

Frank and Fanny eBook

Frank and Fanny

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Page 1

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[Illustration]

Frank and Fanny:
A rural story.

By Mrs. Clara Moreton.

WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

Boston:
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PREFACE.

To inculcate gentleness of disposition, patience, and benevolence, and to inspire the young with a love for the simple pleasures of rural life, is the purpose of the following story. The love of exciting narratives is not favourable to the developement of those mild virtues which are the most beautiful ornaments of youth; and, in the following pages, the quiet scenes and simple characters of rural life solicit attention, in preference to the hairbreadth 'scapes and marvellous adventures which are often brought under

the notice of the young. If the author has succeeded in the moral purpose of her little book, she will be satisfied with the result.

FRANK AND FANNY.

CHAPTER I.

Frank and Fanny's home.

Frank and Fanny Lee were orphans. Their parents died when they were children, leaving them to the care of their grand-parents, who lived in the suburbs of a beautiful village, in New England.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were very fond of their grand-children, and did every thing in their power to make them happy. They were not rich, and therefore, had no money to throw away for useless toys; but this caused Frank and Fanny no uneasiness. In fine weather, all the leisure time which they could get from school, and from their tasks, was spent in wandering through the woods which skirted the little village on almost every side. In spring time they watched for the first flowers, and many a bouquet of tiny 'forget-me-nots,' and dark blue, and pure white violets, they brought to their grandmother, who welcomed the wild flowers of spring, with as much pleasure, and youth of heart as the grand-children.

As the season advanced, there was no end to the variety which they gathered; and the sweetest were daily selected for the little vase, which always stood upon the table, beside the large family Bible, out of which, both morning and evening, the good grandmother read to her children.

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Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton owned the comfortable cottage, in which they lived. It was shaded in front by a large elm tree, that spread its arms far out over the moss-covered roof, as if it were some protecting spirit. Around the door, a beautiful vine had been trained; and rose bushes, and shrubs, were scattered through the yard. On one side of the house, was a garden, where grew a profusion of currant bushes, and raspberry vines, with many useful vegetables, and flowers were scattered along on each side of the little walk that ran through the centre of the garden. There were hollyhocks, and noonsleeps, and tiger-lilies, and little patches of moss pinks, the tiny flowers all tangled in with their green foliage, and sweet williams, and love-lies-bleeding; and the children thought there was never such another garden in the world. Here the children delighted to watch the butterflies, and bees, and birds, revelling among the flowers, especially the beautiful humming bird, with his jacket of golden green, his ruby-colored throat, and long, slender bill, which he was so fond of thrusting into the garden lilies and hollyhocks. He loved to resort to the garden of Frank and Fanny, where the bright sun was shining on the flowers.

[Illustration: *The humming bird.*]

Then there was a little brown arbor, with grape vines carefully trained over it, and rustic seats within; and there were quince trees just beyond, and up by the gateway there grew tall stalks of fennel; and altogether, it was a most delightful place. Back of the house was an orchard, and here pippins, long-stems, flyers, greenings, and seek-no-furthers, grew side by side.

[Illustration: *The cedar bird.*]

Here these children delighted to watch the beautiful cedar bird with his silky plumage, and his smart crest. He is a sociable, gentle bird, who allowed the children to come very near him, as he was perched upon the cedar bush.

The stone wall which surrounded the orchard, afforded shelter to a great number of striped squirrels, whose nimble motions it was the delight of Frank and Fanny to watch, as they scampered over the wall, or ran along on its top, or sought a safer retreat in the thick branches of the apple trees. This last retreat, however, was not often sought, as the striped squirrel is not fond of trees. His nest is in a hole under a stump, or stone wall; he seeks his living on the ground, and is the most playful, elegant little animal I ever saw. He is called in different parts of the country, Ground Squirrel, Chipping Squirrel, and Chipmuck, the last being probably his Indian name. Frank and Fanny loved the striped squirrel; but never threw stones at him, or sought to make him a prisoner.

[Illustration: *The striped squirrel.*]

The foot of the orchard was bounded by a clear, wide brook, shaded by willows, and the fish plashed about in troops in the cool shade.

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Here upon the margin of the water, seated upon a little stump, watching for his finny prey, the children used often to peep at the Belted King Fisher, in his bluish coat, white collar, and prettily marked wings. This bird's delight is to dwell on the borders of running rivulets, or the bold cataracts of mountain streams, which abound with small fish and insects, his accustomed fare. When the fish do not approach his station, he flies along, just over the water, and occasionally hovers with rapidly moving wings over the spot where he sees a trout or minnow. In the next instant, descending with a quick spiral sweep, he seizes a fish, with which he rises to his post and swallows it in an instant. All these proceedings were watched frequently by the children, with intense delight, as they stood concealed among the bushes, not daring to move for fear of disturbing the bird.

[Illustration: *The king Fisher.*]

On the other side of the brook was a cranberry marsh, with a raised road passing through to the pine forest, still beyond, where the children gathered the ground pine, and hunted for the bright scarlet berries of the winter-green. When the children resorted to the cranberry marsh to obtain a supply of berries for their mother, they often saw the beautiful meadow lark, crouching among the reeds, or flying slowly and steadily away, as they approached her, uttering her lisping, melancholy note, which sounded like, "*et-se-de-ah*," and sometimes, "*tai-sedilio*." This bird was much admired by Fanny, who was dreadfully grieved when a neighboring sportsman shot a number of meadow larks for the sake of their flesh, which is almost equal in flavor to that of the partridge.

[Illustration: *The meadow lark.*]

[Illustration: *The American Avoset.*]

In this marsh, too, the children sometimes saw that singular bird, the Avoset, with its curious curved bill, its noisy clamor, and its long legs, bending and tottering under him, as he ran about the marsh or waded into its pools. He was a great curiosity in his way.

Thus the cranberry marsh had its pleasures for Frank and Fanny.

But this was not their favorite resort. They loved best to cross the meadows in front of the house, to a forest, where the woods were more open, and where trees of every variety, cast their shadows upon the green turf, and wild flowers grew upon every hillock, and peeped out from every mossy glade. There were little wildernesses of honey-suckles, too, scattered through the woods, and long, pale green fern leaves, fit for a fairy to sway to and fro upon; and there were vines of wild grapes, with branches so strong, that they often made swings of them.

