

The Nest in the Honeysuckles, and other Stories eBook

The Nest in the Honeysuckles, and other Stories

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CHAPTER I.

[Illustration]

"Do come here, mother," said Eddie, carefully tip-toeing from the window, and beckoning with his hand. "Here is something I want to show you. Come carefully, or I am afraid you will frighten it."

Mrs. Dudley laid aside her book, and stepped cautiously forward, Eddie leading the way back to the window. "What is it?" she inquired.

"It is a bird with straw in its mouth, and I do believe it is going to build a nest."

Mrs. Dudley stood by her little boy a few minutes, looking from the window. Presently a robin alighted on the walnut tree, directly before them, with a bunch of dry grass in its mouth. It rested a few seconds, and then flew in among the branches of a honeysuckle which twined around the pillars, and crept over the top of the porch. A fine, warm place it was for a nest, sheltered from the north winds, and from the driving rains, and from the hot rays of the noon-day sun.

Eddie and his mother watched the bird for some time. It would bring straws, and arrange them in its nest, as only a bird can; and then it would away again, and come back, perhaps, with its bill covered and filled with mud, which it used for mortar in fastening the materials in their places. Then it would get in the nest, and, moving its feet and wings, would make it just the right shape to hold the pretty eggs she would lay in it, and the little robins she would love so well, and feed so carefully.

The robin was industrious, and worked hard to get the house finished in season. I think she must have been very tired when night came, and she flew away to her perch to rest till morning. I do not see how she could balance herself so nicely on one foot, as she slept with her head turned back, and half-hidden beneath her wing.

Eddie often watched the robin during the day. He was careful not to frighten it. "I wonder how the robin could find so nice a place. I should not have thought it would have known about it,"—he said to his mother, as he saw the bird fly in, almost out of sight, among the clustering branches.

Mrs. Dudley told Eddie God taught the birds where to build their nests, and that he took care of them, and provided food for them.

Is it not wonderful that God, who has built the world in which we live, and all the bright worlds we can see in the sky, should attend to the wants of the robins and sparrows, and other birds which he has made? We should forget them, if we had much of importance to attend to, or we should be weary of providing for their wants; but our

heavenly Father never forgets, and never grows weary. He hears the ravens when they cry, and not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge. "Are ye not much better than they?" our Saviour said to his disciples, when endeavouring to teach them to trust in the love and parental care of God, and not to be anxious in regard to their temporal welfare.

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If God so cares for the birds, whose lives are short, and who have no souls to live in another world, will he not much more care for those who are made in his image, and for whom the Saviour died?

No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly, who try to obey his commandments, and look to Christ for salvation from sin. I hope, my dear children, when you see the birds, you will remember God's love to them and to you.

I have given you all I know of the history of one day of the robin's life, but Eddie will observe it while it lives in its house in the honeysuckle, and will tell me all he sees of its domestic arrangements. I hope to tell you with what kind of a carpet it covers the floor, and what it hangs on the walls, and how it brings up its little children, if it should be so happy as to have any to gladden its quiet home, and cheer it with their chattering tongues. I am sure it will have pretty flowers and green leaves for pictures to look at, painted by One whose skill no artist can rival; and it will need no Cologne for perfume for the breath of the honeysuckle is more delicious than any odour which the art of man could prepare.

CHAPTER II.

Going to housekeeping.

I promised to tell you more about the nest in the honeysuckles. Eddie has observed it with great attention, and has kept me well informed in regard to it. I have stepped out upon the porch with him, and, kneeling down, and looking over the side, I have had a peep myself at this wonderfully contrived home of the robins. It is partly supported by a cornice, which runs around the porch, and gives it a firmer foundation than the small branches of the honeysuckle could do.

But I must not forget to tell you about the finishing of the nest. The second day, the robin was at work before six o'clock in the morning; so you see birds are early risers, and like to have their work done in good season. They know how pleasant it is to see the rosy dawn, and welcome it with their sweetest strains of music. I wonder how many of my little friends see the sun rise, these bright mornings! If they would awake with the birds, they must, as wisely as the birds, go to their places of rest before the shades of evening shroud the world in darkness. If they sit up late, they will lose the morning songs, which fill the woods with sounds of gladness, and which resound from every tree and shrub about the houses of those who love these pleasant visitors, and refuse to allow them to be frightened from their premises.

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The robin rose early, as I have told you, and resumed her labours for a short time. Through the day she came occasionally to see how the house was drying, but did not seem to be at all busy. She had accomplished so much by her previous industry, that there was no necessity for much exertion, and she felt quite at liberty to enjoy herself, taking short excursions in the country, and returning sometimes alone, and sometimes in company with her mate. He, once in a while, visited the nest; but was so well satisfied with the domestic arrangements of his wife, and had so much confidence in her ability and skill, that he manifested no disposition to interfere with any of her plans, but cheerfully acquiesced in them, and cheered and encouraged her by singing her one of his sweetest songs, telling her how dearly he loved her, how highly he esteemed her, and how truly happy he was that he had so pleasant and agreeable, and at the same time so housewifely, a companion. She appeared quite as well pleased to be appreciated as any wife or housekeeper of my acquaintance, and it made her labour a labour of love. We all like to be appreciated.

I see the robin is a plain, common-sense bird in her notions, and wants nothing for mere display. Every thing which could add to the real comfort of her family she has provided, and has no desire for any thing further. Many house-keepers might learn a valuable lesson from her prudent, comfortable arrangements.

When the dwelling was completed, and suitably dry for occupancy, the robin deposited there four bluish-green eggs. I assure you they are beautiful, and are great treasures to her. In about twelve days from the time Eddie first saw her carrying straws into the honeysuckles, she became very domestic, never leaving home but for a few minutes at a time. Her four eggs now occupy all her attention and her great business seems to be to keep them warm with the heat of her own body. She does not complain of being confined at home, but is entirely satisfied to attend to the duties which devolve upon her. She is not uneasy that she cannot sing like her husband, or, like him, attend to the interests of Robindom; but quietly and discreetly she labours in her appropriate sphere, and feels no wish to leave it for a less secluded and less happy life. Her *heart* is satisfied with the happiness of her home, and she feels no uneasiness—no ungratified longings for something to occupy her, aside from the duties she so cheerfully performs.

Madam Robin was entirely satisfied with the success of her labours, and she had reason to be. No bird could have done better. This consciousness of having done well did not make her proud; it only gave her such self-respect as every one feels who is conscious that an allotted task has been faithfully performed; and the praise of her husband was no injury to her, as she was not silly enough to think of herself more highly than she ought to think.

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As the house was for a summer residence, she selected fine straw-matting, instead of woollen carpets for it. She put it down with great care, perfectly smooth and even. The wall was covered with the same cool material, delicately woven. Wasn't it nice?

CHAPTER III.

Pleasant neighbours.

The location selected by our friend, the robin, seems to be highly appreciated by many of the feathered race. Although the robin was the first settler, others have already decided that it affords great advantages in the way of shelter from the fierce winds, from the burning rays of a summer sun, and from the too-curious eyes of hawks and other birds of prey.

An abundance of fresh, soft water can be obtained not far from Honeysuckleville, and this is always a recommendation in favour of any place, either for men or birds. Fruit also abounds. There will be bright red currants for the little folks; strawberries, too, more than they can eat, and raspberries in any quantity they may wish. I must not forget the cherries, of which birds are so fond, and which they can have at any time when they are ripe, for merely the trouble of picking.

It is not surprising, with all these advantages in its favour, that Honeysuckleville should find more than one family happy to settle within its borders. For some time, two song-sparrows have made it frequent visits; and have finally decided, after a careful survey, that no more desirable spot can be found for a summer residence. They have accordingly commenced building, not more than two feet from the mansion of the robins. Their house is much smaller—a cottage—but quite large enough for them. It nestles so lovingly in the shadow of the vines, that I am sure domestic comfort must be found there. Discord and contention could not abide in so peaceful a retreat.

The song-sparrows will be pleasant neighbours. They are exceedingly fond of vocal music, and their clear melodious voices fill the new settlement with harmony. In that terrible snow-storm which occurred in the middle of April, I often saw a sparrow alight on a bough of a tree near the house, and send up to heaven such a strain of full, gushing melody, as melted my heart with pity and admiration. It reminded me of a child of God in the midst of trials and afflictions, yet rejoicing in faith, and trusting continually in the care of a Father in heaven. Was the cold little sparrow singing itself away, as it was once believed the swan sung its own death-song? Or may the new neighbour of the robin be the very one whose voice rang out so clear and loud, above the howlings of the storm? I trust no rude blast nor chilling frost will mar the pleasure of our feathered friends, but that they may prosper in their plans, and never forget seeking a home in the vine which winds so gracefully around the porch of Mrs. Dudley's cottage.

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The song sparrow is not the only neighbour of the robin. A pair of cat-birds have a nest in a lilac near the honeysuckle, and one of them sings hour after hour on the walnut-tree opposite to the window and often comes near enough to the house to look through the open casement. These birds have lived for several summers in that same lilac, and annually make all the repairs necessary to render their dwelling habitable. They have raised several broods of birdlings, much to their own enjoyment, and of Mrs. Dudley's bird-loving family.

CHAPTER IV.

Home duties and home pleasures.

Our robin has been a keeper-at-home ever since those four bluish-green eggs demanded her attention. She has occasionally left, for a few minutes at a time, to procure food and drink, or to take a little exercise; but she has never forgotten her quiet abode, and the duties which there require her almost constant presence. She loves the green fields, the leafy trees, and the clear blue sky, and delights to hop about with her mate over the fresh grass and the clean gravel-walks; but better than all she loves those pretty eggs, which lie so cozily in the bottom of her straw-built nest.

Before she commenced house-keeping, she was very fond of travelling, and many a mile has she wandered, over hill and valley, in company with her friends. She assisted at concerts, and was universally admired; but she had the good sense to give up these enjoyments without a murmur, when higher claims called for her undivided care. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well; and the robin will doubtless be repaid for the unwearied patience with which she performs her unostentatious duties. Some people are inclined to think domestic labour dishonourable, and the cares of house-keeping a burden; but our feathered friend is wiser than they. She does with her might what she finds to do, and she does it heartily. Every act of duty, faithfully and cheerfully performed, is acceptable to God; and his children do his will when they endeavour to attend to their various occupations in such a way as he can approve. If all house-keepers felt that, in attending to the different departments of their work as they should be attended to, they were honouring Him who has made this care necessary for the comfort of families, it would be a blessing to themselves, and to who all who dwell under the same roof with them. We cannot consider any thing which we do to please our heavenly Father of small importance, and no favour can be degrading which he requires of us.

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We may all learn a lesson from the robin who lives in the honeysuckles, and we shall see how she was rewarded for her devotion to the employment which Providence assigned her. The wisest of men, in describing the character of an excellent woman, says: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." "She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life." Our feathered friend's husband is absent much of his time (as most gentlemen are obliged to be) from his well-ordered home; but he always thinks of it with pleasure, and hastens to it whenever he can find time to do so. Sometimes he only stops a moment, but it is a precious moment to them both, for their hearts and interests are one. They are cheered, in their separation, by the pleasant memories of these brief interviews, and by bright anticipations of future enjoyment.

I have observed, Mr. Robin thinks it of importance to look nice at home, as well as when he is abroad. I have seen him alight on the walnut-tree, and carefully arrange his toilet, before going into the presence of his wife. She must feel complimented by this delicate attention, indicating so high a regard for her, and such anxiety to preserve her esteem. I should not wonder if she was a little proud of her handsome husband. However this may be, I am sure it is her greatest happiness to deserve his respect and love, and honourably to perform all the duties which devolve upon her in her married life.

Madam Robin was sitting one day in her vine-shaded home, looking out through the slender branches of the honeysuckle, which were gently swayed by a refreshing breeze, when she heard a slight tap. She listened eagerly. Another tap—presently another. How her heart fluttered! It proceeded from one of those highly-prized eggs, and she knew it was the timid knock of a birdling, who was in that little chamber, and was waiting to have the door opened. Of how small consequence all her self-denial and her seclusion from general society seemed, when that thrilling tap sounded on her ear! She continued to listen, and within those four tiny chambers she heard the same rapping repeated; and more than that, the sweet word, Mother, might seem faintly to greet her ear. How she longed for her mate to return, that he might enjoy, with her, this new happiness! When husband and wife love each other, as they should, all pleasure must be shared, or it will still be imperfect. She waited, almost impatiently for his coming; and when he alighted on the honeysuckle, she looked so full of grateful joy, that he knew that something more than usual must have occurred. He affectionately kissed her bill, and then, in a low tremulous voice, she told him the glad news. He was quite as much pleased as she, although he did not appear so excited. Had employment in the open air given a firmness to his nerves, which her sedentary occupations had not done for her? Yet beneath that calm exterior, his sparkling eye plainly revealed the full tide of emotion within.

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It was pleasant music to their ears to hear those four new voices in their secluded home; and though they knew it would increase their labour to provide food for those gaping mouths, what cared they for their own comfort, if they could nurture their precious charge, and rear them to be an honour and a blessing?

When the doors of their chambers were quite open, out came the baby-birds, with a few downy feathers covering them!

“How very little they are!” said Eddie, with one breath; and, “How big their mouths are!” with the next. To be sure, they do look very small, and their mouths are very large for such diminutive bodies, and they open them so wide that it almost seems as if one of them could jump down another’s throat.

The robin now often comes home, and brings food to his family. It is gratifying to see how attentive he is to his dear children and their mother; and I hope I may be able, some day, to tell you that they repay his attachment, by growing up fine, obedient birds. It will not be long before their education will be commenced, and I will tell you whether they are taught at home, or are sent away to school, and what progress they make in acquiring their accomplishments.

CHAPTER V.

Home life and home education.

The birdlings still live in the honeysuckles.

“How they do grow!” Eddie exclaims, when he looks at them. “I shouldn’t think they could ever have lived in those little eggs.”

They are now almost half as large as the old birds. They are well covered with feathers, and their mottled breasts are very pretty.

“They don’t have to dress as we do,” said Eddie. “Their clothes grow.” And he thinks it would be a great convenience if his clothes grew too, for then they would always be large enough for him, and his mother would not have so much sewing to do.

Sometimes these little birds lie in the bottom of the nest, quietly sleeping, while their father and mother are both away, getting them food. At other times they feel wide awake. Then they stretch their wings, stand upon their feet, and peep over the side of the nest. From the parlour-window, the children can look up directly at their secluded home, and can see them amusing themselves and practising their lessons. The honeysuckle grows almost as fast as the birds, and the tender, overhanging branches make a roof which keeps off all the rain.

The old birds are mindful of their children, but do not consider it necessary to be with them all the time. So other parents endeavour to implant good principles in the hearts of their children, and then leave them to their self-control; ever keeping a watchful eye on the influences which surround them, and using their proper authority, when it becomes necessary, to restrain from evil, and guide in the way of virtue. The child that has never learned to depend upon himself, or to control his own passions, and to do right because it is right, will hardly be able to sustain himself when the presence of his parents is withdrawn.

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The robins know very well that children grow weary of long lectures; so they give them here a little and there a little instruction, as occasion demands.

They are decided in their family government, but not severe. Their children are taught to obey promptly and cheerfully, but they have no slavish fear of their parents. Their presence is not regarded as a restraint; for, at all suitable times, they have freely permitted their little ones to laugh and frolic to their hearts' content. They willingly listen to all the plans of the birdlings, and lend an attentive ear to the story of their joys and their sorrows. Their sympathy is never withheld; their griefs are never considered as of no consequence because they are brief and soon forgotten.

The parent birds do not leave their young alone but a little while at a time. They often fly home to see them, and sometimes perch on the walnut-tree, and talk with them. Their musical chirpings are pleasant to hear. We don't understand the bird-language; but we judge, by the soft tones, that it is something kind and agreeable they are saying. Perhaps they are talking about their plans for the future, when they all know how to use their wings, and can fly about together.

Very often, during the day, the robins bring worms to fill the gaping mouths. It is surprising how much they eat. No wonder they have grown plump and large, for they eat and sleep as much as they please. We expect soon to see them flying about from tree to tree, and hopping along the ground. We hope that great cat, which steps about so softly, will never find them. She is welcome to all the rats and mice she can put her paws on, but we never like to see her climb a tree, for we fear she will destroy some of our cheerful friends, who build near the house in full confidence that they shall not be disturbed.

