baby voice, it is not that the noble dog responds to the call, for the soft



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sound is lost amidst the roar of the waters; but he who fed Elijah by the means of ravens, and taught the dove to bear the olive leaf to Noah, has guided hither to the child a sure and safe conductor to his home. Look, look there! across the stream stands Nero. Nero let out by Thomas for a wild run for exercise as directed first by Mr. Mortimer, and then by Marten; there he stood, his eyes red with eagerness, his tongue protruding, and panting and impatient as not knowing where next to turn his agile bounds. But not for another moment did this hesitation continue, for Reuben ran to the edge of the rock, both arms extended, and scarcely able for the breeze to keep his little feet firm upon the ground. "Nero, Nero," he cried, and almost ere his lips had closed, after the appeal, the noble dog, with a glorious bound sprang from stepping-stone to stepping-stone across the stream, and had overwhelmed the boy with his caresses. What mattered it to Reuben, that his kind friend in his joy at their meeting had absolutely overturned the child upon the ground? What cared he for that? It was Nero, his own Nero, his Nero from home, and Reuben did so love him, and Nero returned his love so warmly, and they were always so happy together, and there was no danger to be feared for Reuben, whilst the faithful animal was by him, which he had power to ward off. Reuben had recognised the dog's bark even amidst the waters roar, and that had made him laugh, for he never doubted that Nero would come to him shortly. And now I don't know how to tell how the rest happened, for in truth Reuben never could explain how things went on, particularly after the arrival of Nero, and there was no other living thing in that solitude but the child and dog. All that Reuben could recollect afterwards was, that he was cold and hungry, and that he wished to get home, and that Nero, too, seemed even more anxious than himself to get home, but Reuben dared not cross the stream, and Nero seemed almost as unwilling as himself to take the child across, and yet the faithful creature would not leave the boy for more able assistance. Reuben was frightened at the threatening rock above his head, and yet he knew not how to leave it, for he had run on far enough to lose the way to the lane which led to Mr. Jameson's, and he was frightened at all around, and shivering and hungry, for he had tasted no food that morning.

[Illustration]

At last, finding all his efforts useless to tempt the little one across the stream, a new idea seemed to strike the sensible dog, for Nero was very sensible. He seemed all of a sudden to bethink himself that there might be another road home; and taking hold of Reuben's dress in his mouth, he attempted to draw him along the road the child had come. Now to this the little one was rather inclined, for he believed it would take him home, but on attempting to walk he found that he had hurt his foot before he had reached the rock, and that the cold air had made it stiff



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and painful. Poor Reuben was going to cry, and then I do not know what would have happened if Nero, finding out that something was wrong, had not seated himself beside the child on the ground to comfort him; and in so doing, reminded Reuben that Marten always told Nero to sit on the ground before he told his brother to get on the dog's back for a ride, for Reuben often took a ride on Nero's back. And now, then, fancy the child seated upon Nero, who rose at once gently from the ground, and with great care and stateliness commenced his progress homewards. It is said that a white elephant will not allow any one to ride upon him who is not of royal descent, and then the king of beasts steps on with full consciousness of the honour of his kingly burthen; but what could his pride be, compared with that of Nero's, as the faithful creature stepped on and on with his infant rider? It was not, after all, so slow a progress as might have been imagined, and as it is believed the dog followed the scent of the child's footsteps, he naturally went up the lane the little one had trod that morning. On arriving where the road divided, Nero was, however, no longer at a loss, for he knew which direction his own home lay, and Nero was not likely to be tempted elsewhere than home, for if he could have reasoned he would have said, in as strong terms as nurse herself could have used, that Reuben had better be at home than anywhere else whilst he was so young. Nero, as I said, now knew the road, for he had often accompanied the different members of Mr. Mortimer's family when they went to visit Mr. Jameson's, and how carefully, on account of his young rider, did he step on his way towards home.

And now I could say a great deal upon the fidelity of Nero, the trustfulness of Reuben, and the useful lesson the little one was learning; but I am anxious to speak of Marten and nurse, and all those who loved the child and trembled for his loss. And yet I cannot talk of their distress, the deep deep remorse of Marten, his full and complete acknowledgment of his own carelessness and ignorance of himself, so that nurse could not even say one word to him, though her tears and sobs were a deep reproach. No, I cannot speak of this, I would rather tell of how in the midst of all this trouble, tears were changed to smiles, and even laughter took the place of sobs, when Reuben came riding into the court yard tired, cold, and hungry, it is true, but no little important at his wonderful adventure. And then came such kisses and caresses, such warming by the kitchen fire, such a comfortable breakfast for the child, such luxuries for the dog, which Reuben was allowed to bestow; and then such runnings hither and thither to inform all the kind searchers all was right with the child, and such congratulations, that I should never have done, if I attempt but to repeat one half of them; so let me conclude in these words of the apostle, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot



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be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James i. 13, 14, 15. But our Saviour has declared, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death. Oh! death, I will be thy plague: Oh! grave, I will be thy destruction." Hosea xiii. 14.

By this little narrative we are taught that whoever fills himself up with the belief that he is wise and clever, will be apt, like Marten, to fall into some sort of trouble, which he did not look forward to. All the wisdom of man lies in knowing that unless he is guided in all his actions by his heavenly Father, he is sure to go wrong, let his age or condition be what it may. If little Reuben had been really lost or hurt, very severe indeed would have been the punishment of Marten for his conceit, but God in his tender love let him off for his fright only; which, however, we doubt not, was sharp enough to make him remember the lesson all his life.

It is well for poor sinful men, women, and children, however, that they have a brother, even the Lord the Saviour in his human person, who cannot forget them as Marten forgot Reuben, no, not for one moment.

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Specimen from page 57. The convolvulus tribe.

“181. The common bind-weed of our hedges may be taken as the representative of this very natural tribe of plants, distinguished by their *twining habit*, and by the peculiar *plaited manner* in which the corolla is folded in the bud.”

“182. The calyx consists of five sepals, two of which are outside the remainder; there are five stamens, and a superior pistil, containing three or four cells, with about two seeds in each.”

Questions appended at the foot.

“181. What are the marks distinguishing the convolvulus tribe?”

“182. Describe the remaining parts of the flower?”

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"A. To make the necessaries and conveniences of life; as clothing, tools, and furniture."

"Q. Of what is clothing made?"

"A. Clothing is made of wool, flax, cotton, silk, or leather; and there are great manufactures of each of these."

"Q. Of what are tools made?"

"A. Of wood, iron, steel, and brass."

"Q. Of what is furniture made?"

"A. Of oak and deal, with brass ornaments, with beds of cotton or linen, and hair mattresses or feather beds."

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