Sometimes in their rambles in the woods, they started a wild hare, which they called a rabbit, who fled away from them with long leaps, and was soon out of sight, so that they

could hardly catch a glimpse of him in his rapid flight. But they were always greatly excited with a view of him, and lamented that they had no means of catching him.

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[Illustration: *The rabbit.*]

Some of Frank's school fellows, however, were more skilled in hunting. They knew how to set snares for the poor rabbits, and were very often successful in catching them. By means of an elastic branch, or sapling, bent over, and furnished with a snare of strong twine, they contrived to catch the poor rabbit by the neck, and string him up in the air, like a criminal convicted of murder. It was no misfortune to Frank to be ignorant of this hunting craft.

[Illustration: *Boys snaring rabbits.*]

Another curious animal, which the children sometimes saw, and which may be seen occasionally in the pastures and pine forests, in all parts of our country, from Maine to Carolina, was the woodchuck, or ground-hog, as it is sometimes called. It feeds, generally, upon clover and other succulent vegetables, and hence it is often injurious to the farmer. It is said to bring forth four or five young at a litter. Its gait is awkward, and not rapid; but its extreme vigilance, and acute sense of hearing, prevent it from being often captured. It forms deep and long burrows in the earth, to which it flies upon the least alarm. It appears to be sociable in its habits; for upon one occasion, we noticed some thirty or forty burrows in a field of about five acres. These burrows contain large excavations, in which they deposit stores of provisions. It hibernates during the winter, having first carefully closed the entrance of its burrow from within. It is susceptible of domestication, and is remarkable for its cleanly habits. Its cheeks are susceptible of great dilatation, and are used as receptacles for the food which it thus transports to its burrow. The capture of the woodchuck, forms one of the most exciting sports of boys, and it is very easily domesticated.

[Illustration: *The woodchuck.*]

The woods abounded in other wild animals, all small and harmless, but extremely interesting to the children. In their frequent visits to the woods, it was their delight to watch the animals and birds, and observe their motions, habits, and modes of life. But they were not fond of disturbing them; and when they deviated from their rule in this respect, on one remarkable occasion, as we shall now relate, it gave them occasion for much sorrow.

CHAPTER II.

The young chickadee.

One Saturday afternoon, the children found in the woods, a grape vine, larger than any that they had before discovered. One end clasped a decayed tree, and as they bore their weight upon the vine, to try its strength, they were startled by a hoarse cry above

them. Looking up, they saw two brown birds, beating the air with their wings, and screaming, “tshe daigh, daigh, daigh; tshe daigh, daigh, daigh!” At the same time, from amidst the green foliage which twined about the dead tree, they heard

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a feeble, plaintive cry from several little throats, “te-derry, te-derry.” Frank and Fanny were much amused. They had never seen a bird’s nest so low before, and they had been forbidden to climb the trees; but now Frank saw, that by placing one large stone upon another, he could reach up, so as to look into the nest. He did so, and found there were six little birds in it. But Fanny begged him to get down, the poor parent birds were so distressed. So he went and stood by her, upon the turf, where she was kneeling, and they both watched the frightened mother bird, as she fluttered back to her nest. The other still flapped the air with his wings, and by his angry notes, brought another bird to the scene. This one looked so plump and dignified, perched upon the bough of an adjoining tree, that Fanny guessed he was the grandpapa.

[Illustration: *The chickadee.*]

They became so interested in the birds, that they forgot how rapidly the time was passing, and it was nearly sundown when they started to go home. They skipped lightly over the soft, green grass of the meadows, stopping now and then, to look at some curious insect, and then walking on slowly with their arms around each other.

[Illustration: *Frank and Fanny in the woods.*]

Frank was very fond of his sister, seldom leaving her for any other playmate. He remembered his dying mother’s charge. She had called both children to her bed side, before her death, and placing Fanny’s hand in Frank’s, had said, “My son, in a few hours you and Fanny will be motherless; promise me that you will try to fill my place; that you will cherish and love your sister, with all the care and tenderness of which you are capable; and Fanny, my little darling, you must remember mamma, and try never to be peevish and fretful, so that Frank will love to be with you, and take care of you; and both of you must always be the same good and obedient children to your grand-parents, that you have ever been;” and Frank promised, through his sobs, that he would never neglect his gentle little sister. He had kept his promise faithfully. More than a year had now passed away, and very seldom had Fanny known what it was to have her brother cross, or unkind to her.

Frank was now ten years old, and Fanny seven. In all the village, there were not two happier, or better behaved children.

We will now go back to the pleasant green meadows, where we left them on their way home. Fanny was looking very serious, when Frank said:

“Are you tired, sister? If you are, I will carry you pick-a-back back.”

“Oh, no, I am not one single bit tired.”

“Then what makes you look so sober?”

“I was wishing that I could have one of those little birds to love, and to take care of always. I do think that it would make me very happy to have a dear little bird, that would know me, and turn his bright, black eyes up to me, like Mary Day’s little canary. When she calls, “Billy, Billy,” he turns his yellow head, first one side, then the other; and when he sees her, he sings so sweetly! Oh, couldn’t you get just one of those little birdies for me, Frank?”

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Frank looked very thoughtful for a moment, and Fanny spoke again.

“Just one; you know there are six little ones.”

“I know there are six, Fanny; but you heard how the poor birds cried and scolded, when I only peeped into the nest; and if I took one away, what would they do?”

Fanny thought an instant, and then said:

“I did not have six mammas, I only had one; and God took my mamma away from me, and I am sure the birds could spare me one little one, when they have six, better than I could spare my mamma, when I only had one.”

Fanny’s reasoning seemed very correct to Frank; he was not old enough to explain the difference to her; so, promising to bring her one of the birds, he left her, and ran back, over the meadows, while Fanny kept on her way home, because she knew her grandmother always expected them earlier on Saturday afternoons. But though she made haste, it was quite sundown when she reached home. The snow white cloth was spread upon the table for tea, and Sally was cutting the fresh rye bread, as Fanny entered the room. Her grandmother sat by the little table, between the windows, and looked up to welcome Fanny, but missing Frank, she asked where he was.

“He has gone back to the woods, grandmother, to get”——then Fanny hesitated, for she remembered how often she had been told, that it was wicked to rob the bird’s nest, and she had not thought it would be stealing the bird, until now. She felt ashamed to tell her grandmother, and so she hurried through the room, and went to the closet to hang up her sun bonnet.