The young robins are not lonely in their rural home. The plainly-dressed sparrows and the brilliant yellow-birds look in upon them, and, now and then, their cousin, the oriole, comes, clad in the richest golden plumage, and sings them a song. If he had dipped his feathers in the gorgeous sunset he could not be more beautiful. The delicate little humming-birds sip nectar from the deep horns of the honeysuckle; and the red-winged starling, in his glossy black coat, and his dashing scarlet epaulette, occasionally comes from his home in the meadow, to make them a call. He does not like Honeysuckleville quite as well as his dwelling in the grass, just above the water. If he was not so confirmed in his habits, I think he would be strongly tempted to become a neighbour of the robins. A few weeks ago, when his favourite resort was five or six feet under water, he and his friends seemed to be in great uncertainty what course to pursue. They had several mass meetings on the quince-bushes, in full sight of Honeysuckleville, and a great many speeches were made. It sounded to me like incessant chattering, and as if all were talking at the same time. I could not understand a word they said, and I cannot tell you the result of their deliberations. Whatever it may have been, when the water subsided, they returned to their old haunts by the river-side.

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These I have mentioned are not the only visitors whose society our friends enjoy. The swallows gracefully skim through the air, and greet them with their merry voices. The wren often favours them with one of his sweetest melodies, and the blue-bird flies around the corner to sing a song on the walnut-tree. He has a curious little nest of his own, hidden away under the eaves. The cat-birds, of course, are always near, as they live in the lilacs. The oriole has suspended his nest, like a basket, from a limb of the great pear-tree; and when the robins know how to fly, they can return some of his visits.

The old robins, now and then, play peep with the young birds. They fly almost up to the nest, and poise themselves for an instant on the wing, just long enough to say, "Bo-peep!" and then away! almost before they can be seen. Pretty soon they return again, generally bringing some nice morsel with them. They often first alight on a small branch of the vine, below the nest, and then hop up to it.

What a chirping the birdlings keep up with their mother! They like to talk as well as Eddie Dudley and some other children, whom I have heard pleasantly called little chatter-boxes. Children have much to learn, and must ask many questions. The world is new and strange to them, and is a constant source of surprise and wonder. I do not suppose people ever learn faster than before they are six years old, or ever learn more in the same length of time. They are constantly observing, and in this way the stock of their ideas is continually increasing. I once heard a gentleman say he did not like to go through the world with his head in a bag. He wished to see what was taking place around him, and it was this seeing, and thinking upon what he saw, that, among other things, made him a distinguished man.

The young birds are now seeing and thinking, as well as birds can. Their time for action has not come. Like dear children in their happy homes, they are preparing for the responsibilities of life; and, if they honour and obey their parents, as far as birds are expected to do, and as all children should, I doubt not they will faithfully perform the duties which will hereafter devolve upon them.

From observations I have made, I conclude the robins neither send their children to school nor employ a governess for them. They have so made their arrangements that either one or the other has time to attend to their education. Sometimes the father, and at other times the mother, assumes the labour of teaching, and their dearly-loved pupils are quite as attentive to their instructions as any children I have ever seen.

CHAPTER VI.

Going abroad.

It was on a bright, warm, breezy morning in early June, that our friends at Honeysuckleville decided that the home education of their children had been attended

with such success as to encourage the hope that they would “come out” creditably to themselves, and their parents. Arrangements were accordingly made, and I assure you there was much talking and no little excitement and bustle upon the occasion. It was proposed to spend some weeks in travelling, that the young people might enjoy themselves, and acquire much useful information, which could be obtained no other way.

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The weather was delightful. A few light, fleecy clouds were floating in the blue sky, continually changing from one form of beauty to another. The sun shone forth in his splendour, cheering the tender grass and the up-springing seeds, and drawing them nearer and nearer to his bosom. They stretched toward him their feeble blades and diminutive leaves, as if they would gladly be clasped in his arms; but their growing roots were striking deeper and deeper into mother earth, and binding them closer and closer to her.

The gentle, cooling zephyrs were playing among the leaves, and winning sweet music from the tiny voices, which responded in glee to their salutations. Often they lifted the soft hair from the brows of the children, and frolicked amid their curls, and fanned their sun-burnt cheeks. It was a morning which all nature enjoyed. There could not have been a finer day to start upon a journey. As birds do not need a change of dress, there was no trunk to pack, and no travelling-bag to be laden with comforts. All the preparation necessary was the usual attention to the toilet, and the instruction and advice which the exigency required.

The hearts of the young adventurers fluttered with excitement. There was a mingling of curiosity to visit the great world of which they had heard such glowing descriptions, and of fears to trust themselves to the power of their wings to bear them from their pleasant, happy home, and keep them out of harm's way. They had seen Pussy, as she walked about in her white and black robe, and though she seemed so gentle, they had been warned against her as one of their most deadly enemies. They knew she was often prowling about, with stealthy tread, to prey upon the unwary. They feared that, instead of flying to the walnut-tree, as was the plan, they should fall upon the grass, where she could pounce upon them and destroy them, notwithstanding the screams and agonizing entreaties of their parents. Puss is a full believer in the doctrine that "might makes right;" and she is as unmoved by the cries and appeals of her victims as if they had no hearts to suffer, and were made merely for her own use.

Many words of encouragement were addressed to them by their parents. They told them how they themselves had suffered from similar fears; how difficult it was for them to trust implicitly in the wisdom of their own father and mother; and how they stood, tremulous and fearful, on the top of the nest, wishing they had sufficient resolution to obey, and yet fearing to venture; but how easy and pleasant they found it to spread their wings in the air, and be borne up by it, when they fully determined to make the attempt.

Our little birdlings still hesitated, just as I have seen children hesitate and quiver with terror when for the first time they go into the water to learn to swim. They know their father tells them the truth, for he has never deceived them. He has bound a life-preserver beneath their arms, and has promised to remain near, to catch them, if they begin to sink; yet they are afraid, and draw back. They lack faith. When at last they timidly push from the shore, and find themselves buoyed up on the water, their delight is almost unbounded, and they are as unwilling to leave as they were reluctant to enter it.

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The old robins stood on one of the branches of the walnut-tree, and endeavoured to persuade their timid brood to come to them. They were not stern and severe, for they had not forgotten their own youth, and they sympathized deeply with these children; but the father found he must be decided, so he told them, (as it seemed,) authoritatively, that they must hesitate no longer. He would count one—two—three; and when he said three, they must spread their wings and do as well as they could. The mother smiled lovingly upon them, and they determined to obey, whatever effort it might cost. “One—two—three,” counted the robin, in his full, musical tones. The birdlings fluttered their wings, and strained every nerve to alight by the side of their parents. With what joy they felt their feet clinging round the branch! How elated they were with their success! They chirped continually, and merry and brisk was the conversation. “What is this?” one asked, and “What is that?” said another, till it seemed as if the old birds would be weary of their questions; but they never lost their patience; they thought the little folks remarkably intelligent.

When they were rested, away flew the birds to the elm, and called to their young. Grown courageous by success, they quickly followed, and, through the whole day, they were flying about from tree to tree, enjoying themselves highly.

At sunset, I saw them on the locust-tree, near the cottage, inhaling its delicious perfume, with their faces toward the west, wondering, perhaps, what occasioned all that glorious beauty, as the sun escaped from their view.

Presently they flew to a great cherry-tree, and, from the chirping and calling, we concluded they spent the night in its shelter. How strange it must have been to them, this first night of their perching! The sky was clear, the stars twinkled, and the half-moon shed her silvery light on the earth, and gleamed through the cherry-leaves, as it had done through the honeysuckles; but it was not home, that cherry-tree, and they sighed as they thought of their birthplace. They sat close to their mother’s side, and felt that, after all, where she was, was the best place for them. They curled up one foot into the soft down, and turned back their heads till their bills were beneath their wings. The lids slowly closed over their eyes, and they slept quietly and sweetly, till wakened in the morning by the warbling of songsters who welcomed the rosy dawn.

A new sense of responsibility filled their hearts. They were no longer mere children, their every want supplied by others; but they were youth, and must begin to provide for themselves, and depend upon their own energies. We frequently hear the young robins among the trees, but we seldom see them. We really miss them, and think of them as pleasant visitors who have been spending a few days with us.

We hope that Honeysuckleville will not be forsaken; but that every year the birds will return, and rear their young beneath its fragrant shade, making hearts of the little Dudleys glad, and teaching them to love.

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"All things, both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
Hath made and loveth all."

[Illustration]

"May I pop some corn?"

"May I pop some corn?" asked Eddie.

"Yes," answered his mother; and laying down her work, she went to the closet and got for him several small ears—some red and some white—the kernels of which were not half so large as those of common corn.

Eddie took a white bowl and sat down on the carpet by his mother with the tiny ears in his apron. He worked away for some time, shelling first one ear and then another, till every little kernel was in the bowl, and nothing but cobs left. These he thought would help to build a "log-house," so he put them in his play-box, with those he had treasured before, and took his bowl to the kitchen.

Kate, the cook, was a coloured woman, and she loved children. When he said to her, "Mother told me I might pop some corn," she cheerfully placed the iron pan on the stove, and when it was hot enough, told him he might put in the corn. Pretty soon it went Pop! pop! pop! till the pan was filled with snow-white kernels. Eddie always wondered how they could turn inside out and suddenly grow so large. He did not understand that it was because of the expansion or swelling of the air within the hard case, which then burst open to find more room.

[Illustration: Eddie popping corn.]

Eddie was very busy for some time in the kitchen attending to his corn. When it was all done, he separated that which was popped from that which was only parched, and put it in different dishes. He gave his dog Philo some of the brown kernels, and he seemed to like them as well as Eddie himself. Eddie enjoyed hearing him crack them with his sharp teeth, and would stroke his great head, and say kindly, "Poor Philo! you are a good Philo;" and the dog would wag his tail as much as to say, "Dear Eddie! you are a good Eddie."

After giving Philo his share, and Kate hers, Eddie carried up a large dishful to his mother and the children. He did not wish to eat it all himself for he was a generous boy and always liked to have others partake of his pleasures, whatever they might be. He reserved some of the nicest of it in a tumbler, which he placed on his mother's work-table. Mrs. Dudley took a little, saying to him,

"If you miss your corn, Eddie, you will know what has become of it."

He looked up from his play quite soberly, and said slowly, "Mother, if *you* wish to eat more you may, but *I* am not going to."

"Why not, my child?"

"I am going to save it for father."

Mrs. Dudley was pleased to see Eddie willing to deny himself to give to others, so she said to him, "That is right." When his father came home from his business, Eddie placed the tumbler beside his plate on the tea-table. After the blessing was asked, Mr. Dudley, looking at the children, inquired, "Where did this come from?" "I popped it," answered Eddie. And his father thanked him with a kind and loving smile.

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Eddie was much happier than if he had eaten all the corn himself, for he had made others happy by his generosity. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," the Bible tells us; and Eddie had been learning this truth in the great pleasure he felt in dividing his popped corn with others. I hope you who read this story know how to sympathize with him. If you do not, will you try the experiment, and see if you are not far happier to share your corn, or your candy, or whatever else you may have, with your brothers and sisters, and those around you, than you are to devour it yourself? I have seen little chickens seize their favourite morsel and run away and hide where they could eat it all alone; but I should be sorry to think that any child would do so.

"Which would you rather I should do?"

"Which would you rather I should do?" asked Eddie of his mother, his large blue eyes filling with tears.

"I should rather you would stay with me," was the answer.

"Then I will, mother!" and the tears remained where they were, and did not chase each other down his plump cheeks. A trembling smile played around his mouth; for he had conquered himself, and had readily yielded to his mother's wishes. There had been a struggle, severe, but short, in his mind, and when he said, "Then I will, mother," he meant he could be happy to stay at home, and would not ask again for permission to go with the other children. Mrs. Dudley could not resist the impulse to clasp him to her heart, and tell him he was a good boy; and this made him still happier. He saw he had pleased her, and her approving smile was worth more to him than any enjoyment could be without it.

Eddie, you know, is a little boy, five years old. He has brothers and sisters older than himself, and they have fine sport in sliding and skating. Their teacher takes them every day to enjoy it, and they come home in high spirits, swinging their skates by their sides, and talking loud and fast about it.

Eddie has watched them many days from the nursery window, and has longed to be with them; but his careful mother has feared he would get hurt among so many skaters, or perhaps be lost in one of those "air-holes" which are often found in the most solid ice; so when Eddie asked her if he might go to the river, she hesitated, for she did not like to deny him. "Which would you *rather* I would do?" then inquired the dear boy; and when his mother told him, he did not tease her, but resumed his place at the window.

Mrs. Dudley resolved to go herself with her little son to the river, when the children went again. She did not tell him so, however; but the next day, when the merry skaters were in the midst of their enjoyment, she put on her hood, and her warm blanket-shawl, and thick gloves, and calling Eddie to her, wrapped him in his wadded coat and woollen tippet, and placing on his head his "liberty-cap,"—knit of red and black worsted, with a

tassel dangling from the point—and pulling it well down over his ears, and covering his fat hands with warm mittens, they started out on the white snow. The snow was frozen sufficiently to bear them, and they had a pleasant walk above the hidden grass and stones.

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Eddie was in great glee. His mother enjoyed it almost as much as he did, for it was an exhilarating sight. Some of the boys were sliding, some skating, and others pushing sleds before them, on which a mother or sister were sitting. It reminded one of the pictures we often see of skating in Holland; and, to make the resemblance more perfect, a Dutchman was there with his pipe, defiling the pure, fresh air with its foul odour.

Mrs. Dudley was invited to take a ride, and, leaving Eddie in the care of another, she was soon seated on one of the sleds, and speeding away before a rapid skater. She found it far more swift and agreeable than riding in the usual way. Eddie, too, had a ride, and his little heart was brimfull of happiness. He walked about on the ice quite carefully and fearlessly.

The river, on which these children were, rises and falls with the tide. Eddie saw other boys sliding off towards an icy meadow bordering on it, and he thought he would go too. The ice formed an inclined plane; his feet slipped on its smooth surface, and down he went; he jumped up, but the blood from his nose, flowing over his face and coat, and staining the snow, frightened him, and he uttered a loud cry. The skaters were with him before his mother, though she was but a few steps away, for she could not move as quickly as they. It was pleasant to see their sympathy, and hear their kind inquiries. His mother soon comforted him; for he had not been cut by the ice as they feared. The blood from his nose testified to a pretty hard bump. He soon forgot the pain, and was as happy as ever. He will long remember his first sled ride on the river.

Why do you think, dear children, I have told you this story about a child whom you have never seen? I wanted to ask you, or rather have you ask yourselves, if you are willing, as Eddie was, to do as your mother thinks best? Much as he wanted to go on the river, he felt satisfied to do as his mother wished. I hope, when you know what your mother prefers, you will make up your minds to give up your own plans, and be happy in doing so.

I am not one of those who imagine children have no trials. I know their lives are not all bright and sunny. I have not forgotten being a child myself. Many a hard battle has to be fought with wrong feelings and wrong wishes; but never fear; resolve to conquer yourselves, and subdue every thing that is sinful. Every victory will make you stronger, and render it easier for you to do right. Will you try?

“If at first you don’t succeed,
Try, try again.”

THE BIRDS AND THE SNOW-STORM.

The weather is warm and sunny. The snow of winter has disappeared. The grass is green, and growing finely. The early spring-flowers have opened their blossoms, and

we all think summer is so near, that the cold weather must be over. The birds have thought so, too; for they are flying from tree to tree, singing most beautiful melodies, and peeping about, here and there, making arrangements for summer, and selecting places where to build their pretty nests.

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But the wind blows chill again. The sky is clouded, and people begin to say, "I think we shall have another snow-storm." It is not long before the feathery flakes begin to descend. The earth is so warm that they scarce touch it before they are melted and absorbed. The snow continues to fall, the earth grows colder and colder, and soon it cannot melt the snow, but is itself chilled, and accepts it as a mantle. For three days the storm rages. The ground is as white as in mid-winter.

What is to become of the birds? They can find neither food nor shelter. It is painful to see them flying distractedly through the storm, not knowing where to go; but too cold and too hungry to remain in the trees, and too fearful to seek comfort in the many warm houses, that would have opened their windows, if they would have entered under their protecting roof.

Mrs. Dudley's children are all watching them from the windows, and throwing out hominy and bread-crumbs for them to eat. How cold the little sparrows look, as they pick up their food! Children's hearts are generally tender, and always so unless they have been hardened by the practice of cruelty, and Mrs. Dudley's were full of sympathy for the little sufferers. "Oh! mother!" said Eddie, the youngest, "if the birds knew how we loved them, they would come into the house;" but the birds did not know, and they stayed out in the snow, and many of them perished.

The children were sadly grieved, when, after the storm, they found many of their feathered friends dead. How much they regretted they could not have saved their lives! If the birds had only known, as Eddie said, how much the children loved them, they would have flown into the house, and been warmed and fed.

There are many dear children who do not know how much Jesus loves them; how much he wishes them to enter the "ark of safety," and escape the dangers there are in the world. There are many who have not even heard of him; and many of those who have, do not know he is their best friend.

Do *you* know how much he loves you, and have you sought his protection amid all the dangers that surround you? If you have not found refuge in that "high tower," of which David speaks in the Psalms, you are no safer than were the birds flying through the cold snow, and you surely will be lost if you do not fly to that kind Saviour, who has prepared a way of escape for you.

[Illustration]

THE FIRST STRAWBERRY.

How bright and red it looked, half-concealed as it was by the green leaves! It was the first strawberry of the season. Mary gathered it with delight, and ran with it to her mother.

“Here is something for you, mother,” she said, holding up the rosy treasure.

“Thank you, my dear!” said Mrs. Dudley, smiling upon her daughter. She ate it with a double relish. She was very fond of the fruit, and she was gratified by this expression of the thoughtful, unselfish love of her dear child.

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How much more Mary enjoyed that look of love, and that approving smile, than she would have enjoyed eating that luscious strawberry herself!

Every day, Mary, Willie, and Eddie search for the fruit as it ripens, and almost every evening their father and mother find a saucer of berries, with sugar and cream, beside their plates at the tea-table.

How pleasant it is to see children think so much of their parents! I hope they will continue obedient and attentive, for there is no more beautiful sight than an affectionate, united family.

God will bless those who honour their parents.

"I prayed all day for help."

It was a beautiful evening early in June. The air was cool and pleasant. The trees and shrubs were covered with luxuriant foliage, and the roses were in their opening beauty. The frogs were croaking in the pond, and the birds singing on the trees. The sun had just sunk beneath the horizon. The clouds which lingered around his pathway received his parting rays, and were most gorgeously decorated with the richest of his colouring.

Willie walked about the lawn, his face lighted up with a smile, and his dark gray eye bright with happiness. His heart was attuned to harmony with all nature around him, and he would frequently look up to his mother, who sat by the open window, enjoying the delightful evening. Presently Willie came, and stood by her side.

"How happy I am this evening!" he said to her. She put her arm around him, and drew him towards her.

"What makes you so happy?" she inquired.

"Because I have been trying to control my temper, I suppose"—was his answer.

"You have not been angry to-day, have you?"

"No, mother."

"Did you pray about it, Willie?"

"Yes, mother. I prayed all day for help."

"How did you pray?"

"I said, Forgive my sins, and give me a new heart."



“God heard your prayers, and he has helped you to control your temper. God always hears prayer, and helps those who ask his aid. I hope you will never forget to pray for what you need,” said his mother. Willie smiled, and kissed her, and went out of doors again to enjoy the evening—

“So cool, so calm, so bright.”

Willie is generally a good boy, but he has a quick temper. When three or four years old, he would sometimes get very angry. I have even known him to throw things at children with whom he was playing, if they did any thing to offend him. He did so one day when his mother was from home. She was much grieved when she heard it, and talked seriously with him. It made a deep impression on his mind. He speaks of it now with great solemnity, and asks his mother if she remembers it. He feels that he committed a great sin. He knows it is wrong to let his temper govern his reason, and he is struggling to control himself. I think he will succeed.

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I knew his grandfather when I was a little girl, and I remember hearing him say that he was naturally quick-tempered; but, although I lived in the same house with him, and saw him under a great variety of circumstances, I never heard him speak a hasty word. I hope Willie will obtain as perfect control over himself, and, if he lives to manhood, that his friends will be able to say of him what I can say of his grandfather.

Willie was, at one time, playing with some children, and found he was growing angry. He immediately left them, and sat down on the stairs alone. Pretty soon they followed him. He did not feel entirely good-natured, so he again left them, and went into the library. He shut the door and prayed to his Father in heaven for strength to conquer himself. He remained there alone till he felt he had obtained the victory.

Willie is not the only little boy who has a quick temper, and I tell this story about him for the sake of the dear children who sometimes get angry. I hope, like Willie, they will learn to go to God for help, and then, like his, their countenances will be radiant with gladness; and they, too, can say, "How happy I am!"

"An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression."

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

"Ever so many beautiful things."

"There are ever so many beautiful things up in the sky, mother!" said little Eddie, as he sat in his mother's lap, leaning his head upon her encircling arm.

The clouds had gathered about the horizon, and assumed many beautiful and fantastic shapes. Some of them were gorgeously coloured with the rays of the departing sun, and were shaded from the most delicate rose to the darkest, richest crimson. As the sun receded farther and farther behind the green hills, they grew darker and darker, and the imaginative boy had seen fancied ships with their sails spread; steam-vessels with clouds of smoke rolling from their chimneys; mountains piled upon mountains; trees, birds, and many other wondrous things which filled his infant mind with admiration.

Soon the stars twinkled forth, and they awoke a new interest. At first they appeared one by one, as if timidly venturing to look down upon our beautiful planet, and when fully assured that the king of day had disappeared, they came forth faster and more numerous, till the whole heavens were bespangled with their glittering brightness. Then their companion, the moon, came slowly up, shining with a soft and mellow light, a new beauty in the "blue wilderness of interminable air."

Eddie had long gazed silently before he uttered the exclamation, "There are ever so many beautiful things up in the sky!" and I suppose he had many thoughts which it would have been pleasant for his mother to know. He did not often sit up so late that he could see the stars.

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Eddie is not the only one who has been charmed with the glowing sunset, the gray twilight, or the starry firmament. David loved to look upon the works of God. In one of his psalms, he says, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him!" It was astonishing to David, that God, who was so infinitely superior to man, and who had given such proofs of his power and greatness in the creation of the heavens, should condescend to notice him, to provide for his minutest wants, and to protect him from danger. I suppose this psalm was written in the night, when the sweet singer of Israel had been looking at just such a sky as drew from Eddie his exclamation of admiration.

I often think, as I look abroad, how wonderful it is that God has made every thing so beautiful. We need never be weary in studying his works. The more we learn of them, the more we realize his greatness and perfection. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

When you look at the clear blue sky, do you remember who has spread it out, and who has created the innumerable worlds which we see, when darkness covers our earth? "There are," indeed, "ever so many beautiful things up in the sky," and it was a Father's hand that placed them there. They are for us to enjoy, and many a lesson of love and confidence have they taught God's children. Dear little Eddie! I hope he will always love nature, and early learn to "look through nature up to nature's God."

I shall never forget a drive with my father, when I was a child so small that I sat on a little footstool in the carriage, between him and my mother. We were returning from a visit to Aunt Harriet, at whose house we had been spending the day. It was a fine evening. The air was balmy and pleasant. I remember how the frogs sung in the low ground, and how we listened to their quaint music. We had not ridden far before the moon rose, and the stars, one by one, appeared. My father had a true love for nature, and for whatever was beautiful or grand. We drove on without speaking for a time, each enjoying the evening. My father broke the silence by repeating that beautiful hymn of Addison's, commencing with these lines—

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim."

I was awed by the reverence of his manner, and I felt myself in the presence of my Maker,—a mere speck amid his vast creations. An ineffaceable impression was made on my mind, young as I was. My father died many years ago, while I was still a child, but the lesson of that hour has not been forgotten.

[Illustration]

LILY AND HER DUCKLINGS.

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The white duck, Lily, made a nest on the ground, in a small enclosure, from which some tame rabbits had been removed. She gathered the scattered straw into one corner, and made a much neater nest than the other ducks did, who laid their eggs under the wood-pile among the small chips.

She laid several large, smooth, white eggs, and when she had as many as she could conveniently take care of, she began to sit on them to keep them warm, till the little ducks should be ready to peck their way out. She plucked the soft white down from her breast, to line the nest, and to make it of a more even temperature for the eggs; and, whenever she left to procure food, or to take a short swim on the pond, she carefully covered them.

The duck cannot spread her wings as wide as the hen, so she has to be much more particular about her nest. She makes it deeper and warmer than Biddy. It is wonderful with what skill all animals rear their young. It shows the great goodness and kindness of God, that he should thus fit the creatures he has made for the duties they must perform. His care is continual, not only over us, but over them all. He hears the young ravens when they cry, and the ducks and the chickens are not forgotten by him. To the duck he has not given the brooding wings of the hen-mother; but he has given her a coat of down, from which she can make a warm bed for her cherished eggs.

It was a very pretty sight to see Lily on her nest, almost covered by the straw, her head turned back, and her broad yellow bill partially hidden beneath her wing. The down lay scattered about like snow-flakes. She looked patient and hopeful, as she opened her eyes to see who had intruded on her solitude.

When a sitting-duck goes in search of food, she acts so queerly that you would surely laugh to see her, if you are not accustomed to her odd ways. She bends her head back, and draws it close to her body, and waddles about in the greatest haste, quacking all the time.

Lily waited four weeks before the ducklings appeared. Some of the brood were of a straw-colour, and some were marked with spots of black. They were all pretty. When I first saw them, they were partly hidden beneath their mother. Their glossy bills and bright eyes were visible, but they were afraid to venture from their shelter. They were provided with water and food in the old rabbit-house, because, if they followed their mother to the pond, the musk-rats would probably devour some of them.

While the little ones remained with their mother, they were safe, but when they became discontented, and wandered from home, they were sometimes lost. The rats were their principal enemies, and those from which they had most to fear. They were constantly lurking about to catch the ducklings, and sometimes the defenseless little ones ran directly into their deep holes, from which there was no possibility of escape. Quite a number of Lily's family came to an untimely end in this way.

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When I saw them roving about in the high grass, seeking in vain to find their way to their mother's presence, and hearing their calls for help, and her answering cry of distress, I could but think of the dear children who forget their mother's counsel, and leave her protection before they are old enough to take care of themselves.

The ducklings, I observed, did not know who were their friends; for, one day, when the prettiest of the brood had found a way out of the rabbit-house, I thought I would catch it, and give it back to its mother. It was much alarmed, and Lily was in equal trouble. It ran away from me, thinking, perhaps that I was a greater enemy than the rats, against which it had probably been warned. Just as I was going to put my hand on it, it hid itself in a rat-hole, from which there was no escape. I could not rescue it, neither could its mother. The next morning, when I went to look at the ducks, and give them their breakfast, there lay the poor duckling, close by the fatal hole. The rat had brought it out, and partly devoured it.

Children often think they know what is best for them quite as well, if not better, than their parents, and when told not to do this or that, they are not satisfied to obey quietly, but ask, "Why not?" I think children may often be told why they are bidden to do this, or forbidden to do that; but they should obey their parents promptly, whether they know their reasons or not.

Sometimes there are reasons which children cannot understand, sometimes there are reasons which it would not be wise to tell them, and sometimes it is not convenient to give the why and the wherefore. Children are commanded to obey their parents,—not the reasons their parents may give them. The young ducks could not understand why their mother did not wish them to go out of that enclosure. They could not comprehend the dangers which surrounded them. They saw the birds flying about in the air, and heard the hum of the bees as they were going abroad for honey, or returning loaded to the hive, and they could not understand why they might not wander about too. The red clover looked very beautiful, and the white clover was so fragrant, they longed to ramble in it. They thought their mother unnecessarily strict, because she wished to keep them with her, instead of permitting them to see all the pretty things of which they could now and then catch a glimpse, as they peeped through the cracks of the rabbit-house.

Children sometimes feel unpleasantly because they are not permitted to play in the street. Ah! they are as ignorant of danger as the poor ducklings and they are too young to understand the peril to which they are exposed. Even if their mother should explain it to them, they could realize but little about it. It is by far the better way for children to feel that their mother knows best, and to be satisfied that her reasons are good and sufficient even if they do not know what they are.

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I once heard a distinguished clergyman say he had always observed that those persons who had learned to obey their parents promptly, most readily yielded to the claims of God, and became converted, while those who had always liked their own way had generally a long, severe struggle, before they were willing to give up their sins, and oftentimes could not make up their minds to do so, and, though deeply convicted, remained impenitent.

It is a fearful thought that, if you form a habit of disobedience to your parents, it may cost you the salvation of your soul.

PRAYING FOR RAIN.

It was the first of July. There had been no rain for several weeks. Every one feared there would be a drought. The farmer looked anxiously upon his fields of corn, whose deep green leaves had not yet begun to turn yellow, and upon the potatoes, whose blossoms were still unwithered. They could not long remain thus beautiful and thriving, if the refreshing rain was withheld. The ground was so dry that, in hoeing the garden, no moisture could be observed.

Mrs. Dudley talked with her children about the need of rain, and the propriety of praying to our heavenly Father to water the earth, that it might “bring forth and bud,” and “give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.” She told them how Elijah prayed for rain, after there had been none in the land of Canaan for three years and six months, and how God heard his prayer, “and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

This great drought was a judgment upon the people of Israel for their sin in departing from God, and worshipping idols. There had been, in consequence of this want of rain, a “sore famine.” We read in the book of Kings of one poor woman, who had only a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse. When Elijah met her, and asked her for water, and a morsel of bread, she told him this was all she had, and that she was gathering two sticks, that she might bake it for herself and her son, that they might eat and die! She knew not where to find any more food for herself or her child, and expected to “pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field,” and to die with hunger.

Elijah bid her not to fear, but go and do what she had said. He asked her to make him a little cake first, and bring it to him, and afterwards make one for herself and son. “For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.”

It would not have been strange, if this widow of Zarephath had been unwilling to divide her handful of meal with Elijah, or if she had doubted the promise which was made to



her, but she did not. She baked the little cake for the stranger, and afterwards one for herself and her boy, and there was plenty of meal and of oil left for another repast. "She, and he, and her house, did eat of it many days." The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, till the Lord sent rain upon the earth, and her wants could be supplied in the usual way. She did not lose the reward promised to those who give a cup of cold water to the friends of God.

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God does not willingly afflict the creatures he has made. He is a gracious God, merciful, and of great kindness, and has compassion even on the beasts of the field. When Jonah complained that he spared Nineveh, because its inhabitants humbled themselves before him, and turned from their evil way, after having sent him to prophesy to them that in forty days it should be overthrown, he said to Jonah, "Should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left; and also much cattle?"

In this long drought in the land of Canaan, the cattle must have suffered greatly, and many of them probably perished. Indeed, we read that Ahab, the king of Israel, and Obadiah, the governor of his house, searched the land for the fountains and brooks, to find grass to save, the horses and mules alive, that they might not be all lost.

God is a Father, and, like a tender, loving father, he removes his chastisements so soon as they have produced the effect designed. He was "grieved for the misery of Israel." He told Elijah he would send rain. The prophet went to Ahab, who, when he saw him, asked, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah answered, it was Ahab, and his father's house, who troubled Israel, because they had forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and worshipped Baalim.

Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel, and earnestly prayed for rain. God had promised that he would send it, and Elijah no doubt pleaded this promise, as he interceded with him. He directed his servant to go where he could look towards the sea. He went and looked, and said, "There is nothing." Elijah was not discouraged. He knew God would remember his promise, and he sent him seven times more. The seventh time the servant returned, and said, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." It grew rapidly larger and larger, till the sky was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.

James, in his Epistle, says, "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much," and he mentions this instance of prevailing prayer in Elijah, as an encouragement to all Christians to ask for needed blessings. "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are," he tells us, and if he prevailed with God, so may others. God is the "same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He does not change. He is always a hearer of prayer.

Mrs. Dudley also told her children that God hears the cry of all who are in distress. She referred to one of the psalms of David, where he describes a storm at sea, and the great terror of the sailors. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivers them out of their distresses."

God does not forget any creature he has made. He provides the springs and the streams to give drink to the beasts of the field, and to the birds which sing among the branches. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man.

He feeds the fowls, and clothes the flowers with beauty. He has taught us to ask for our daily bread, and as this must depend upon fruitful seasons it is proper we should ask for rain, whenever it is needed.

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The children were quite interested in what their mother had told them. They knew that she earnestly desired rain, and that she often asked God to send it, before vegetation perished for want of it. They watched the sky with great anxiety, and when it became cloudy, and continued so from day to day, they thought surely a storm was near. After several days, there was a slight shower, but not enough to refresh the plants. Mary was greatly disappointed "I thought," (she said to her mother,) "it was going to rain in answer to your prayer."

"I thank God for that little rain," said Eddy, as he talked about it. Mrs. Dudley told him that was right, but they ought to pray for more, it was so much needed.

The next Sunday Mrs. Dudley was not well, and could not attend church. When her children returned she asked Mary if they prayed for rain. "No, mother!" she answered; "but I did."

The sky continued cloudy for some time, and then the rain gently fell for a day and a night, and all nature was refreshed and cheered.

Soon afterwards I left Mrs. Dudley's family. When I had been absent about a fortnight, I received a letter from Mary. She told me about the bantams, and the flowers, and many other things in which I was interested. She wrote that it had "rained on Sunday, and all day Monday. I cannot help thinking," she continued, "how good God is to send us rain when we most need it, and what cause we have for thanksgiving."