Pretty soon she heard the garden gate swing to, and she ran out into the back yard, to meet Frank, who was hurrying along with a sober face, very different from his usual joyous expression. He held his cap together with both hands, and Fanny’s heart beat hard, when she heard the feeble plaint of the poor imprisoned bird.

“Oh, Frank, I am so sorry,” were the first words that she said, “I did not think that it would be stealing, until I got home, and then I was ashamed to tell grandmother what you had gone back for. Oh, I am so sorry.”

“And so am I,” said Frank; “it almost made me cry to hear the poor birds fret so. When I took it away, one of them flew close around my head, and when I ran on to get away from it, I hit my foot against a stone, and stumbled down, and I am afraid I hurt the bird. All the way across the meadow, I could hear the old birds crying so sorrowfully, “chick-a-dee-dee-dee,” and it made my heart ache so, that I should have carried it back, if it had not been for you.”

“Oh, dear, I wish you had. It is too late to carry it back to-night, and what will grandmother say to us.”

“Supposing we don’t tell her to-night, and to-morrow morning we will get up early, and carry it back, and then we can tell her all about it.”

“No, we can’t do that, Frank, for to-morrow is Sunday, and grandmother does not let us go into the woods on Sunday; oh, what shall we do?”

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Frank now uncovered the bird, and Fanny took it gently in her hand, smoothed the glossy black head, and the brown wings, but it gave her no pleasure, for the poor little thing wailed pitifully, and looked so frightened out of its dark hazel eyes.

All the time that they had been talking, their grandmother had been standing at the open window, close by them, but the vines hid her from sight, and they did not know that she was there. When they went into the house, they did not see her, and so they carried the bird up stairs, into Fanny's room, and made a nest out of soft wool, and placed the little bird in it; but it fluttered out, and Frank saw that one of its wings was broken. Then he knew that he must have broken it when he fell, and the tears came to his eyes, as he laid it in the nest again, and covered it over with the wool.

"Let us go and tell grandmother all about it," said he, "for, perhaps, she may know how to mend the broken wing."

Just then they heard Sally calling them to supper, and they went down stairs, and sat down at the table. But the bowls of new milk remained untouched. They felt too sad to eat, for Fanny could hear the low plaint of the bird, in the room above; and still louder sounded in Frank's memory, the sad, "chick-a-dee-dee-dee," of the mourning mother.

"Why do you not eat your supper, children?" inquired their grandmother, kindly.

Fanny burst into tears, but Frank answered:

"I have done something very naughty, grandmother, and we both feel too bad to eat. We did not want to tell you to-night, for we knew it would make you unhappy to hear that we had done wrong, but we cannot keep it to ourselves any longer."

"Frank would not have done it, if it had not been for me, grandmother," sobbed Fanny; "but I wanted a little bird so badly, and I forgot that it was wicked, and I teased Frank to go back to the woods, and get me one, and now I am so sorry."

Their grandmamma looked very grave, but she answered,

"You have done right, my children, to tell me about it. I should have been still more grieved if you had concealed it from me. As it is, I feel sorry for you, for I know how much you are both suffering for your thoughtlessness: now, try to eat your supper, and we will take good care of the bird to-night, and to-morrow morning, before church, I will send Sally with Frank, to carry it back again, for it will be an errand of mercy to the poor little bird."

The children were very much relieved by their grandmother's sympathy. After supper, they brought the bird down, and showed her the broken wing, and Frank told how he feared he had broken it. Sally tried to feed it, but it would not eat; and the children felt very sad again, when they found that the wing could not be mended. After carefully

laying the bird, with the wool, in the basket, Sally prepared the children for bed. Then their grandmother read to them a chapter from the Bible, after which they sung, in sweet tones, this little evening hymn, which I will copy here, as it is such a good one, for all little children to repeat:

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Evening hymn.

“Lord, I have passed another day,
And come to thank thee for thy care;
Forgive my faults in work and play,
And listen to my evening prayer.

Thy favor gives me daily bread,
And friends, who all my wants supply;
And safely now I rest my head,
Preserved and guarded by thine eye.

Look down in pity, and forgive
Whatever I’ve said or done amiss;
And help me, every day I live,
To serve thee better than in this.

Now, while I speak, be pleased to take
A helpless child beneath thy care,
And condescend, for Jesus’ sake,
To listen to my evening prayer.”

Then Frank and Fanny kissed each other ‘good night,’ and Frank went to his little room, which was close to the one where Sally slept with Fanny.

CHAPTER III.

THE BIRD’S FUNERAL

The next morning was a beautiful one. The air seemed full of fragrance, and the sunshine rippled down through the leaves of the old elm tree, falling in little golden waves of light upon the vines, that were twined about the doorway and casements of the cottage.

Fanny was awakened from her sleep, by the joyous notes of a robin, that had perched close beside her window, and was shaking the dew in showers from the leaves, with every motion of his restless little wings. She sprang out upon the floor, fancying for a moment, that it was her chick-a-dee, that was singing so merrily; and she hastened to the basket, and carefully lifted the wool. She was grievously disappointed, for the poor bird lay stretched upon its back, and when she lifted it, she found it was quite cold and dead! Her little bosom swelled, and large tears gushed from her eyes. It was more than she could bear, and when Sally came into the room, a few moments afterwards, she found her sobbing bitterly.

[Illustration: *The robin.*]

Frank was in the room below, studying over his Sabbath school lesson, but when he heard his sister crying, he dropped his book, and hastened up to her. Sally had told him, that the bird was dead; and he, too, felt very badly about it, but he could not bear to hear his sister grieve so.

“Don’t cry so, dear sister,” he said, “I will earn some money, and buy you a Canary, like Mary Day’s.”

“No, no, Frank; I don’t want any more birds; and, O, how I do wish I had never wanted this one,” and then she cried again, as though her little heart was breaking.

It was some time before she was at all pacified, and even then, the long sighs seemed almost to choke her.

As Sally said, she was, indeed, ‘very much afflicted.’

After breakfast, her grandmother, to divert her mind, took her in her lap, and read to her Bible stories, until the first bell rang for church. Then Fanny was dressed in a neat lawn, and her long curls were fastened back, under her simple straw bonnet; and taking hold of Frank’s hand, they walked to church with their grand-parents.