I hope Mrs. Dudley's children will never forget that God is the giver of every good gift, and that he likes to have people ask him for what they need. Children should think of God as their best friend, and should go to him in prayer, feeling as sure he can and does hear them, as they are that their mother does. In a season of drought they should ask him for rain, and when he sends it to make vegetation grow, they should thank him for that evidence of his loving-kindness.

THE GRAPE-CLUSTERS.

Very beautiful were the grape-clusters as they hung on the graceful vine, and very tempting to the hand that was near enough to pluck them.

Two little boys came on an errand to the lady who lived in the house which the grape-vine shaded. It was reviving to come out of the city's heat and dust, and enter that pleasant parlour, screened from the fiercer rays of the summer's sun by its green curtain of leaves. The hot pavement and the glaring walls of the city seemed far distant, for the charm of the country was spread over that retired room. All city sights were shut out, and peace and quiet reigned within.

The lady was sitting at her desk, writing, when the boys entered. She spoke to them kindly, for they were objects of her kind care, although they did not live with her. They handed her a note which required an answer. She gave them permission to play in the yard, while she should write it. They were very happy, for it was an unusual pleasure for them. They examined the flowers which grew in the narrow bed by the high, close fence, and then they began to look wistfully at the rich bunches of grapes, which were within their reach. The lady had not told them that they might gather any, and they felt that they ought not to do so. But the tempter was near, and they listened to his suggestions.

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[Illustration: The lady was sitting at her desk writing, when the boys entered.]

Looking towards the house to see if they were observed, they cautiously went up to the vine, and each gathered a bunch of grapes. They ate them secretly, that they might avoid detection; but although they knew it not, there was an eye in the house that saw them, and there was another eye from which their act was not hid—the eye of the all-seeing God.

When the note was written, the boys were recalled to the parlour, and pleasantly dismissed. I think they must have felt somewhat ashamed, that they had abused the confidence reposed in them, and had been guilty of stealing from their kind friend.

After they left, the lady was informed what they had done. When she visited “the home,” where they lived, she mentioned the fact to their teacher, although she did not allude to it to them.

The teacher took occasion to talk with her scholars about being honest and trustworthy, and asked them what they should think of children who, when sent on errands and permitted to go into the yard to enjoy themselves, should stealthily take the fruit which grew there. They, of course, condemned such conduct. She gave them the instruction they needed, and endeavoured to impress its importance upon their minds.

Soon after the close of the school, the two boys who had taken the grapes went to her and told her what they had done. She talked with them kindly. They seemed truly penitent. She asked them if they would like to go to the lady and acknowledge their fault. They said they should, and immediately they put on their straw hats, and their clean sacks, and went cheerfully to make all the reparation in their power for the fault they had committed. Confession is always pleasant to the truly penitent.

Again they stood in that shaded parlour. They were affectionately welcomed as before. They confessed freely and fully, what they had done on their previous visit, and asked forgiveness, which was readily granted. Just as they were leaving, they turned and inquired, “Can you ever trust us again?” The lady assured them that she could, and they went away happy and strengthened in their good purposes.

From that time there has been a marked change in the children. Their characters have much improved and they have been, in all respects, more conscientious and trustworthy. One of the boys has, I think, found a Christian home, and the other is waiting for one.

“It almost makes me cry.”

“It almost makes me cry to think of the heathen,” said Willie Dudley, as he was standing by his mother’s work-table, with his elbow leaning upon it, and his head resting upon his

hand. "I don't wonder missionaries go to them." His face was thoughtful and sad, and the tears stood in his eyes.

He had just been looking at two hideous idols, which had been brought from Africa, and his mother had been telling him that the heathen thought they were gods, and prayed to them.

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Little Eddie wondered that any people could think these stone images were God. His large, blue eyes looked larger and rounder than ever, they were so filled with amazement at what he heard. He could only say, "Oh, mother! oh, mother!" in tones which indicated surprise, pity, and horror.

Mrs. Dudley told her children that the heathen had not been taught, as we have, that God is a spirit, and that they had never learned the commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

"I don't wonder that the missionaries go to them," was the sentiment on the mind of Willie, as he thought of the ignorance and degradation of the heathen. He loved, himself, to hear about God, and our blessed Saviour, and he knew that God required a pure and spiritual worship. He knew God was the Creator of the world, and that his power and glory could not well be represented or conceived by man. He had often heard of the heathen, and had read about their idols, but to see and handle a stone head which had been actually an object of religious worship, made it seem much more real to him than ever before, that there are many people who have never learned to worship the true God.

Willie has always had a great reverence for his heavenly Father. Several years ago, he was reading a description of one of the idols of the Hindoos. The picture was disgustingly repulsive. He went to Mrs. Dudley with his book, saying, "Mother, I don't like to call g-o-d God here; I want to call it d-o-g, for I don't think it is right to call such a thing by that great name."

Perhaps Willie will some day be a missionary, and preach the glad tidings of salvation to those who are now sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death. But if he is not a missionary himself, I trust he will never forget to do what he can for those who, far from their homes and their friends, are fulfilling Christ's last command, to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

All Christians cannot be missionaries, but they can all do something to spread a knowledge of true religion throughout the world. They can contribute of their property to this noble purpose. Our heavenly Father accepts the smallest gift, offered in love. We, surely, who live in comfortable homes, and are surrounded by so much that is pleasant, should never forget those who, in foreign lands, are preaching the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

If our Saviour were now upon the earth, I suppose dear children, you think it would be a great pleasure to minister to his wants, and provide him with food or clothing, or any thing he might need. It is delightful to know that what we do for those who love him, he accepts as done to himself. In his Holy Word he says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

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THE BOY WHO STEALS.

Mrs. Dudley was sitting at her dining-table. The dessert was before her. There were fine, red water-melons, rich and juicy, with glossy black seeds peeping out from their hiding-places, and musk-melons, fragrant and luscious, which grew in her own garden. They had been gathered early in the morning, by George and Willie, and placed in the cellar, that they might be cool and refreshing. The boys had assisted in planting them in the spring, and with their little hoes they had worked about them during the summer, and subdued the weeds. They had watched their growth, and every day they examined the vines to find those that were ripe. They carefully gathered them, and sometimes there were so many that their wheelbarrow was quite full. Then they had the pleasure of carrying some to their neighbours. Mrs. Dudley did not consider good ripe fruit injurious, but much more healthy, in summer, than meat, puddings, and pastries, so that melons formed quite an important part of the family dinner. The children enjoyed them particularly, because they had raised them, in part, by their own industry.

George asked to be excused from the table. Not long after he left, Mrs. Dudley heard a cry, as if some child was in trouble. She looked around. Mary, and Willie, and Eddie were there. The sounds of distress could not come from George, for he never cried in that way. Mr. and Mrs. Dudley immediately arose and went out upon the lawn. The children followed. They looked here and there, and soon saw a boy near the house. He had a small bundle in his hand, and a little tin pail. I should think he was ten or eleven years old. He was crying, and calling to a boy who stood at the gate. Mr. Dudley inquired of him,

“What is the matter?”

“John won’t let me go home.”

“How does he prevent you? What does he do to you?” asked Mrs. Dudley.

“He won’t let me alone.”

“Does he try to make you fight?” she again inquired,—for she had frequently seen that large boys often love to tease and torment smaller ones, and she thought perhaps this little fellow was abused by a tyrannical companion. She thought of going to speak to the boy at the gate, but Mr. Dudley made further inquiries, and the child’s answers were not very satisfactory.

Mary Dudley now came near her mother, and, speaking in a low voice, said to her, “That is the boy who steals.”

While they were talking with him a larger boy came up, and said his teacher had sent him and the boy at the gate to take Jimmy back to school.

“Why, what has he done?” asked one of the group which surrounded him.

“He has been stealing the children’s dinners. He stole yesterday, and he has been stealing to-day.”

This was a sad account to hear. Jimmy begged to be permitted to go home, but Mr. Dudley told him he had better return to the school. He then very reluctantly walked down to the gate with the largest boy, and I suppose was led back to his teacher.

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Mrs. Dudley had never heard of this child before, but Mr. Dudley said he had known him as a very bad boy. She asked Mary how she happened to know any thing about him. Mary told her that he attended Sunday-school, and that, a few Sundays before, one of the children could not find his cap. A thorough search was made for it, but it could not be found. The superintendent thought some one must have taken it. He suspected Jimmy, because his reputation was so bad, and followed him on his way home. Jimmy had it on his head, and his own cap was hidden under his sack!

The superintendent of the school talked with Jimmy, who said he would never steal again; but, alas! he soon forgot his good resolution. Although he carried a dinner for himself in his tin pail, he took whatever he liked from the baskets of his companions.

Mrs. Dudley has seen this boy several times since she heard him crying on the lawn. She says it always makes her feel sad to meet him, for she cannot avoid thinking,—“that is the boy who steals.” She has learned that he has no father or mother, but lives with his grandparents. I fear he “will bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.” He has allowed himself to steal small things, and as he grows older he will probably take articles of more value. He may become a housebreaker or a murderer.

It is dangerous to indulge in the least sin. It hardens the heart, and stifles the whisper of that still, small voice, which so often tells children, when they are tempted to do wrong, “That is not right; you should not do that.”

In some Catechism the question is asked, “What is my duty to my neighbour?” and a part of the answer is, “To keep my hands from picking and stealing.” I suppose “picking” must mean, secretly taking little pieces of cake, or sugar, or any thing of the kind, of small value. I presume Jimmy was in the habit of “picking,” at his grandmother’s before he ventured to steal at school.

I could tell you several very sad stories of people who have stolen when they were children, and who have grown more and more wicked, as they have advanced in years, till they became a curse to society and themselves. “The way of transgressors is hard.” These people have no true enjoyment. There is always a fearful looking forward to the future.

It is not pleasant to me to write about bad children, and I should not do it if it were not to warn the dear children I so much love against the formation of wrong and sinful habits.

How much better it would be for Jimmy if he had learned to “touch not, taste not, handle not,” that which does not belong to him!

[Illustration]

LOOK AT THE BIRDS!

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October, with its golden and crimson hues, its “gentle wind,” and its “fair sunny noon,” has passed away. November has come. The sun shines brightly, and the sky is almost clear of clouds; but the chill wind blows roughly, and the leaves are rudely torn from the trees where they have gladdened us through the spring and the summer by their refreshing shade, their modest beauty, and their sweet music, as they sung to the gentle breeze which played amid the branches. They lie now, most of them, beneath the trees, wrinkled and faded, or scattered here and there, far from their fellows, wherever the cold blast has wafted them.

The birds have been taught by their unfailing instinct that summer has departed, and winter is near. They no more warble their rich melodies, or flit in and out of the bowery recesses of the honeysuckles or peep with knowing look under the eaves, or into the arbour. Other purposes prompt to other acts, and they are taking their farewell of the pleasant summer haunts, where they have built their nests and reared their young.

This morning, soon after sunrise, Willie was standing on the lawn, contemplating the beauties of nature, and thinking, I suppose, of the changes of the seasons, when all at once I heard him shout, “Look at the birds! Look at the birds!” We threw open the window, and there were thousands and thousands of them almost over our heads. Their wings made a noise like the rushing of a steam-engine as it cleaves the air in its speed. They were calling to each other with a short, quick sound. It seemed as if they were giving and receiving orders. We watched them till they disappeared over the tree-tops.

“There are more! There are more!” shouted Mary. We again looked towards the rising sun, and up over the eastern hills came another immense flock, calling to each other as the first, and they too disappeared behind the western hills.

“There is another flock!” and so indeed there was. Up from the meadows and over the hills they came, swaying up and down in their flight, and so near that we could see each bird distinctly. Almost simultaneously they alighted on Clover Hill to rest for a moment. I can never forget their motion so full of grace and beauty, waving and undulating like the gentle swell of the ocean. Soon, another company followed in the same direction, and when they were over Clover Hill, up flew the others, and away they went with them beyond our sight. Flock after flock appeared, each taking the same general direction, and some of them so large that they stretched from the hills which bounded our view on one side, as far as our eye could see on the other. They looked, as Willie said, like bees swarming, only they were much larger. Occasionally a few stragglers could be seen, hurrying on to join their party, which was in advance of them. Perhaps they had delayed to take a last farewell of their pleasant summer homes, or, may be, they were dilatory in their habits, and did not make their morning toilet in season. I hope they will be more prompt in future, for it is a bad habit to be late, and occasions, often, much vexation and inconvenience.

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I never before saw so many birds together, although I have frequently been startled by the peculiar sound made by large numbers flying in company, and have looked at them with wonder and admiration.

The migration of birds is one of the most remarkable phenomena in natural history. "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming," and so do all birds of passage. Their Creator has endowed them with a wonderful instinct, which, in some way, unknown to us, teaches them to guard against the severity of the season by seeking a warmer climate, and when "winter is past," and "the flowers appear on the earth," and "the vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell," then "the time of the singing of birds is come," and their voice is heard in our land. Some of them return, not only to the same country, but to the same place, where they have previously built their nests, and, year after year, raise their broods in the same friendly tree.

It is said that, to enable birds to fly with ease, and to continue long on the wing, they must fly against the wind. I observed, this morning, that there was a brisk wind from the west, while the birds were flying a little south of west. Perhaps they had been waiting several days for a favourable wind, and that may have been the reason of the great number of flocks we saw.

"Behold the fowls of the air," said our Saviour, in his sermon on the mount; "for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" At another time, when he was talking with his disciples about the persecutions they should endure for his sake, he said to them, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Not one of that immense number of birds, which we saw flying to a warmer country, can perish without God's knowledge. He sees every one of them. During the summer, he has fed them on the meadows near the sea-shore, and now that winter is approaching, he has taught them to seek other localities, where their appropriate food can be found.

Whenever God's children are tempted to yield to despondency, and to fear that they shall suffer from want, let them remember that they are of more value than many sparrows, and that if they trust their heavenly Father, their bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure. He who feeds the birds will feed them. May he

"Fill" our souls "with trust unshaken
In that Being who has taken
Care for every living thing,
In Summer, Winter, Fall and Spring."

[Illustration]

THE LOST CHILD.

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It was a Sabbath morning in November, clear, bright and frosty. Mrs. Dudley's family were preparing for church. They heard Carlo bark violently, and knew a stranger must be near. Carlo is a faithful watch-dog, but his habit of barking at visitors is so disagreeable, that he is usually kept chained in the day-time. On Sunday, as no company is expected, he is permitted to go at large. When Mr. Dudley heard Carlo, he immediately threw open the window, and spoke to him. He saw a gentleman, who was evidently much alarmed. None of the family knew him. The stranger soon made known the occasion of his call, by inquiring,

"Have you seen any thing of a stray child?"

"No, we have not; whose child is lost?"

"Mr. McPherson's."

"How old is the child?"

"About six years old. His mother sent him from home, yesterday, about two o'clock, and she has heard nothing from him since. He had a small tin pail with him to get some yeast."

It is sad to hear that a child is lost, and all the family sympathized with the anxious parents. "How badly you would feel if I was lost!" said Eddie, and he looked sober and grieved, as he thought of the little boy about his own age, who had wandered from home, no one knew where. There was much fear that he had fallen into the river, as he had been seen on the dock.

At ten o'clock the family started for church. They met people who were searching for the child, and who asked them, as the gentleman had done at the house, "Have you seen any thing of a stray child?"

Notice was given in the churches that a boy was lost, and many a mother's heart beat quicker as she thought of her own dear little ones, and imagined one of them sleeping, perhaps, through that cold November night on the ground, or (fearful thought!) buried deep in the chill water.

After church, you could hear one and another inquiring anxiously, "Has the child been found?" But no favourable answer was received. In the afternoon, however, many hearts were gladdened by learning that he was safe. He had gone to the village, and got his pennyworth of yeast, and then, instead of returning immediately, he stopped to play with some boys. He had gone with them to a part of the village with which he was not acquainted and when he wished to go home, he did not know what direction to take. He chose a road leading him from home, and wandered at least five miles. Just



before dark an old gentleman and his grandson were walking on the road, and they observed this little boy crying.

“What do you suppose he is crying about?” said the child to his grandfather.

“I don’t know. Perhaps he has been sent to the grocery, and does not like to go.”

They watched him and found he did not stop, but passed on with his tin pail, crying grievously. They waited for him to come up to them, and asked him,

“What are you crying about?”

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“I want to go home!”

“Where is your home?”

The boy could not tell.

“What is your name?”

“William Hudson.” He did not say, as he should have done, William Hudson McPherson.

The old gentleman kindly took him by the hand, and led him to his own home. William’s tears were soon dried, and he became quite contented. It was too late to attempt to find his parents that night, as he could not tell where they lived, and the name of Hudson was not familiar to the good people who had given him shelter.

When Sabbath morning came, William was questioned again and again, till at length some clue was obtained of his father’s place of residence. The horse was harnessed, and William, with lame and blistered feet, was placed in the wagon. About noon he safely reached home, and was clasped once more to his mother’s heart. The father had not returned from his search, and he afterwards said, it had seemed to him that he never could go home without his child, on account of the terrible and almost frantic distress of the mother. As he approached his house, borne down with grief, he saw a wagon at the door. His heart leaped with joy, for he thought the lost one was found. He opened the door hopefully, and there, indeed, was William gathered once more with his brothers and sisters around the great cooking-stove, tears of joy flowing down the grateful mother’s cheeks.

All this great grief which William’s father and mother endured—all the anxiety felt throughout the town—and all the sufferings of the boy himself, were occasioned by William’s stopping to play, when he ought to have gone directly home!

Children often think they are quite as capable of judging for themselves, as their parents are for them. Sooner or later this opinion will lead them into trouble. William thought it was safe to stop and see the boys play marbles, but he found, to his sorrow, that it would have been far better to have resisted temptation and denied himself the short pleasure he enjoyed.

Every human heart is grieved when a child like William strays from home. We do not wonder that his mother should be fearfully anxious in regard to his fate. But, oh! how much more bitter tears a loving mother sheds, when her dear ones stray from the path of virtue, and become disobedient and wicked! I hope none of the children who read about William will go astray from the right path, but will ever choose that which is pure



and lovely and of good report, and which, through the grace of God in Christ Jesus, will safely lead them home to heaven.

[Illustration]

THE UNPLEASANT NEIGHBOUR.

Eddie's father has a disagreeable neighbour. In one way or another he is a constant source of annoyance. Sometimes his pigs will creep through the fence, and root up the smooth green lawn. His part of the fence he will not keep in repair, and the hungry cows, in search of food, will break into the garden, and make sad havoc among the cabbages and other vegetables. His fine bay horse, whom he knows will jump over any ordinary fence, is permitted to run in a pasture, where he can eke out his scanty meal by a hearty lunch among Mr. Dudley's corn. All these aggressions, and many more, have been borne with the greatest patience.

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Mr. Dudley has often been advised to resort to the law as a means of defence, yet he has been reluctant to do so. The children have sometimes felt very indignant when they have been obliged to chase the pigs or the cows out of the yard or field, but their parents have endeavoured to teach them Christian forbearance.

At one time Eddie had been thinking about Mr. Morrison,—for by that name I shall call the unpleasant neighbour,—and he said very seriously to his mother,

“Mother, can Mr. Morrison go to heaven if he dies.”

She hesitated a moment how to answer him, for, she had taught him that it is wicked to lie and to swear, and that if a person loves God he will not be in the habit of committing such sins; so she told him, that unless Mr. Morrison repented he could not go to heaven.

At another time Eddie and his mother were talking about God’s love for the beings he has made. She told him that God loves every one.

“Does he love Mr. Morrison?” he inquired.

“Yes, God loves Mr. Morrison. He is grieved and offended by his wickedness, but he loves him. You know I love you, when you have done wrong, although I am sorry that you have been naughty. I do not cease to love you. The Bible tells us that while we were sinners, God so loved us as to send his Son to die for us. He loves all, and wishes all to repent and believe in Christ, and be happy. He has provided a way for all who believe to be saved, and it is only because people love sin more than they love holiness, that they are lost.”

Nothing can give us a higher idea of God’s love, than the thought that he loves every one—even his enemies. “God is love.” What a blessed, glorious thought! How it encourages us to trust him at all times!

God does not willingly afflict, nor grieve, nor punish any one. All that he does, he does from the truest love.

The knowledge that God loves us should lead us to love him. We are naturally disposed to love those who love us, and always do, unless there is something repulsive about them. There can be nothing repulsive about God, for he is love, and we who love him, love him because he first loved us.

One night, after little Eddie had repeated the Lord’s Prayer and his usual evening petitions, he raised his head, and said to his mother,

“Shan’t I pray for Mr. Morrison, now?”

“Yes, dear, if you wish to,” she answered.



He bowed his head again, and uttered a simple prayer for the man who was the occasion of so much trouble and perplexity to his father's family. He prayed that God would forgive his sins for Jesus' sake, and make him a good man. It was very pleasant to hear Eddie pray thus, and to witness his kind and forgiving spirit.

Mr. and Mrs. Dudley have often regretted that the children should have their early memories saddened by such a neighbour, but perhaps their heavenly Father wishes to teach them a lesson of forbearance and love for those who injure them, which they could not so well learn in any other way.

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Our Saviour, when dying on the cross, taught us practically the duty of forgiveness. He prayed even for those who put him to death. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Do you not suppose he was pleased to hear Eddie ask his Father in heaven to forgive Mr. Morrison and make him a good man?

[Illustration]

THE BOY WHO KEPT HIS PURPOSE.

"I would not be so mean," said George Ward to a boy who stood by, while he put the candy he had just bought in his pocket.

[Illustration: "I wouldn't be so mean."]

"You have no right to call me mean," replied Reuben Porter, "because I don't spend my money for candy."

"You never spend it for any thing," continued George, tauntingly.

It was true. Reuben did not spend his money. Do you suppose it was because he loved it more than other boys do?

Reuben turned slowly away, meditating upon what had occurred.

"I will not care for what George thinks," he at length said to himself; "I have four dollars now, and when I have sold my cabbages, I shall have another dollar. *I shall soon have enough*," and his heart bounded joyfully, his step recovered its elasticity and his pace quickened, as the pleasant thought removed the sting which the accusation of meanness had inflicted on his sensitive spirit.

Enough did not mean the same with Reuben as it means with grown people. It had a limit. He hastened cheerfully home, or to the place he called home. He had no father or mother there, but kind and loving friends in their stead. His father had died two years before, leaving a wife and four children without property to sustain them. Reuben was the eldest, and as he was old enough to assist in the labours of a farm, it was thought best he should leave his mother. Mr. Johnson, a neighbour took him into his family, where he soon became a great favourite.

There was one thing about the child, however, which good Mrs. Johnson regarded as a great fault. It was what she called "a spirit of hoarding." She said she never gave him an orange, or an apple, that he did not carry it to his room, instead of eating it. Perhaps his sisters at home, or dear little brother Benny, could tell what became of them.

Mrs. Johnson had noticed, too, in his drawer, a box, which was quite heavy with money. She did not believe he had bought so much as a fish-hook, since he had been in their family. If he should go on in this way he will grow up to be a miser. Mr. Johnson smiled at his wife's earnestness, and remarked that with such an example of generosity as Reuben had constantly before him, he could not believe the child was in much danger from the fault she feared. "It must be remembered," he said, "that Reuben has his own way to make in life. He must early learn to save, or he will always be poor. There are his mother and sisters, too, who need his aid."

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In various ways Reuben added to his store. When the snow came, he made nice broad paths about the house, which so attracted the notice of a neighbour, that she asked if he might be allowed to make paths for her. He rose early that he might have time for this extra work, and was well paid for his efforts. The box grew heavier from week to week. *Reuben had almost enough.*

One day there was a barrel of flour left at Mrs. Porter's. She thought there must be a mistake about it; but the man said he was directed at the store to take it to that house. Mrs. Porter went immediately to learn about it, and what was her surprise on finding her son had been the purchaser. How could he pay for a whole barrel of flour? "The money," said the merchant; "he brought in a box. It was in small bits, which took me some time to count, but there was enough."

The mother called, with a full heart, at Mrs. Johnson's, and related what had occurred. Reuben wondered why his mother should cry so. He thought she would be happy. He was sure he was happy. He had been thinking two years of that barrel of flour, and now he felt more like laughing than crying.

Those tears, noble boy, are not tears of sorrow, but of the deepest, fullest joy. You are more than repaid for your self-denial. You have persevered in your determination. You have resisted every temptation to deviate from the course which you marked out as right. You have borne meekly the charge of meanness so galling to your generous spirit, and now you receive your reward. You are happy, and so is your mother, and so are your kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson.

That night, Mr. Johnson remarked to his wife, as they sat together before the cheerful fire, that he had some idea of keeping the little *miser* and educating him. "A boy who could form such a purpose, and keep it, will, in all probability, make a useful man." After-years proved the correctness of this conclusion. Reuben is now a man of intelligence and wealth. He is one whom the world delights to honour; but among his pleasantest memories, I doubt not, is that of the barrel of flour he bought for his beloved mother.

"Filial love will never go unrewarded."

[Illustration]

MARY'S STORY.

Mary and Eddie had retired to their little beds. Their mother had said "good night," and had given them both a kiss. She was just leaving the room, when Eddie said to his sister,

"Now you can tell me about Jesus."

This simple remark revealed to Mrs. Dudley the subject of their conversation after she left them for the night. It gave her great pleasure, for she desires nothing so much as that her children may love the Saviour, and she knows the more they think about him, and the more they learn of his life, the more they will find him worthy of love. Mrs. Dudley offered up a silent prayer to her heavenly Father that the Holy Spirit would teach them and guide them into all truth.

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She did not remain with the children to hear them as they talked together, but a few days afterwards she asked Eddie what Mary told him about Jesus. He repeated the history of his birth, of the cruel persecution of Herod, of his blameless life, and his death upon the cross.

Eddie is too young to realize much about the great love of Christ, and how much he has done for us that we may be happy, but he is not too young to love him.

I hope he will never forget the sweet story Mary told him. Jesus loves little children. He is their best friend, always ready to forgive them when they are sorry for doing wrong, and to help them when they try to do what is right.

Even now, as I am writing, I hear children singing

“There is a happy land
Far far away.”

The sound grows fainter and fainter—eyelids are drooping—sleep is near—the voices are hushed—the little ones are slumbering. May “holy angels guard their bed.”

[Illustration]

THE SUNNY FACE, AND THE SHADY FACE; OR, JUNE AND NOVEMBER.

“How happy I am to-night! I love you so much I want to be with you all the time,” said Willie to his mother, as he followed her from the dining-room to the nursery, one stormy evening.

What made Willie so happy? It was not because the day had been pleasant, and he had been permitted to enjoy himself out of doors, for a chilling snow had been falling, and Willie had been obliged to remain in the house. It was not because he was well, for many hours of the day he had been lying on the bed too ill to sit up all the time. It was not because he had received a handsome present, for none had been given him.

There had been nothing unusual to make him so happy, excepting a thought hidden in the secret recesses of his heart. Shall I tell you what that thought was, that made his face so bright and sunny, that made his eyes sparkle, and wreathed his lips with smiles? I will tell you in his own words, and I hope you will treasure it in your heart. If you do, your face, too, will be cheerful and smiling, and your friends will love to look upon you.

When Willie told his mother how happy he was, she put her arm around him, and drew him lovingly to her side. “What makes you so happy?” she inquired.

“I suppose it is because I have been trying to be good,” he answered.

“That always makes people happy,” his mother replied.

Willie is generally a good boy, but he sometimes does wrong, and wrong-doing always makes him sad. It was a great pleasure to him that he had tried to be good, and had been enabled to overcome temptation.

All children are sometimes tempted to do wrong, and it often requires a severe struggle to decide to do right. But every child who overcomes evil feels a conscious happiness and self-respect in so doing. I hope you will “try to be good.” If you do, and look to Christ for strength, he will aid you, and through his grace you will be able to become conqueror over the sins that “so easily beset you.”

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Henry Maxwell lives in the same town with Willie, and is of the same age. These boys often play together. I regret to be obliged to say that Henry is not so good a child as Willie. He does not so promptly obey his mother, and of course he cannot be so happy. Sometimes he pouts out his lips, when his mother wishes him to do something which he does not exactly like.

I one day heard his mother talking to him about his teeth. She wished him to brush them again, as he had not done it thoroughly the first time. It was astonishing to see how that fair, round face was disfigured by that ugly pout, and it was sad to hear his dissatisfied "I don't want to." When his mother insisted on obedience, Henry reluctantly complied with her wishes, closing the door behind him with great violence.

His face was not sunny and bright like Willie's, when he had tried to be good, but was dark and shady, like a clouded sky. It was not pleasant to look upon, and it made the heart of his mother heavy and sad to see it. I hope Henry will learn to be cheerful and prompt in his obedience to his mother, for, if he should not, the expression of his face will grow more and more disagreeable, till, when he is a man, it will look more like a chilly day in November, than a sweet, gladsome day in June.

I do not wish you should tell me, but I should like to have you ask yourself, when you have read about these two boys, which of them you are most like. Is your face sunny, or shady?

"IT ISN'T FAIR. I PEEPED."

Willie and Eddie were playing Hide the Button. After they had played some time, and it was Willie's turn to find it, he came into the nursery with his face flushed, and evidently much excited. "It isn't fair," said he, and the tears gathered in his eyes, and his lips quivered with emotion, "I peeped. Eddie must hide it again;" and he went out of the room, for Eddie to put the button in another place.

Willie had been overcome by temptation. He had done a dishonourable act, but his conscience was quick to reprove him, and he had listened to its admonitions. There had been a short but severe struggle in his mind, and truth and honour had conquered. He was brave enough to confess his fault, and to do what he could to make amends for it.

Mrs. Dudley was not at home, but a friend who had charge of the children told her the circumstance. It rejoiced her greatly that her dear boy should have had the manliness to acknowledge his error; and it encouraged her to hope that he would never be guilty of a similar fault again. Willie is a conscientious boy. He sometimes does wrong, as in this instance, but when he reflects, he is always sorry.

Mrs. Dudley did not say any thing to Willie about the occurrence; but a few evenings afterwards as she was sitting at the tea-table alone, the others having all left, he came to her and stood by her side, leaning his elbow upon the table, and resting his head upon his hand. She knew by his manner and his serious look that he had something in particular to say to her. She put her arm around him and drew him close to her.

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"Mother," said he, "the other day, when you were gone, I peeped while Eddie hid the button;" and then went on and told her all about it. Mrs. Dudley talked with him a short time, and said he had done right in confessing his fault, and in refusing to profit by his wrong act. She knew he was much happier than he could have been if he had done otherwise. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Willie found the happiness of an approving conscience; and I doubt not that Jesus looked down with love upon him, as he does upon all true penitents. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

If Willie had not confessed his fault, and been sorry for it, his conscience would have been hardened and he would probably have "peeped" another time, when the children played the same game. But now, if he should be tempted in this way again, he would remember how much he suffered in consequence of having once yielded to a similar temptation, and would not allow himself to commit the wrong.

It is very important that children should early learn to confess their faults, and not form the habit of endeavouring to hide them from others. If they have injured any individual, they should apologize to that individual. Sometimes it is only necessary to confess to God, but we should not be satisfied with doing it in a general manner. Each wrong act, so far as we remember it, should be mentioned.

If we really love our heavenly Father, we shall wish to tell him all about ourselves. We shall have no desire to conceal any thing from him, and it will be a pleasure to us to think that he knows every thought and feeling of our hearts.

Willie had no wish to conceal from his mother the wrong he had done; he preferred to tell her about it; and I have no doubt he had previously told his Father in heaven.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

THE CHRYSALIS.

"O mother, look here! What is this?" exclaimed Eddie, as he was in the garden with his mother and Mary and Willie. He was standing by a tall pole, around which a Lima bean-vine had wound itself. He had been gathering the great dry pods in a basket to preserve them for winter, when his grandmother would come to Clover-Hill to see her dear grandchildren. His attention had been attracted by something peculiar, and he immediately called his mother to come and see it. Mary and Willie ran to look. Mrs. Dudley found it was a beautiful green chrysalis, suspended by its silken cords to the vine. The colour was soft and delicate, and it was ornamented with a black line, and with bright golden spots.

“Isn’t it pretty, mother?” “How did it get here?” and many more questions were rapidly asked, while the little folks carefully examined it.

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Mrs. Dudley told them what it was, and that if they preserved it, they would in a few days see a butterfly escape from it. Eddie looked up astonished. She also told them that it was once a worm, crawling about upon the earth; that it had climbed up, and suspended itself under the shelter of the leaves, to await its change into a new and more attractive form of being.

Mrs. Dudley took the chrysalis from the vine and carried it to the house, and put it on the mantle in her room. Every day the children looked at it to ascertain if there was any change. Soon the colour began to fade, and the delicate pea-green became an ashen white. Then it opened slightly, where there had from the first seemed to be lines of division, and they could peep in at the imprisoned insect. The opening became wider and wider, and one day, when Eddie came into the room and went as usual to look at the chrysalis, the shell was empty! The butterfly had escaped. He uttered an exclamation of mingled surprise and disappointment. As he turned his head, he saw, on the little cotton muff of Mary's doll, the butterfly for which he had so patiently watched.

"Here it is, mother!" he shouted in the most joyous tones, and his eyes sparkled with delight.