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Several times during the sermon, Fanny's lips quivered, and tears started to her eyes, but she looked at the minister, and tried very hard, to forget the little dead chick-a-dee.

After church, they staid to Sunday school. When they went home, Fanny asked if they might not stay at home that afternoon, so as to go down in the woods, and bury the bird. Her grandmother told her that that would not be right; and Fanny said very earnestly,

"Why not, grandmother? Wouldn't that be an errand of mercy?" This made her grandmother smile; but she told her that the poor bird's sufferings were now over, and that it was to shorten them, that she had given her consent to Frank's carrying it into the woods, on the Sabbath.

After dinner, they all went to church again, but Fanny was very warm and tired; so her grandmother took off her bonnet, and laid her head in her lap, and she soon fell asleep. Just as the minister sat down, after finishing his sermon, Fanny turned restlessly, and said, "poor, dear little birdie." The church was so still, that though she spoke low, she was heard all around. It made the children smile, but Frank blushed, and felt almost as badly as his grandmother did. She woke Fanny up, and soon after service was over, and they walked slowly home again. Then Frank and herself sang little hymns, and read their Sabbath school books until sundown, when their grandmother gave them permission to walk in the garden. They talked a great deal about the bird. Frank said he would make a coffin for it, and Fanny picked mullein leaves to wrap around it.

The next morning they woke up very early, and Frank nailed some pieces of shingles together, and Fanny folded the leaves about the bird, and laid it in. Then she picked rose buds, and put them around, and every thing was prepared for the little bird's funeral.

But their grandmother said there was too much dew on the grass for them to go down through the meadows that morning; so they borrowed a piece of black cambric from Sally, and spread it over the little box, which they called the coffin; and Frank darkened the windows, as he remembered they had done when his mother died. Then they left the bird alone, and went down stairs to breakfast, after which they studied their lessons until school time.

At school, they looked very solemn all the forenoon. Their teacher noticed it, and asked Fanny what was the matter.

"We are going to a bird's funeral, Miss Norton," said Fanny, "and we feel very afflicted." The teacher had to bite her lips to keep from smiling. Frank noticed it, and said,

"It was Sally, Miss Norton, that put that into Fanny's head; but we have reason to feel badly, for if it had not been for us, the little bird would have been alive now."

When they had told Miss Norton about it, she said that she did not wonder that they should feel bad, and the children saw that they had her sympathy also.

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At noon, their grandmother thought there would scarcely be time for them to go down to the woods, and back, between dinner and school time; so the funeral was again postponed.

But after school was out in the afternoon, the children hastened home, and bearing the little box, still covered with the black cambric, they walked slowly down through the meadows, stopping just at the edge of the woods, a few rods from the tree that contained the nest, from which Frank had taken the little bird only two days before.

When they heard the notes of the brother and sister birds, Fanny thought, that had it not been for her, the little one that they carried would have been chirping as merrily as they, and this made her cry again.

She sat down on a little mount of grass, and watched Frank as he prepared the grave. It was a beautiful spot. The broad, green boughs of a noble oak shaded them from the sun, and a placid little brook wound along through the long grass and brake leaves at their feet. Tall stems of blue-bells blossomed around, and modest little daisies sprang from the turf every where. After Frank finished burying the bird, he heaped up the green moss, all about it, and then sat down beside his sister. Putting his arm around her neck, he drew her close to him, while he clasped both of her hands in his.

[Illustration: *Frank and Fanny.*]

Her eyes still rested upon the little mount of moss beneath which the bird was buried, and the tears were still welling from them.

“Don’t cry any more, dear Fanny,” he said; “don’t cry any more, I am sure we have both repented doing so wrong, and we never shall forget how unhappy it has made us. Grandmother has often said that every thing is for the best; and perhaps, this will make us more careful to try to do right—so don’t cry any more.”

“I do try not to cry, Franky, and then I think how sweetly the little bird would have been singing to-day, if it had not been for me, and how badly the papa and mamma birds must have felt, when you took it away, and I can’t help crying. And perhaps, the little bird will go to heaven, Frank, and it might see our mamma, and tell her how naughty we had been to take it from its nest, and then she would think we were such bad children—oh, dear;” and Fanny breathed another long sigh.

For some time the children sat very quietly, occupied with their own thoughts, but at length Frank proposed that they should gather twigs, and make a fence around the grave. After this was completed, it looked very neat, and Frank thought that if the birds could see it, they would think it was a very nice little grave.

[Illustration]

CHAPTER IV.

Country amusements and occupations.

Frank and Fanny were permitted to keep pigeons. They had a pigeon house at the back of the barn, with windows opening into the yard, which could be entered by going up into the hay loft, and opening a little door. Fanny often went up there to look at the eggs, and play with the young pigeons. Indeed, the old ones were quite tame, and not at all afraid of her.

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[Illustration: *Fanny in the pigeon house.*]

All the various occupations of the neighboring farmers were observed by these children with great attention; because they were desirous of gaining information by their own observation. The ploughing of the ground in the spring, and the breaking of it up with the harrow, to prepare it for receiving grain, such as barley, rye, and wheat, were operations which interested them very much, as well as the sowing of the wheat, and harrowing it so as to cover the seed.

[Illustration: *Hoeing corn.*]

Then, again, the culture of Indian corn, or maize, was another curious operation. They saw the farmer, after ploughing up the ground, making it into little hillocks with his hoe; each hillock, or hill, as he called it, received a shovel full of manure, before the corn was dropped in, which last operation, Frank and Fanny sometimes assisted their neighbor, Farmer Baldwin, to perform. Afterwards they saw the farmer hoe the corn, loosening the soil round the plant, and cutting up the weeds with his hoe. In summer, they often enjoyed a feast of green corn, roasted or boiled, and when it was gathered, in autumn, they assisted the farmer in husking it.

[Illustration: *Sheep washing.*]

Farmer Baldwin's sheep were objects of great interest to the children, and the little lambs they very justly regarded as types of purity and innocence. When the season of sheep washing and shearing came, they went over to the farmer's, and witnessed these amusing operations with great delight.

[Illustration: *Sheep shearing*]

Very sorrowful were they when they heard of the disaster which happened to the good farmer's flock, by the great snow storm. The sheep were in a pasture quite distant from the village, late in autumn, when just before night there came up a sudden and violent storm of snow, and Farmer Baldwin and his hired men got the flock home with some difficulty, losing several lambs in the snow.