Eddie and his mother observed it for some time. Its long, slender legs rested on the muff, and ever and anon it would open and close its brilliant wings, as if to try their power, or to dry the miniature feathers which adorned them. Its colour was a rich orange, shaded from the lighter tints to the deeper, and variegated with stripes of black. The children examined it with a microscope, which made it appear even more beautiful and wonderful than before.

It remained on the muff several hours, and then flew to the window, and alighted on the curtain. At evening, it was found on the cushion of a spool-stand, and there it passed the night. The next day it disappeared, and the children saw it no more. It probably flew away through the open window, to enjoy its brief life under the smiling sun.

The children talked much about the transformations which had taken place in the life of that caterpillar. Their mother told them that the butterfly was sometimes considered a type of immortality. In this world we are, like the worm, in an inferior state of existence. Our bodies are laid in the grave, but we are not dead, any more than the unmoving chrysalis—which remained so long on the mantel just where it was placed—was dead. The spirit still lives, and, after it has freed itself from the imprisoning flesh, is more beautiful than before, and is susceptible of more perfect enjoyment in the pure atmosphere of heaven.

CHRISTMAS AT THE COTTAGE.

Mrs. Dudley's children look forward to Christmas with many anticipations of pleasure, for several weeks before it comes. They are quite busy in preparing for it. Their mother is the repository of their secrets, and assists them by her advice in making their arrangements. Many important deliberations take place about mats, pin-cushions, and bookmarks.

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As the day approached, the children often expressed the wish that it was here. A few days was a long time for them to wait. But time did not hasten. The hours were just sixty minutes, and the minutes just sixty seconds. The clock ticked on as usual. It was unmoved by all the excitement, and never, for an instant, quickened its pace.

When Saturday came, their mother proposed that the presents should be distributed that evening. She did not like to have the children wish the Sabbath past, and on Monday morning there would be but little time to make their arrangements before the hour for school. She knew they would be quiet and happy if they had some new books to read, and would be perfectly willing to lay aside other gifts till Monday.

Mary wished to decorate the parlour with evergreens. Mrs. Dudley sent a man to get some for her. She and Willie arranged them in bunches and wreaths. Eddie helped all he could, and was as happy as any of them. In the afternoon their mother assisted them. She put the bunches made of the delicate, feathery hemlock, and the dark glossy laurel, over the windows, and suspended the wreaths where the bay-windows projected from the room. Small branches of cedar and spruce were tastefully arranged in vases, relieved by the rich, green leaves of the ivy, and the bright, lively twigs of box.

The children wished for a Christmas tree, but the evergreens they had were all too small for that purpose Mrs. Dudley suggested that the hat-stand might be substituted. They were delighted, and immediately busied themselves in adorning it with garlands. It proved quite ornamental, and the pegs served a very useful purpose. Mary arranged on some strips of white paper the words, "A merry Christmas." The letters were made of the small leaves of the box, and were fastened on with gum-arabic. These were placed amid the wreaths on the transformed hat-stand.

When all these arrangements were completed to their satisfaction, they left the room. Mrs. Dudley remained some time longer. When she left, the door was locked.

Mr. Dudley returned from the city, where he had been spending the day, bringing some friends with him. Tea was speedily despatched, and then all the family were summoned. The parlour door was unlocked. There were various toys, baskets, and reticules suspended on the hat-stand. There was a nice little felt hat for one of Mary's dolls, and a looking-glass for the baby-house, and an embroidered cushion, which Willie's industrious fingers had made for Minnie Dudley, as the doll is called—a far better employment for him, I think, than throwing it about and treating it roughly, as I have sometimes heard of boys doing. There were humming-tops, which reminded me, by their music, of the great spinning-wheel that whirled away in my mother's kitchen when I was a child. There were graces, and battle-doors, and jack-straws for the amusement of the children when it was too cold or stormy to play out of doors.

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On a table was an array of slippers, which Mary and her mother had wrought for father and the boys. There was merry capering when they were transferred to the feet of their owners. I shall not tell you whether Mr. Dudley so far forgot his dignity as to partake of the excitement, but I am quite sure he was much gratified by the present Mary had made for him with her own hands, and that he kissed his thanks with great fondness.

Most valuable of all to the little folks, and most gladly welcomed, were the books. How eagerly they looked them over.

There was a present to Mrs. Dudley from her children, which I must not forget to tell you about. It was a plain gold pin, in which, neatly plaited, were six bunches of hair. One of them was dark, streaked with gray—the others were auburn, flaxen, and brown. She knew whence the treasures came to unite in that beautiful mosaic, and the tears were ready to start from her eyes as she received that precious token of family love.

When I was a child, I heard little about Christmas. It came and went without my knowledge. But I enjoy the return of it very much now, and sympathize with children in the interest with which they regard it. I like to think they are treasuring up such cheerful memories to make their early home attractive to their age.

The little Dudley's will always like to look back to this pleasant evening, and wherever they are, their hearts will warm more fondly on account of it to their father's cottage, nestled in the valley, and they will be in less danger of forgetting the lessons of love and kindness they have learned there.

I WILL CONQUER MYSELF.

In one of the oldest towns of New-England there lived, many years ago, a little girl, whom I shall call Helen Earle. Her father had been engaged in the East Indian trade, and had accumulated great wealth. Her mother was a sweet, gentle woman, who most tenderly loved her children, and endeavoured to correct their faults, and develop their excellencies. In Helen's home there was every comfort and every luxury that heart could desire, but she was not always happy. She had one fault, which often made herself and her friends very unhappy. It was the indulgence of a violent temper. She would allow herself to become exceedingly angry, and her usually beautiful face was then disfigured by passion. Her mother was greatly grieved and distressed by these outbreaks of ill temper, and did all in her power to restrain them. She talked with her daughter earnestly in regard to the sin of such a temper. Helen would weep bitter tears, and express much regret for the past, but she could not quite make up her mind to determine to overcome temptation. The task seemed too difficult, and she shrunk from the attempt.

Mrs. Earle shed many tears in secret over this sad failing in her beloved child, and most fervently pleaded for help from Him who had given her the care of this immortal spirit to educate for eternity. She knew that God alone could change Helen's heart, and give her power to overcome sin, even though assaulted by the fiercest temptation.

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One day, when Helen was very angry at something which had occurred, her mother led her up stairs to her own room and left her alone. For a time she cried violently, then she grew calm and quiet, and her mother could hear her walking back and forth across the room, talking to herself. She listened. How her heart rejoiced when she heard her repeating, again and again, "I WILL CONQUER MYSELF! I WILL CONQUER MYSELF!"

And Helen did conquer herself. She had come to the determination, not that she would try to conquer, but that she would conquer, and, by the gracious help which is always given to those who ask,—she nobly succeeded. From that hour she was able to overcome the temptation, and was not overcome by it. She grew up to womanhood remarkable for the evenness and gentleness of her temper. None, who had not known her in childhood, would have suspected that she was not always thus mild and lovely.

Helen did for herself what no earthly friend could do for her. By the power of her will she controlled her impulses, and this triumph was of far more value to her than all the wealth of her father. It made her a blessing to her friends, strengthened all her good purposes, and enabled her to perform the duties of life without the friction which a bad temper always occasions. It gave her that true self-respect which elevates the character, and which none can feel who are not conscious of the power to rule their own spirits.

No child is blamed for having a quick temper, but he is blamed if he allows himself to be overpowered by it. If he really determines, as Helen did, to conquer himself, he will succeed. The old proverb, "Where there is a will, there is a way," will never fail in such a case as this. "God helps those who help themselves," and he is ever ready to assist us in subduing what is wrong in our own spirits.

The Bible contains many passages which condemn anger: "He that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly." "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools." "Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go." "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

All habits grow stronger by indulgence. If you allow yourself to become angry to-day, you will more easily become so to-morrow. If you control your temper to-day, it will be less difficult to control it to-morrow. Helen's victory was obtained by decision. To form the determination to conquer herself required more effort of will and more strength of character than any subsequent struggle with her besetting sin could possibly require.

If you have any fault which you wish to correct, you must fully make up your mind to succeed. You must resolve that you will conquer. If you should occasionally be overcome, yield not to despair, but with renewed courage try again.

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“On yourself and God relying,
Try, keep trying.”

[Illustration]

SELFISH ELLA.

Ella Russell is a little girl with soft, flaxen hair, bright eyes, and a complexion fair and clear. She is neat and orderly in her habits, and is very gentle and mild in her manners. Her musical laugh sometimes rings through the house like a sweet melody. It is so contagious that you would laugh yourself to hear it.

Ella is obedient, and needs as little care as any child I ever knew. Her father is living, but she has no mother, and Ella lives with a Mrs. Lindsley, who has three daughters, two of them older and one younger than Ella. She is much attached to this lady, and feels perfectly at home in her house.

Ella's mother was in feeble health several years before her death. Ella was her constant companion, and nothing gave her more pleasure than to wait upon her and do all in her power to relieve her sufferings and make her more comfortable. Mrs. Russell said her daughter was an excellent nurse, although she was not more than seven or eight years old. It shows how much even small children can do for the comfort of their invalid friends, if they really try. It is very gratifying to a mother to have a child so careful and thoughtful, and Ella and her mother loved each other more and more every day. Mrs. Russell's disease was consumption, and she could not be restored to health. Poor Ella, how lonely she felt when her mother died! She was young to know so much sorrow.

Ella's home is not far from the city. Her father often goes there, and frequently sends her some delicacy which he knows she would relish—a box of early strawberries, or a basket of plums or peaches, or whatever fruit may be in season. Mr. Russell is exceedingly generous, and he expects his little daughter to divide the fruit with the family where she has found so excellent a home.

Ella, good child as she is in most respects, has one sad fault. She is selfish. When she receives any rarity she would prefer to eat it herself, just as the chickens do when they have found a nice tit-bit. It is really a trial to her that she cannot eat a whole basket of peaches before they would spoil! Indeed, one day, after receiving such a present, she said to a person in the family, “I wish my father would not send so many. I like it better when I have only a small basket, and can keep it in my own room.”

At one time Mr. Russell sent a basket of peaches to Mrs. Lindsley. Ella was not at home. She had gone out to make a call on some of her friends. She heard this basket

had been sent, and hastened back as soon as she could. "I hope they haven't eaten up all my peaches!" was her first exclamation. She was quite indignant to find the basket had been opened.

Mrs. Lindsley gave her all she considered it safe for her to eat; but Ella was not happy. She felt as if they all ought to be hers, and she really cried about it. A day or two after Ella saw her father, and he told her the peaches were designed for the family. Ella was somewhat mortified, and afterward told Mrs. Lindsley what her father said about the basket of fruit.

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It seems very strange that Ella should be so selfish, for her father is not at all so, and I know it must grieve him to have a child of his so forgetful of the enjoyment of others. This selfishness does not make her happy. It occasions her much trouble, and it always will.

I know a little boy, six years old, who is very fond of fruit, and who is much delighted when his father brings him an apple; yet I have seen him, when he had but one, divide it between his brothers and sisters, and reserve no part of it for himself. He seemed entirely happy in doing so.

One day he heard his mother say, "I have not even a penny in my purse." He went upstairs to his money-box, and brought down a handful of pennies, and gave them to her. His mother kissed his plump, brown cheek, and thanked him for his gift.

[Illustration: His mother kissed his plump, brown cheek.]

Which should you prefer to be like—selfish Ella, or this generous little boy?

The selfish person is always willing to receive favours, but the generous "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

[Illustration]

"OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN."

"Father is coming, father is coming!" shout a merry group of children, as Mr. Wilmot appears around a little knoll, on his return from his business.

"Let us run and meet him,"—and away they scamper over the lawn to see which will get to him first. They are laughing gaily, and their feet trip lightly, as hatless and bonnetless they hasten to him. Mary's brown curls are streaming in the wind, and it is a beautiful sight to look upon these children, so full of life and joy and love.

Mr. Wilmot greets them with a smile, and stoops to kiss each of them, as they put up their arms to give him a loving welcome to his home. One of them takes his basket, and another his cane, and then the unoccupied hands are claimed by the tiny ones who love to walk by his side.

Why do these children hasten so eagerly to meet their father? It is just because he is their father. He has provided them with a home, and with food and clothing, and has given them many pleasant things to enjoy. He loves them, and his love and approbation are very precious to them. They obey his wishes, and strive to please him, and this is one source of the happiness which fills their hearts.

I think most of you, dear children, have kind parents, to whom you are warmly attached, and that you do not hear the name of father without emotions of pleasure. Some of you have no earthly father, but you all have one in another and better world.

Most of you, in your infancy, have learned to repeat the Lord's Prayer. How beautiful and expressive are the words with which it commences, "Our Father who art in heaven." God, then, is your father, and you may go to him as his children. You may tell him all your wants, all your sorrows, and all your joys. You may pour out your heart to him with perfect freedom. You need not fear to do this as you would to a stranger, for he is your Father, and knows all about you. He knows every time you suffer, and he sees every thought of your heart. God loves you more than any earthly friends can, and he has enabled them to bestow upon you all the comforts which surround you.

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When you kneel down to pray, will you not remember that it is to a father you are speaking, and will you not love him as truly and warmly as you do the dear father who takes you on his knee, and speaks so kindly and affectionately to you. Your father in heaven has given you this earthly parent, and you should surely love him for all he has done for you.

Do not let the precious words, "Our Father who art in heaven," be unmeaning ones to you; but strive to realize the great goodness and condescension of God in permitting you to call him by so sweet a name, and give him the only thing you can in return,—your young and grateful hearts.

[Illustration]

HATTIE AND HERBERT.

"Was there ever so good a mother as you are?" said Hattie Atherton, throwing her arms around her mother's neck, and kissing her with great affection.

"Oh yes!" answered little Herbert, in a solemn tone, "there is one a great deal better."

"Why, Herbert! what do you mean?" exclaimed Hattie, who knew Herbert loved his mother as dearly as she did.

"I mean God. He is better than mother."

"But God is a Father. He is our Father in heaven," continued Hattie.

Herbert was quite satisfied with Hattie's correction, and was then ready to agree with her, that his mother was the best mother in the world.

Herbert was a very little boy, but he had been taught that God was more worthy of love than even his father or mother could be. He was too young to understand much about the being of God, and when he called him a mother a great deal better than his own mother, it was an expression of his love and reverence.

Do you, dear children, when you realize something about the love which your mother feels for you, and which enables her cheerfully to do so much for your comfort, remember that God loves you even more than she does, and that He is far more deserving your strongest affections?

"He that loveth father or mother more than me," the Saviour said, "is not worthy of me." God should occupy the first place in your heart, and next to Him you should love your parents.

Happy is that child who is so willing to be governed by her mother's wishes that she is at all times ready to exclaim, "Was there ever so good a mother as my mother!"

[Illustration]

THE TWO WILLS.

When a man of wealth dies, there is always much interest felt in regard to the disposition he has made of his property by will. Sometimes large bequests are made to benevolent societies, and the donor is generally considered a very generous man. Many bless his memory, and his name is cherished with grateful respect. It is right that it should be so. God loves the cheerful giver.

I have just read the last "will and testament" of a little boy nine years old, who lived in Ohio. Not very long ago he was taken ill with fever. The disease was violent, and he suffered much. At length it became evident that he must die.

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A few hours before his death, he looked up to his mother and said:

“Do you remember my gold dollar?”

“Yes, my son; but we had better not think of that now.”

“But mother,” said George, “I want you to give it to the missionaries, and my shillings too, and all the pennies. Give it all to the missionaries.”

George died, and I trust has gone to heaven. His desire to do good was no doubt acceptable and pleasing to God. He could not receive here the reward God has promised to those who give to the poor, but in another world his heavenly Father can most richly recompense him. The sum contributed by the dying child was not large, but it was all he had.

In the same town lived a little girl, whose father was a clergyman. One after another of his dear ones were taken from him. A precious babe of seventeen months, a sweet prattler of three years, and another of five, were called to leave this world and grow up with the angels in heaven. Then this child of eleven must go too—the fourth out of that family circle within one short month! She had been a follower of the Saviour for three years, and had thought much of the condition of the heathen, who have no knowledge of the way of salvation through Christ. She hoped, if she lived, to become a missionary herself, and teach them about the true God and his son Jesus Christ.

She was ill nearly three weeks, but she was not unhappy. She did not fear to die. The Saviour, whom she loved, was near her, to walk with her through the valley of the shadow of death, and his rod and staff—they comforted her. She knew that her beloved parents would soon join her in the heavenly world, when they all together should enjoy the immediate presence of their Lord. She looked forward cheerfully and joyfully, to the glorious immortality upon which she was so soon to enter. When dying, she exclaimed, “It is all dark here, but I shall soon be where it is light. I shall be with my heavenly Father, and the blessed Saviour, and all the good people.”

One of this child’s last requests was, that her dollar—the only money she possessed—should be sent to a missionary society to buy Testaments for heathen children.