[Illustration: *Farmer Baldwin's disaster.*]

When the season for harvesting the grain arrived, the children's services were sometimes required by the farmer, to carry the dinner to the reapers, out in the field where they were reaping the wheat with sickles, and binding it into sheaves. An expedition of this kind was quite delightful to Frank, who always felt proud of being useful, and never neglected an opportunity of rendering good service to the farmer. His good conduct in this respect, not only gained him the respect and good will of Farmer Baldwin, but it was well requited, when the apples and pears were gathered, when the



potatoe crop came in; and when the festive occasions of Thanksgiving day, Christmas, and the New Year, served to remind the worthy farmer, that a brace of fowls, or a turkey, might be acceptable to Frank's grandmother. Very light was Frank's step when he carried the reapers their dinner. Sometimes he was accompanied by his sister on this useful errand, but he went oftener alone. But before he returned home, he made a point of picking up a few dry sticks for kindling wood, which he brought home on his shoulder.

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[Illustration: *Reaping.*]

[Illustration]

This was not the only service which Frank rendered to the farmer. He often ran of errands for him when out of school, and the farmer was kind to him in return. He predicted that Frank would turn out a useful and industrious man. He was also useful to his parents. One of his regular occupations was to drive the cow to pasture, early every morning, and to drive her home again in the evening, after school was done.

[Illustration]

Farmer Baldwin had a large hop field, which, when the hops were in full bloom, was a very beautiful sight. Here the children were allowed to wander about at pleasure, their favorite resort being under a spreading oak in the hop field. Here they often spent a Saturday afternoon, reading, or making rush baskets, or wreaths of flowers, and listening to the sweet singing of the redstart, whose nest was in the top of the oak. Very sweet and plaintive was the music of the redstart.

[Illustration: *The redstart.*]

When the season for hop gathering came, the children had a grand frolic, as this kind of labor, in which they took a part, was a real pleasure to them. The hops were so light and fragrant, and the picking of them was such fun, and so many men and women assisted at the work, and the long summer day was closed with such a grand rural entertainment, when the great table was spread in the farmer's orchard. Frank and Fanny wished that there might be a dozen hop picking frolics every year.

[Illustration: *Hop picking.*]

[Illustration]

CHAPTER V.

Jack Mills.

I should not omit to tell you, Mrs. Hamilton was bringing Fanny up to be very industrious, both with her sewing and knitting, and Mr. Hamilton taught Frank to weed the garden, and saw wood, and gather chips; and the children were as busy as bees, when at work, and as happy as birds, when at play.

I have told you that Frank seldom played with any one beside his sister; but sometimes when she was busy, after his work was done, he would cross over a corner of the orchard, to a little brown house that stood near by, to play with a boy that lived there,

with his mother. Mrs. Mills was a widow; but Jack was very rough and wild, and Frank's grandmother did not like to have him go there often.

One day Jack called to him from the orchard, and Frank, who had just finished his work, ran over to meet him.

"Look here," said Jack, "see what I've got," and he held out his cap, which was nearly half full of bird's eggs. Frank looked at them with surprise.

"You certainly couldn't have been so wicked as to rob the birds' nests of all those," said Frank.

"Couldn't I?" said Jack, and he gave a long, low whistle; "may be *you* never did nothing of the kind."

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"I never took eggs away from a bird in my life," said Frank; but he held his head down, for he thought of the little bird he had taken only a few weeks before. So he told Jack about it, and how sorry he had felt ever since; but Jack laughed at him, and said:

"Ah, you are nothing but a chicken-hearted fellow, any way; if you wasn't always tied to your sister, you might come with us fellows, and have some fun. Me, and Joe Miller, and Sam White, is going down the meadows, to hunt for more this afternoon, and if you'll come, we'll give you some."

"No, indeed; I wouldn't go for any thing; and I do wish you would let the poor birds be. Just think how badly you'd feel if you was a bird, and had a nice little nest of your own, to find your eggs all stolen."

"Ho, ho," laughed Jack, "here's a young parson, preaching to me, who wasn't too good to help himself to a bird, a few weeks ago, when the old ones did all they could to keep him away from the nest. Why didn't you think then how you'd feel if you'd been the bird?—ha?"

Frank did not answer; but he thought that he had suffered sufficiently for his thoughtlessness, without being taunted with it. He tried to persuade Jack not to rob any more birds' nests; but Jack only laughed at him, and told him to run home to his sister, like a good little boy. Frank was the oldest, and he felt rather vexed at the sneering way in which Jack spoke; but he made no angry answer.

At school time, Frank and Fanny went to school again; but Jack played truant, as he had done in the morning, and went down in the meadows, with the boys, whom he had told Frank he was going with.

Miss Norton asked Frank, if he knew what had kept Jack away from school all day, and he repeated to her, as nearly as he could, the conversation which had taken place between them that noon.

The next morning, when Jack came into school rather late, Miss Norton called him up to her, and told him to read out loud, this piece, from the Village Reader.

"Have you seen my darling nestlings?"

A Mother robin cried:

"I cannot, cannot find them,
Though I've sought them far and wide

"I left them well this morning,
When I went to seek their food;
But I found upon returning,
I'd a nest, without a brood.



"Oh, have you naught to tell me
To ease my aching breast,
About my tender offspring,
That I left within my nest?

"I have called them in the bushes,
And the rolling stream beside:
Yet they come not at my bidding
And I fear they all have died."

"I can tell you all about them,"
Said a little wanton boy,
"For 'twas I that had the pleasure
Your nestlings to destroy.

"But I did not think their mother
Her little ones would miss,
Or ever come to hail me
With a wailing sound like this.

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"I did not know your bosom
Was formed to suffer woe,
And mourn your murdered offspring,
Or I had not grieved you so.

"I ever shall remember,
The plaintive sounds I've heard;
And never'll kill a nestling
To pain another bird."

Jack was very much confused when he commenced reading. As he read on, he looked more and more ashamed, and when he finished, his face was almost crimson.

Miss Norton was glad to see this, for she thought that it showed, that he was not entirely hardened; so she suffered him to go to his seat, without saying any more to him, hoping that this would be a sufficient reproof. Before school was out, at noon, however, all Jack's mortification had vanished, and in its stead, he indulged in very angry feelings towards Frank for he was sure that Frank had told of him.