These children’s offerings, small though they are, are yet precious gifts cast into the treasury of our Lord. Their influence will never cease. Many souls may be converted through the truth these “two mites” may be the means of teaching.

[Illustration]

“BLESS GOD FOR THIS DOLL.”



When Mary Wilson was about five years old, her aunt Ann came from a distant place to make her mother a visit. She was fond of children, and often talked and played with her little niece, and assisted her in making dresses for her doll. This gratified Mary, and made her love her more and more, as we always love those who are kind to us.

Mary's doll was not pretty, but she liked it very much, and took good care of it. She always undressed it at night, before she went to bed, and put on a nice white night-gown her mother had made for it; and in the morning she would dress it again for the day. She named it Louisa, but her younger brother always called it Quesa, and, after a time, all the family spoke of it by that name.

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Mary often wished she could wash Quesa's face, as her own was washed; but she had tried it once, and found it would not answer, for the colour came off its cheeks, and it looked more than ever as if it needed a good rubbing with a sponge.

Sometimes, when passing the shop-windows, and seeing the new dolls so temptingly displayed, Mary would ask if she might stop and look at them, and would, perhaps, say, "I should like that doll." Mrs. Wilson would gladly have purchased one of them for her, but she was obliged to be economical, and could not gratify all her wishes. Mary had early to learn many lessons of self-denial, and I must do her the justice to say she was always satisfied with her mother's decision.

Mary would occasionally go to walk with her aunt Ann, who observed with what delight she looked at the porcelain dolls, so bright and fresh, and she thought she could not make her a more acceptable present than one of them.

One day, when Mary was not with her, she bought a doll with rosy lips and cheeks, blue eyes, and short curling hair, and dressed it in clothes which could be taken off and put on easily, as all little girls like to have them. It was indeed very pretty, and its face could be washed without injury as often as Mary pleased to do it.

Mary knew nothing about the present she was to receive, till all this was done; and then her aunt, going into the nursery, put it in her arms as she was sitting in her low chair playing with Quesa. Mary looked at the new doll, and then at her aunt, and then at the doll again, as if to say, "What does all this mean?" Aunt Ann answered the look by saying, "The doll is for you, Mary."

It was just what she had long wanted, and her heart was full of happiness and gratitude. After holding it a moment, she laid it carefully in her chair, and kneeling down, put her little hands together and closing her eyes, said, "Bless God for this doll." Mary had been taught that God was the giver of every good gift, and she felt, that although aunt Ann gave her the doll, her heavenly Father had put it into her heart to do so, and she wanted to thank him for making her so happy.

Perhaps you think that God is too great a being to care about your little wants, and that he does not put the thought into any body's heart to buy dolls for children, as Mary Wilson did. Nothing which concerns the happiness of the creatures he has made, is too small for his attention. Nothing escapes his notice. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." So small a bird as a sparrow, the Bible tells us, cannot fall to the ground without his knowledge. If he cares for the birds, he certainly does for children, and wishes them all to be good and happy.

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God has given you all many gifts, for which you ought to thank him. If I should look into your play-rooms, how many things I should see which add to your enjoyment! In one there is a pasteboard house, with windows and doors, and partitions to divide it into rooms. It is furnished with tables and chairs, and the dolls can sit in them. In another, are blocks with which to build houses, castles, and railways, or any thing the fancy of the young architect may dictate; and here is Noah's ark, in miniature, containing himself and family, and many animals. Countless other toys are distributed among my young friends, which make their bright eyes sparkle, and wreath their lips with smiles.

Other treasures, more valuable than these, are not wanting. How many books I see! and as I open them, one after another, at the fly-leaf, I read your own names and the names of those friends and relatives who have given them to you.

Have you ever thanked your heavenly Father, as Mary Wilson did, for these pleasant things which make you so happy, and for all the blessings he confers upon you?

Your parents provide you with food and clothes, and many other comforts which you need; but it is God who enables them to do so, and who fills their hearts with such love for you as to make it a pleasure to watch over and care for you. You should be grateful to them for all their kindness, but you should never forget that to your Father in heaven you owe your gratitude for such loving friends.

God himself has taught you to ask him, day by day, for your daily bread. That prayer shows who provides for your wants, and whom you should thank for the pleasant things you enjoy.

There is one gift of exceeding great value which the Lord has bestowed upon us—greater than all others—but I will tell you about it another time.

BESSIE HARTWELL.

Children who are called obedient children are often not so prompt in their obedience as they should be. Instead of doing directly as they are bidden, they stop to ask "Why?" and seem to wish some other reason for compliance with a command than the word of a parent. It is often proper to tell children why they should do or should not do certain things; but children should be careful to remember that they must obey, whether they know the reason of the requirement or not.

Bessie Hartwell is about eleven years old. She is generally a good child, but, like all others whom I have known, she has some faults. Although she always intends to obey, she does not always obey instantly. I will tell you a sad accident which befell her in consequence of this tardiness, and you will see it would have been much better for her if she had learned to be prompt.

She was travelling with an aunt on a steamboat. She was very happy, for she was going to visit her grandfather and grandmother, and she knew she should enjoy herself on the fine farm, scampering about over the fields, raking the new-mown hay, and riding on the top of the load.

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Bessie always liked to go to the country. Her home was in the city, where she had only a small yard, not much larger than her grandmother's capacious kitchen, to play in, and that was surrounded by a high, close fence, so that she could see only the tiny patch of grass beneath and the beautiful blue sky above.

Children in the country do not know how to prize their freedom. If they could be penned up in the city for a few months, as Bessie was for the greater part of the year, they would learn to appreciate it, and they would look upon every tree and every blade of grass as a friend. The chirping of the crickets, the singing of the frogs, and the warbling of the birds would be thrice welcome music to them. No wonder Bessie was so happy when she thought of the wide lawn studded with trees, the orchard rich in apples and pears, the hills down which she and her sisters could run, and up whose steep sides they must scramble when the horn sounds for dinner. The country is rich in its treasures of happiness, and they are bestowed freely and profusely upon every one "who in the love of nature holds communion with her visible forms."

It was in the gray twilight of the morning that the steamboat arrived at the wharf. When they went home, Bessie was awakened, and was soon ready, with her travelling-bag on her arm, to leave the boat. Her aunt took her by the hand, to lead her across the gangway. They had but just stepped upon it, when she started forward to reach her uncle, who, with an infant in his arms, had just preceded her. Her aunt called to her to stop. She paid no attention, but passed rapidly on. A car, laden with baggage, was drawn across the gangway. It frightened her. She stepped quickly aside, and fell into the water.

Oh! the agony of that moment! Her uncle and aunt could not aid her. He besought the people near him to take the infant from his arms, that he might leap into the water to attempt the rescue of the child; but they would not do it. They held him back, that he might not expose himself to the danger of immediate death; for he could not swim, and of course he could not render the assistance which was needed. He and her aunt were both obliged to stand and look on, in unutterable anguish, while strangers attempted to save her.

Bessie fell in such a way that she did not sink under the water. Her clothes spread out, and buoyed her up like a life-preserver. A man let himself down as soon as possible; but the rope was not long enough for him to reach Bessie. He could only touch her with his foot. She took hold of it, and he slowly raised her till he grasped her bonnet. In this way they were both pulled up, and Bessie once more stood by the side of her aunt. How freely they all breathed once more, when the terrible suspense was ended, and she was safe!

Bessie seemed scarcely aware of the danger she had been in. She had been perfectly calm, and did not lose her presence of mind; and it was owing to this, probably, that she

was so easily rescued. She tried to save her travelling-bag, but, as she told her aunt, she could not hold it any longer than she did.

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It was wonderful that Bessie was not drowned. If she had not been supported by her clothes, she would have sunk beneath the water, and when she arose would very probably have come up under the boat, so that it would have been impossible to save her.

If Bessie had been in the habit of obeying so soon as she was spoken to, she would not have met with this fearful accident, and her uncle and aunt would have been spared the mental suffering they endured. I should think she never again would forget to obey at the first word from those who have the care of her.

I hope, dear children, you will profit as much by Bessie's accident as I trust she will; and that you will aim not only to be obedient, but promptly obedient. You may not suffer the same mishap that she did, even if you allow yourself to form the same habit; but it may lead you into as great danger, and even greater, for it may peril the purity and peace of your soul, and that is of far more consequence than the safety of your body.

[Illustration]

"MARY'S GREAT TREASURE"

More than twenty years ago, there was a little blue-eyed, curly-haired child playing about one of the pleasant homes in the West. She was happy and kind, and every one loved her. She was only six years old, yet she had a great treasure in her possession—greater than many of the kings and queens of the earth can claim.

What do you suppose this treasure was? Was it a valuable diamond? Was it an immense amount of silver and gold? Something better than diamonds or silver and gold, was in this little girl's keeping—something which will be safe when these have all perished.

I will tell you what this treasure was, because I want you to be as rich as Mary, and, through the great goodness of God, you may all have just such a precious gift. It was a NEW HEART—a heart that loved her heavenly Father, that loved to pray to him and ask him to keep her from sin.

Mary often talked with her companions about Jesus, and before she was ten years old several of them had been brought to love and obey him, and had, like Mary, a new heart. How happy they were together! How much the Saviour loved them!

Mary is now dead, and has gone to heaven. Do you suppose she is sorry she so early went to Christ and asked him for a new heart?

How pleasant it must have been to her to be able to say, as she looked back over her past life, that she could not remember the time when she did not love the Saviour; and



she surely does not now regret, that when she was a little child—less than most of you who are reading about her—she went to Jesus and asked him for a heart to love him.

Our heavenly Father will give you a new heart, if you really wish to have it and feel your great need of it. Jesus died that you might be saved from sin, and he loves *little* children. Will you not go to him, as did Mary, and ask him for a new heart? If you are sorry for your sins, tell him so; and if you are not, ask him to help you to feel how wicked sin is, that you may have the “great treasure.”

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[Illustration]

“SUSAN WILL BE HAPPIER IF I GO WITH HER.”

Mary Wilson is a little girl only nine years old. She loves her mother very dearly, and she is always happy to be with her.

Mrs. Wilson lives in the country, not far from a pretty village, to which she occasionally goes to make a few purchases or call on a friend. She sometimes takes Mary with her, who always enjoys such a walk. She trips along by her mother's side, sometimes taking her hand, and sometimes stooping down to gather a wild-flower which blossoms by the roadside; and then perhaps she runs on and watches the brook that trickles down the hill, on its way to the river. Her smiling face and sparkling eyes show she is happy.

One day when she was all ready, with her white sack and blue sun-bonnet on, to accompany her mother along the bank of the river to the village, Susan Grafton called for her to go with her in another direction, on an errand for Mrs. Grafton. Mary was greatly tried. She wished very much to go with her mother, but Susan did not like to go alone. What to do she did not know. Tears were in her eyes, as she told her mother her trouble and asked her what she should do. Mrs. Wilson left the decision entirely to Mary. After a short struggle she smiled through her tears, and said, “I should rather go with you, mother, but Susan will be happier if I go with her. I think I had better go with her.”

Mrs. Wilson kissed the quivering lip of her daughter, and told her she had done right in thinking of Susan's happiness. Her heart ascended in prayer to God for his blessing on her dear child, that she might ever be unselfish and self-sacrificing.

Would not most children be happier than they now are, if, like Mary, they tried to make others happy, and were willing to deny themselves for the sake of their companions?

Although Mary was so much grieved to lose her walk with her mother, she was far happier that afternoon than she would have been without an approving conscience.

Will you not pray, dear children, for a kind, unselfish heart?

[Illustration]

THE NEWS-BOYS' BANK.

PART I.

“How much money have you in the bank?” I heard a gentleman inquire of a boy. “A dollar and a half,” he replied. I looked up, and saw before me a slender, bright-looking lad, about fourteen years old. The pantaloons he wore had evidently belonged to a full-grown man, and were rolled up at the bottom to make them short enough for the present wearer. His coat had been cut short in the skirts, and the sleeves hung loosely about his hands. His shirt was not particularly clean, neither was it very dirty. His face, however, had been nicely washed, so that there was nothing repulsive about the fellow. The gentleman talked with him a few moments. I was quite interested in the conversation and learned from it that he was one of the news-boys of New York.

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[Illustration: First interview with the news-boy.]

Patrick—for by this name I shall call the boy—sleeps at the lodging-house for news-boys, and is there learning to read. I concluded that I would go there, and see for myself what had been done for the improvement and salvation of these energetic, active boys. I found the building to which I had been directed, but could not readily find the entrance which led to the room I was seeking. I inquired of some poorly-dressed children where it was. A boy about ten years old guided me. He asked if I wanted a boy. I was sorry to say “No,” for he looked so bright and active that it seemed a pity not to give him some employment.

I ascended one flight of stairs, and another, and still another and another, before I came to the right door. I knocked, and was admitted by a gentleman who has the oversight of these boys. The room which I entered was nicely painted and whitewashed. There were many seats with desks as in a schoolroom, and there were books and slates on them. Maps and pictures hung on the walls, and there was a library for those who could read.

The room was neat and tidy, and quite inviting in its appearance. At the farther end of it was an office for the caretaker, and a bathing-room, where water can be used without stint or measure. The boys enjoy the free use of the water, though probably many of them never bathed in their lives, before they came to the lodging-house. If “cleanliness is next to godliness,” much has been already accomplished.

The school or sitting-room opens into the dormitory. This is a large and well-ventilated apartment, and, being in the sixth story, overlooks most of the buildings in the vicinity. There were accommodations for fifty boys, and the room is large enough for eighty. Each boy has a separate bed. They are arranged in two tiers, as in a steamboat. The beds were all neatly made, and looked quite comfortable. Many of these boys have never slept in a bed except in this room. The remarks which they make to each other, when comparing their beds, with their clean sheets and pillow-cases, with the boxes, areas, and crannies where they have been accustomed to sleep, are very amusing.

I am happy to know that there has been a constant improvement among the boys. They grow more orderly, and are more easily restrained, and some of them give promise of making useful men. They are not allowed to use profane language, to fight, nor to smoke in the rooms, and generally manifest much kindness of feeling toward each other.

There was a table in the room, which interested me greatly. It was of black-walnut. In the top there were one hundred and ten different holes, large enough to admit a half-dollar. Each of them was numbered. This was the bank in which Patrick had deposited his money. There were one hundred and ten little divisions in the drawer, corresponding with one hundred and ten openings in the top. The boys each have a certain number

for their own use, and if they choose, can safely secure their day's earnings for a time of need. The superintendent keeps the key of the drawer.

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Several weeks ago, the boys voted not to take their money from the bank till November, that they might then have the means of purchasing warm clothes for the winter. I had quite a curiosity to look into the bank, to see how much the boys had saved. In some of the divisions there were only a few pennies, while in others there were several dollars.

I never looked upon any bank with so much pleasure, as I did upon this simple one of the news-boys. It was teaching them a lesson of economy and forethought, which I trust they will never forget. When they enjoy their comfortable coats and warm pantaloons in the cold weather of winter, they cannot avoid remembering, that it was by taking care of the pennies, that they were enabled so nicely to clothe themselves. The news-boys have never been taught the true value of money. They have not hesitated to gamble it away, or to spend it for segars and tobacco, and other unnecessary and hurtful things. They have been exceedingly improvident and have had no idea of laying up any thing for the future.

One evening, as the boys were gathered in their sitting-room, one of them was leaning on the bank. He held up a quarter of a dollar between his thumb and finger, and, looking at his companions, said, "You know Simpson, the pawnbroker?" "Yes." "He is a friend in need, but *here* is a friend indeed!" and the bright silver dropped, jingling, into his bank.

Those news-boys all of them possess more than ordinary intelligence and energy of character. "Every one of them," as a gentleman said, "is worth saving." They are sure to make *men*, and to exert an influence in the world.

After my return from my visit to their rooms, I told some children about the necessities of these news-boys, and how much they need better clothing. A little girl, whom I know, has determined to make a shirt for one of them. I am sure it will be acceptable; for, frequently, when they first go to the lodging-house, they are so filthy that something must be given them to make them decent. Perhaps other children may like to do something to benefit those needy ones, who have no father nor mother to take care of them and provide for their wants.

PART II.

When the bank was opened, the first of November it was found to contain seventy-nine dollars and eleven cents! This sum of money had been saved in seven weeks, by twenty-four boys. They were quite astonished at their own success. They learned the lesson by personal experience, that if they took care of the pennies, the shillings would take care of themselves. Some of them had saved enough to buy a new suit of clothes, others enough for pantaloons, and others for a cap or shoes. They were advised not to spend their money hastily; but a few were too impatient to wait, and the same evening

they received it they went out to make their purchases. Others laid by their money till morning.