"I'll fix him," he said to his seat-mate, Harry Day, a merry little fellow, whose roguish blue eyes looked quite capable of assisting where there was any mischief going on.

"What'll you do?" said Harry.

"Why, I'll get him mad, and then I'll lick him; and I know how I'll get him mad." So Jack, in accordance with his wicked resolution, wrote in very large letters upon a slip of paper, '*boy-girl*;' on another slip, he wrote, '*girl-boy*;' and giving Harry the one he had first written, he told him to pin it on to Fanny's back, when they stopped in the entry, to get their bonnets and caps. At the same time, he slyly pinned the other on Frank's roundabout. So when Frank and Fanny went along out of school, as usual, the little children, amused by the slips of paper, ran after them, some calling, '*boy-girl*,' and others, '*girl-boy*,'

Frank did not know what all this meant; but he kept on without looking back.

"Look behind you," cried Harry Day, as he ran up to Fanny. Jack kept some distance behind, and said nothing.

"Look behind you, I say," shouted Harry again.

Fanny was turning to look, when Frank said to her in a low tone, without moving his head,

"Don't look around, Fanny, and don't mind what they call us, for I don't care."

[Illustration: *Jack MILLS'S Trick.*]

So they kept on, side by side, the children still calling after them, and when they got away from the school house, Jack's voice was heard among the rest, shouting, 'tell-tale,' 'girl-baby,' and other provoking nicknames.

Frank took no notice of them, until his sister stooped down to pick a flower, and as she did so, he saw the paper on her back.

"Who did this?" he said, and as he turned toward the children, he saw Jack throwing a stone. The stone flew past him, hitting his sister in the face. Fanny screamed, and the blood started from her nose.

Jack ran, and Frank's first impulse was to spring after him; but he did not know how badly his sister might be hurt, and so he staid with her, and wiped the blood from her face. The children crowded around, and Harry Day unpinned the pieces of paper, for he felt ashamed, for the part he had taken.

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All the while, Frank's heart was full of angry feeling toward Jack, and he could not have kept them down, if he had not had his sister to take care of. He was very glad to find that she was not seriously hurt; for the stone had not hit her with its full force, only grazing her nose, between the eyes.

When they got home, Fanny told her grandmother all about it; but Frank did not say a word. It was plain to be seen by the way in which his head moved, as he walked the floor, that he was striving to obtain a mastery over his passions. After a while he said,

"I wish I could fight Jack Mills, grandmother."

"My dear Frank," she answered, "you have forgotten the golden rule."

"No, I haven't forgotten it, grandmother; for if Jack Mills had a sister, and I had thrown a stone at her, he might have fought me, and welcome."

"But now that Jack has thrown the stone, cannot you set him the example of overcoming evil with good?"

"I don't know, grandmother; I think it would be very hard."

At dinner, Frank asked his grandfather, why kings went to war with each other. He told him, that it was generally to defend their rights.

"Well, grandfather," said he, "if it isn't wrong for them to fight, then I don't see why it wouldn't be right for me to fight Jack Mills, and I know I should feel a great deal happier after I had done it."

His grandfather told him, that it would be very wrong for him to fight with Jack, and that it would make him no happier. He also told him, that Jack had not had the same influences around him, which he had always had, and that if he retaliated, he would be even worse than Jack, who had never been instructed so faithfully in what was right and wrong. Frank listened without appearing to be convinced.

Then his grandmother read him the last eleven verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew; but Frank still said, that he was afraid he could not pray for Jack, and he knew he could not love him.

Mrs. Mills was very poor. She took in washing when she could get it, and when she could not, she went around from house to house, to wash by the day, where she was wanted. Mrs. Hamilton often sent the children to her, with vegetables, or a loaf of fresh bread, or some warm cakes; and sometimes a pie, or a piece of meat, and many other little niceties. That afternoon, she prepared a basket, with a paper of tea, and some eggs, and when the children came from school, she told them that they might go and carry it to Mrs. Mills.



Frank did not look very much pleased at first, but when he saw Fanny lift the basket so willingly, he took it from her, and said,

“You do right, grandmother, to send me to do good for evil, and I will try not to say any thing naughty to Jack.”

His grandmother told him, that she was not afraid to trust him. So the children went along through the orchard, and when they came in sight of the low, brown house, they saw, that the door which generally stood open, was closed. Frank opened it, and looked in. There was a bed in the room, and Mrs. Mills was lying down. She looked very pale and tired; but when she saw the children, she welcomed them, and asked them to come in.

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She tried to sit up in bed, but her head ached so, that she was obliged to lie down again, and give up the attempt. She was really quite ill.

When Fanny found Mrs. Mills was sick, she said,

“Do let me make a nice cup of tea for you. Sally says it is so good for a head ache.”

“I haven’t any tea, my child,” she answered, “or I should have made some when I finished my washing.”

“But grandmother has sent you some, and here it is, just the very thing you want; now, do lie down, and let us fix it for you, it would make me *so happy*.”

Mrs. Mills thought Fanny was too young; but she could not resist her pleading tones, and so Frank raked the embers of the fire together, picked up some chips, and heaped them on, and then filled the little tea kettle, which was soon singing away merrily.

Fanny took down a cup and saucer from the dresser, and drawing a little stand near the bed, she placed them on it, then measured out her tea into an earthen tea pot, as she had often seen her grandmother do; and the water boiled, Frank poured it on for her, and they put it down to draw, as Mrs. Mills told them.

After a while, Jack came whistling into the house; but when he saw Frank and Fanny there, he looked as though he wished he was any where else.

Fanny went towards him, holding one little finger up.

“Hush, Jack, don’t whistle so,” she said, “your mother has the sick head ache, and we are making a cup of tea to cure her.”

Jack looked at her in surprise. He did not know what to make of it all. There was the mark on her face, where the stone which he had thrown that noon, had grazed the skin, and yet, here she was, making tea for his sick mother.

He did not say a word, but turned and went out of the house. Frank thought he saw something very like tears glistening in his eyes, and he acknowledged to himself, that his grandmother was right, when she had told him that he would be happier if he returned good for evil.

Mrs. Mills sat up, and drank her tea, and then Fanny washed the cup and saucer, and she felt very large to think she was able to do it. Then she put her bonnet on, and Mrs. Mills told her that she should tell her grandmother what a kind little girl she was, and how much good she had done her, and Fanny and Frank both felt very happy.

As they went out of the door, Fanny bent her head down to smell of a beautiful damask rose that was blooming on a bush near the house. They walked along without seeing Jack, but he saw them. When they were half way through the orchard, he came running up behind them, and reaching out his hand, and touching Fanny, said:

“Won’t you take this rose.” She turned around, and saw that he had picked for her the very rose that she had admired so much, and as she took it from him, he whispered,

“I hope you don’t think that I meant to hurt you this noon, when I threw that stone—I wouldn’t hurt you for the world. I only threw it to make you look around.”

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Fanny answered him very pleasantly, and then he bade them good night, and went back to his mother.

When the children reached home, they told their grandmother what a happy time they had had, and Fanny said if she was a king, and another king wanted to fight with her, she would send some eggs and tea, and see if that wouldn't make them good, just like it made Jack Mills.

[Illustration]

CHAPTER VI.

The nutting expedition.

One Saturday afternoon, Frank and his sister went into the woods, provided with little baskets and bags, to gather walnuts. As they left the village, they were regaled with a song from the Golden Crested Wren, who was perched on the branch of an apple tree, and seemed to be lamenting the rapid approach of winter.

[Illustration: *The golden crested wren.*]

Scarcely had they got into the thick part of the woods, where the walnuts were abundant, when they found that they were not the only nut gatherers on the ground. The grey squirrels were on the alert, scampering about upon the tall trees, where they were quite at home. Their nests are in hollow trees, high up from the ground, and here they delight to store up the sweet nuts, and acorns, for their subsistence. Frank told Fanny some wonderful stories about these squirrels, which he had heard from Farmer Baldwin: how some thousands of them once set out in company, on an expedition from New York State, to Vermont, and swam across the Hudson; and how they were so fatigued and wet, after crossing the river, that many of those who escaped drowning, were killed with clubs by the people, on the eastern shore of the river.

[Illustration: *The grey squirrel.*]

Fanny also knew some stories about the grey squirrel, which she had read in a book, which she got out of the school library—how they sometimes crossed rivers on chips, and bits of bark, using their large bushy tails for sails. Frank doubted this; but they both agreed to believe what is really the fact, that these animals sometimes migrate from one part of the country to another, in very large numbers.

[Illustration: *The yellow throat.*]

When the children had half filled their baskets and bags, they sat down under the shade of a walnut tree, to eat some dinner, which they had brought along in one of the

baskets. During this frugal repast they were entertained with the song of a Yellow Throat, one of the very sweetest of all the wild birds of the forest. He loves the thickest shades of the wood; and although the children were perfectly charmed with his music, he was so shy, that they could not get a single look at him.

After dinner, the children strolling further into the wood, came suddenly upon a party of their school fellows, who were in the woods for a day's sport. They were sitting under a tree, telling stories to each other.

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[Illustration: *The story telling party.*]

Frank and Fanny were received by this lively party with loud shouts of welcome. They sat down and listened to one or two stories after which Fanny was invited by one of the little girls, to go and see a fine swing, which the party had put upon one of the trees of the forest. The two girls enjoyed themselves in swinging here for half an hour, while Frank remained with the party who were so much engrossed with the stories as not to miss the two little girls who were enjoying the swing.

[Illustration: *The swing.*]

When Fanny returned from the swinging expedition, the children took leave of their friends, and returned alone to the business of filling their bags and baskets with nuts. This they accomplished before sunset, and joyfully set forward for home. Leaving the skirts of this forest, they saw a little boy reclining under a tree with a dog by his side. The boy was leaning his head rather dejectedly on his hand, and seemed rather tired. On the children inquiring how he came there, he replied, that he had been spending the whole day with his dog, vainly endeavoring to catch a woodchuck, which he had seen running into the woods, in the morning. Frank kindly condoled with him on his disappointment; but, at the same time, advised him to seek some more profitable employment in future.

[Illustration: *The woodchuck Hunter.*]

After they had left the boy, Frank and Fanny talked together very sagely on the importance of making a proper use of time, and the folly of spending it in the hunting of wild animals, like the woodchuck, which are very hard to catch.

Just before reaching the village, they met a party of boys playing at soldiers. They had their drum, and fife, colors, and wooden guns, and tin swords, and flourished away in all the "pride, pomp, and circumstance" of military display.

[Illustration: *Playing at soldiers.*]

This sight afforded Frank another theme for remark. His conversations with Farmer Baldwin had inspired him with disgust for this kind of amusement. He hated war, and was not pleased with any thing which reminded him of it. Besides the nonsense of this soldier-playing, he said there was an objection to it, as inspiring a taste for real soldier life, and for amusing one's self with gun powder; and he told Fanny a story of a boy, who, in firing off a little brass cannon, which split in pieces, received one of the pieces in his neck, which cut off a large artery, and caused his death in a few minutes.

[Illustration: *Dangerous sport.*]

Before Frank had finished his comments on this sad affair, they reached home; and so ended the nutting expedition, which, Frank thought, was not quite so profitable as helping Farmer Baldwin to gather his apples.

[Illustration]

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CHAPTER VII.

Mary day.

Mary Day's father was rich. He lived in an elegant house, kept a carriage and fine horses, and Mary had beautiful dresses, and a great variety of play-things.

Now I suppose you think that all these things made Mary very happy. But it was not so. Mary was a discontented little girl. She was never satisfied with any thing that she had, but was always wishing for something new. Even the flock of beautiful tame rabbits, which her father had given, afforded her but little pleasure, because she was of a discontented disposition.

[Illustration: *Mary day's rabbits.*]

Now, it so happened, that Mary had been with Fanny several times to the little 'chick-a-dee's' grave, and she told her mother, that she wished she had a bird's grave of her own, like Fanny Lee's. Her mother told her that Fanny would much rather have a live bird, like Mary's Canary. But Mary persisted in saying, that a bird's grave was a great deal nicer than a bird, which had to be waited on so much as her Canary did, although it was Mary's mother who took care of her linnet.

[Illustration: *Mary day's canary.*]

But Mary's love was soon put to the test, for her Canary sickened and died; and then she found that she missed its cheerful chirrup, and the little spot where it was buried, was no source of pleasure to her, for it but served to remind her of her foolish wish.

It was about this time that their minister, Mr. Herbert, returned from a visit to New York, and he brought with him, for Fanny Lee, a beautiful bird, called a linnet.

Mr. Herbert had heard her when she spoke aloud in church, and said, "poor, dear, little birdie;" and he had inquired of Miss Norton about her, and she had told him what a good little girl she was, and how much the death of the bird had grieved her.

[Illustration: *Fanny's linnet.*]

He carried the bird in a cage to Fanny, and she was so delighted, she could scarcely speak.

Mr. Herbert told her, that she need not fear that the bird would be unhappy, for it had been born in a cage, and had never been accustomed to any other kind of life. Then he told her where to put the seed, and the water, and the sugar, and how to clean the cage; and Fanny listened attentively, and thanked him so earnestly, while her dark, blue eyes



sparkled with delight, that Mr. Herbert felt more than repaid for the trouble he had taken in getting the bird.

The next morning Mary Day stopped, in her way to school. When she saw the cage hanging amid the vines, and heard the clear, sweet notes of the linnet, her heart was stirred with envy. She was a very selfish little girl, or it would have pleased her to see Fanny so happy with her bird; but she looked very cross and sour, as she said,

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"So you have got a bird, just because mine is dead."

"Oh, no," answered Fanny, "I never thought of having a bird; but dear, good Mr. Herbert, brought it to me yesterday. I am so sorry that yours is dead."

"You needn't be sorry for me," said the petulant Mary, "I've got plenty of things that you haven't got, and I'd be ashamed to wear such mean clothes as you do."

Poor Fanny looked down at her clean calico dress, and she saw that it was faded and patched. A bright rose color flitted over her cheeks, and when she looked up, tears stood in her eyes. Mary did not say any more; but she watched Fanny all the forenoon, and saw that she had made her feel very unhappy. When they went out to play, she went up to Fanny, and said,

"I will give you one of my fine dresses for your little linnet, and then you needn't wear that old patched calico any more."

"No, no," answered Fanny, "I would not sell my bird for all the dresses in the world."

This made the selfish, naughty Mary more angry than ever; and she went around whispering to all the girls to look at the patches in Fanny Lee's dress. Some of them laughed with Mary, and poor Fanny felt very much hurt and grieved.

After school, that noon, Frank found her crying alone in her room, and for the first time in her life, she refused to tell him what was the matter.

In the afternoon, after school was out, Fanny did not stay, as she sometimes did, to play on the green with the children; but she took her book, and turned down into the meadow path alone. Frank felt very sad when he saw that his sister avoided him; but he followed her into the woods, and found her sitting in her favorite spot.

It was autumn, and the weather was cooler. Fanny had spread her shawl down upon a log, and she was now sitting upon it, with her open book in her lap; but her eyes were bent upon the ground, thoughtfully. A merry little wren was flitting around and above her, but her cheerful notes were now unheeded.

[Illustration: *The wren.*]

Frank sat down beside her, and putting one arm about her neck, he clasped her hand tenderly. Resting his head upon his other hand, he looked into her face, and said,

[Illustration: *Frank consoling Fanny.*]

"Why won't my dear sister tell me what has made her feel so badly." She did not want to converse, but when Frank told her that he should be very unhappy if he did not know

the cause, she told him all about it. Frank felt very sorry for his sister, and at first bad feelings rose in his heart; but he had learned how to conquer them; so he talked to her, and told her how much happier they were than Mary Day, and how disagreeable she made herself, with her selfishness and her vanity; and then he told her that he had read in a book somewhere, that it was better to live in a mud hovel, with a kind heart, and a cheerful temper like hers, than to live in a palace without it.

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When they went home, Fanny was as happy as ever again, for she found that her heart was very much lightened by sharing her troubles with her brother.

The next day when they went to school, Mary Day was not there, and during the forenoon, Miss Norton received a note from Mary's mother, saying, that she had been thrown from a carriage, and one of her limbs broken. Fanny felt so sorry for her, that she forgot all the unkind things which she had said the day before, and as soon as school was out, she hurried home, and taking down her cage, she started for Mr. Herbert's, without saying any thing to her grand-parents, or to Frank. She was almost breathless when she reached the parsonage. Mr. Herbert was gathering some grapes in the garden, and as soon as Fanny saw him, she said,

"Please, Mr. Herbert, let me give my linnet to Mary Day, her Canary is dead, and she has broken her leg, and she wants this very badly, and I can spare it, for I can go in the woods and hear the birds sing, while poor Mary has to lie in bed, and if I should get very home sick often, dear Linny, I can go and listen at her windows, and hear him sing."

Little Fanny chatted so fast, that Mr. Herbert could not help smiling, although he was very sorry to hear of poor Mary's misfortune. He told her that she might give it to Mary to keep while she was sick, if she thought it would cheer her any; but he said, that he should wish Fanny to have it again, after Mary should recover; for he felt more confidence in her, that she would take good care of the little bird. Then he put his hat on, and went to Mr. Day's house, and told them how she had wished to give the bird to Mary, but that he had only consented to her lending it. They all thought that she was a very good girl; and Mary told Fanny that she might take home any of her play things. But Fanny did not wish for them, and Mary thought it very strange that she should be willing to give her the bird, when she was so fond of it. It was great company to Mary, during her confinement to the house, and when she was able to go to school again, the bird was returned to Fanny willingly, for Mary had learned to love her very much, and she often felt sorry that she should ever have hurt the feelings of so good a girl.

Mr. Herbert always spoke of Frank and Fanny with a great deal of love, for he thought them the most affectionate and dutiful children that he had ever known.

He foretold that they would become useful and respectable when they should grow up; and in this respect he was perfectly right. Frank owns a very large farm, purchased with the wages of his own industry; and Fanny is the happy, busy, and industrious little wife of worthy Farmer Baldwin's only son.

Good children are always beloved, for they make every one happy around them, and they are happy themselves.

I hope those who read this little tale, will try to be kind and forgiving, like Frank and Fanny Lee. A kind, friendly disposition, and a willingness to forgive rather than resent

injuries, is one which cannot fail to make us happy and beloved by our friends in this world; and without it we can not be happy in the world which is to come.

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[Illustration]

[Illustration: *Frank and Fanny.*]