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The news-boys found it was so much better for them to put their money in the bank, than to spend it in gaming, or for cigars, or in other useless ways, that they voted to close it again, not to be opened till December. During the month of November, nineteen boys saved sixty-three dollars and forty-seven cents. One of them had put in thirteen dollars. He did not spend it all for himself, but gave a part of it to his mother to pay her rent.

The boys were delighted with their wealth. "No hard times here!" they cried. "Money isn't tight with us. There is plenty of it."

One of the boys purchased an entire suit of clothes; and when he made his appearance among the others, in his nice blue jacket, with bright buttons, his pantaloons to match, and his blue navy-cap, he was greeted with cheers. One and another examined his wardrobe, and all enjoyed his success. "Who are you? Who'd think this was Charley ——? Is this a news-boy? Who'd believe this was a news-boy?" and various other exclamations escaped from them. "Charley has done well this time." Yes, Charley did well, and he will not soon forget the lesson he learned that month. He knows more of the true use of money than ever before.

The first of December the boys voted to keep the bank closed till the third of January. They decided not to have it opened on the first, because there are so many temptations to spend money that they feared, if they had it in their pockets, they should part with it foolishly.

One of the news-boys has been recently run over by a stage. I inquired about him, and learned that he is the very boy whom I met in a friend's office, and my interest in whom led me first to visit the lodging-house. This is the third time he has narrowly escaped death. The omnibus passed directly over his body. When he was taken up, his companions thought him dying. He was conveyed immediately to the hospital.

The boys at the lodging-house were saddened by Patrick's troubles. They expected he would die. They recounted his excellencies of character. His cheerfulness and ready wit were not forgotten. Patrick is not a boy of many words, but when he speaks, it is to the purpose. The boys called at the hospital to see him. The door-keeper said he never knew a boy who had so many cousins!

The next day Patrick was better. It was found that he was not so much injured as was at first supposed. There was great rejoicing in the evening at the lodging-house. A heavy load had been lifted from their hearts. Patrick would soon be among them again. They were cheerful and full of life and spirits. "Patrick must be half made of India-rubber!" they exclaimed, gleefully.

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This sympathy with each other is one of the most beautiful traits of their character, and shows a nature that may be nobly developed. They cannot but learn much that is good in the hours spent in their reading-room, as they listen to the instruction of those interested in their welfare. Many of them have already found good situations, and give promise of becoming useful men. They appreciate kindness and civility. "Mr. —— spoke to me in the street, when he was walking with another gentleman and *he shook hands with me too*," said one of them triumphantly, as if he had risen in the scale of being, and was more worthy of respect, in consequence of the respect with which he had been treated. Few can estimate the power of sympathy.

"Speak gently, kindly, to the poor;
Let no harsh term be heard;
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word."

"I have never forgotten your words of kindness, when I was poor and almost discouraged," wrote one lady to another, and no more will any child of want forget the utterance of a warm, generous heart.

I should have told you, that besides the money the boys put in the bank, they earn enough to pay for their lodging, six cents a night, and to purchase their food, and, sometimes, various articles of clothing. They are obliged to be very active, and to be up early in the morning. They may be found in all parts of the city, crying their papers with loud, piercing voices, and running at full speed from street to street, stopping only to sell papers to any who may buy.

It would be well if they had some occupation which would expose them less to bad company and unsteady habits; but a news-boy can be honest, virtuous, and temperate, as well as any other boy,—if he will take the right way to be.

[Illustration]

IDA'S DRESS.

At one time, when Mrs. Dudley was spending a few days in the city, she went with a friend to call upon a poor woman whom she heard was in great need. This woman had sent a daughter, about eight years old, to school for one day, and then found that she could not spare her; she felt obliged to keep her at home to take care of the baby.

Mrs. Carter—for by this name I shall call her—occupied a house back from the street. The ladies ascended the steps leading to the first floor, and inquired if she lived there. "She is in the basement," was the answer. They descended into the area. It was neatly swept, and in perfect order. "It must be a genteel woman who lives here," remarked



Mrs. Benton. They knocked. A voice bade them come in. They opened the door and entered. Mrs. Carter was sewing by a table. By her side stood Georgianna, her oldest child, plainly and neatly dressed. At the other end of the table was a little girl about four years old, whose name I forget, and in the rocking-chair before the stove was a dark-haired babe, quietly sleeping.

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The room was neat and tidy. There was a little fire in the stove, but not enough to thoroughly warm the room.

The ladies inquired of Mrs. Carter in regard to her circumstances. They learned that her husband left her last spring, and had gone she knew not where. He was a carpenter by trade, and could earn two dollars a day. She had always done what she could with her needle, and had earned a few dollars a month by binding shoes or doing other sewing. They had lived very comfortably, renting good apartments for eight dollars a month, and knew nothing of want or suffering.

Mrs. Carter was obliged to give up her pleasant rooms, to remove to the basement. She has laboured industriously, whenever she can procure work, to pay her rent, three dollars a month, and to provide food for her children. She has known what it is to be both cold and hungry. She has bought coal by the bushel, and has sometimes been without fire in the dead of winter. Her family have lived principally upon bread and water, and the little ones have cried for food when she had none to give them.

Little Ida is too young to know her mother's sorrow. She is a babe of only a few weeks old, and she sleeps as sweetly in that great rocking-chair as any babe ever slept in a cradle. She is warmly wrapped in a blanket, and does not suffer, although she has scarce a change of dresses.

When Mrs. Dudley returned to her happy home, she told her children about this family, and particularly about the poor babe, who so increased her mother's cares and labours, yet repaying it all by the wealth of maternal love her coming had developed. It was pleasing to see Georgianna lay her face so softly on the infant's, and so gently rock her when her slumbers were disturbed.

Mrs. Dudley's children listened to her story with great interest, and wished to do something for the family. Mary repaired some garments which her mother gave her, and when this was done, she went to her drawer and took out a small piece of calico, which had been given to her to make her doll a dress. She asked her mother if there was enough to make Ida a dress. Mrs. Dudley examined it, and told her there was. So she cut it out for her daughter, and showed her how to make it. This work occupied her several days, for Mary goes to school, and has not much time for sewing. The dress looked very pretty when it was completed. She had embroidered the tiny sleeves with a neat scallop, and had taken great pains to make it strong and neatly.

The next time Mrs. Dudley went to the city, she took several small parcels for Mrs. Carter, who was much pleased with them. None gratified her more than the dress for the baby.

It will always be a pleasant recollection to Mary that she made the heart of this suffering woman happy by sending a dress to her infant. She learned the pleasure of giving, and of exerting herself to do good to others.

If Mrs. Dudley had had the dress made by a seamstress, it would have been equally useful to Mrs. Carter; but Mary would have lost the reward which she now enjoys in the consciousness of relieving the sufferings of the destitute. I hope Mary will always be benevolent, and never grow “weary in well-doing.”

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[Illustration]

WHAT MADE WILLIE HAPPY.

Willie was looking at the slippers which his mother had wrought for him, and admiring the freshness of the colours. They were a Christmas present to him, and had afforded him much pleasure.

"You were very happy the evening they were given to you," said his mother.

"But no happier than I was last evening," he replied.

I will tell you what made him so happy on the evening to which he alluded. At Christmas, two little books had been added to his library, and another had been lent him by one of his companions. When he had read these books, he was very desirous to get still another. He began to inquire how he could earn money enough to buy it, for he thought he should like to purchase it himself. He could think of nothing which could be done in the house, by which he could replenish his purse; so his mother told him, if he would control his temper for a week, she would get the book for him. If he did get out of patience, and immediately checked himself, he was to receive it.

Every evening Willie came to his mother, and told her how he had succeeded through the day. She observed him very carefully, and she knew that he really tried to conquer himself. She encouraged him in his efforts, and Willie was very happy—happy because he was succeeding in correcting what was wrong—and happy in the anticipation of the reward promised him.

The last day of the week came, and passed away. Willie's father returned from the city. He brought with him a parcel done up in soft white paper, and tied with a small red and white twine. His mother opened it, and there was the book for which she had sent. She wrote Willie's name in it, with the day of the month, and then wrote "A Reward of Merit." She thought those few words would remind him of the way in which he earned the book, and would encourage him to persevere in overcoming any bad or sinful habit.

All these things together made Willie quite as happy as on "Merry Christmas." It always makes people happy to endeavour to subdue what is wrong in themselves,—such efforts being their own reward. The consciousness of the approval of our heavenly Father must always occasion the truest pleasure.

DO YOU INTEND TO BE A GENTLEMAN?

(A QUESTION FOR BOYS.)

As I sat at the table a few evenings since, a gentleman called. He was invited to take a seat with us. As he had already supped, he declined. This person is a man of talent and education, but as I turned to look at him, in the course of conversation, I observed a habit which so disgusted me, that it was with an effort I could finish my tea.

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This circumstance impressed on my mind the importance of forming correct habits in boyhood. “The child is father of the man,” Wordsworth says in one of his poems. The habits and character you form now will, in all probability, be the habits and character you will retain when you are a man. I suppose the individual to whom I have alluded was entirely unconscious of doing any thing disagreeable. If not, perhaps he did not consider it of much consequence. He may have grown up with the opinion that little things are of small importance. Now, that this is not always so, you may easily see if you drop a spark of fire in a pile of shavings: the whole will be immediately in flames, and will do as much injury as if it had been kindled by a large coal.

Our happiness depends quite as much on little things as on great. Small trials are as difficult to bear as any. People often lose their patience when a dress is torn, or a pitcher broken, who would be quiet and calm if some serious misfortune had befallen them.

I hope, boys, you intend to be gentlemen. I do not mean fops and dandies, but true gentlemen. You have perhaps seen the remark made, that “dress does not make the man, but after he is made, he looks better dressed up.” Neither do gentlemanly habits and manners make the man, but they certainly improve him after he is made, and render him agreeable and prepossessing.

A farmer, or a cabinet-maker, or a blacksmith, are no less gentlemen because they are engaged in these useful and honourable employments, than are judges, or merchants, or ministers. To be a gentleman is to be a man of gentle manners; and who would not desire to be distinguished for such a trait?

If you intend to be gentlemen, you must begin now, by always conducting, under all circumstances, just as well as you know how. Some of you, I suppose, have better advantages of society, and more careful instruction at home, than others; but no boy of intelligence need fail to be a gentleman if he tries.

A true gentleman is always courteous. He answers respectfully when spoken to—no matter by whom. Do you remember the anecdote of General Washington, who raised his hat and bowed politely to a coloured man he met, who had previously saluted him with the usual civility of the race? A friend with him expressed surprise. “Do you think,” said he, “I would be less polite than a negro?” I hope, when you are tempted to be uncivil to those whom you consider beneath you, you will not forget the good example of the Father of his Country. I suppose the secret of Washington’s politeness and greatness was, as his mother proudly said of him, that “George was always a good boy!”

He was a gentleman—such a gentleman as I should be glad to believe every boy who reads this book will one day be. If you would be polite to all, you must cultivate kind

feelings towards all. A gentleman is not a rough man. He may have great energy and power of character, as had Washington, but still he is a *gentle*-man.

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GENEROUS NELLY; OR, THE WILLING MIND.

Nelly Wallace is about six years old. She has a pleasant, attractive face. Her long hair curls in ringlets over her neck. She is one of the neatest and most gentle children I ever saw, and gives her mother but little trouble. Indeed, she is so orderly, and active, that she is quite an assistance to her. She sings like a lark, and is patient as a lamb. She is very generous, too.

Her father is obliged to live on a small salary.

Nelly is a favourite with her father's friends, and often receives a present from them.

One day, she heard her mother say to her father that they needed some particular article very much, but he told her he had not money enough to purchase it. She quietly left the room, and went up stairs. Presently she returned, and placed a five-dollar gold-piece, which had been given to her, in her mother's hand. "Please use my money, mother," she said; "I should rather you would use it for what you need, than keep it to buy something for myself."

At another time, her father was obliged to take a journey on business. Nelly brought forth her purse, and offered its contents to him to defray his expenses. Dear child! she knew nothing about the cost of travelling, nor the value of money. She thought her three-cent pieces would be all he would need.

[Illustration: Nelly brought forth her purse.]

Paul, when exhorting the Corinthian church to liberality, says, "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Nelly had a willing mind, and her father was as much gratified by her thoughtful consideration as he would have been if she had been able to furnish him all that he needed. So our heavenly Father is pleased with his children when they do what they can to provide for the wants of the needy; and the smallest gift, offered in love, is not forgotten by him.

You recollect that our Saviour, when he saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury and the poor woman casting in her two mites, said that she had cast in more than they all. They had given of their abundance; it had cost them no self-denial—but she, of her penury, had cast in all the living that she had. God looks not only on the outward act, but at the heart. He sees the motives which actuate us. He saw Nelly's heart, and he approved her generosity. He gave her an approving conscience, which made her very happy—far happier than she could have been if she had been selfish, and thought only of her own enjoyment.

LOVEST THOU ME?

Jesus, after his resurrection from the dead, appeared at various times to his disciples. Once, when Peter, John, and a few others were fishing in the Sea of Tiberias, he stood on the shore, and inquired of them, "Have ye any meat?" They answered, "No." Then he directed them to cast their net on the right side of the ship, and they should find fish. They did so, and caught one hundred and fifty-three. The disciples then knew it was Jesus who had spoken to them. After they had secured the fish by drawing the net to the shore, Jesus invited them to dine with him.

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The disciples had observed, so soon as they came to land, a fire of coals, and “fish laid thereon, and bread.” This was the refreshment our Lord had prepared for them, and he, himself, gave them the simple repast.

After they had dined, our Saviour said to Peter three times, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” The first and the second time Peter answered, “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” Peter was grieved because Jesus said unto him the third time, “Lovest thou me?” and he replied, “Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.”

How did Peter know that he loved Jesus? It was not because he always did right, for a short time before he had denied his Lord, and had more than once said that he did not know him! Yet, notwithstanding this, when he was now asked, “Lovest thou me?” he could unhesitatingly answer, “Thou knowest that I love thee.”

If you should be asked, “Do you love your parents?” you would immediately answer, “Yes.” You know you love them. How do you know it? It might not be so easy for you to answer this question as the other, but at the same time you are conscious that you do love them. You feel that they are your best friends. They provide for all your wants. They furnish you with food and clothes and the means of education. They take care of you when you are well and when you are ill. You feel grateful to them for what they do for you, and you enjoy being with them, and talking with them. You like to please them, and it makes you sad when you have grieved them. Children who love their parents very dearly sometimes do what they do not approve; but they are always sorry for it, as Peter was when he went out and wept bitterly.

If you should be asked, “Do you love your heavenly Father?” could you as readily answer, “Yes?” Do you like to hear about him and his wonderful works? Is the story of Jesus’ love for lost man one that interests you? Is it pleasant to you to think of living forever with the Lord when you leave this world?

If you love your Father in heaven, you do not love to do what is wrong. If you are overcome by temptation, and sin against him, you are sorry, as you are when you sin against your earthly parents.

Children, and grown people too, sometimes seem to think that religion is to be kept by itself, separate and distinct from our daily duties, and that it consists in praying, going to church, hearing sermons, and wearing a sober face. It is true the Christian often feels sober, but there is no one who may be so cheerful as he, for there is none that can be so truly happy. True piety extends to all the acts of our lives, and influences them all. It does not forbid our doing any thing that it is right for us to do. A Christian child enjoys play quite as well as any other child.

If Jesus should say to you to-day, as he did to Peter, “Lovest thou me?” could you answer, “Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee?” It is just as easy for you to know

whether you love him as it is for you to know whether you love your father and mother. I trust there are many children who do love the Saviour, and who wish to live to be good and to do good.

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MY LITTLE BAG.

On my table lies a little bag. It has no beauty to render it valuable. It is not made of silk or velvet. The material is plain muslin, and that by no means of the finest texture. It is not very neatly made. The stitches are irregular. Sometimes they are piled one above another, and again they are scattered far apart. The hemming shows that no skilful seamstress held the needle. And yet this bag has afforded me much pleasure. Every stitch was made by the hand of love, and with a desire to gratify me and add to my happiness. It was a work of toil, for the fingers were unused to such labour. Patient industry and persevering effort were required to accomplish it. Self-denial, too, was practised, for play was forsaken on its account.

It was a gift to me from a dear child; a token of his purest and warmest affection; and that has made this coarse muslin more precious than the richest material could be, which had no such extraneous value.

What a blessing is love! How it enriches us! Without it we must ever be poor. "God is love," and he has taught us to love one another. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." We must love our neighbour as ourselves.

"Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make our earth an Eden,
Like the heaven above."

No offering of true love is valueless, however small or imperfect it may be. My little bag is rich in pleasant associations, and I never look upon it but with a full heart.

God does not accept what we do for him because of any peculiar excellence in our devotion, but because it is the result of our love to him.

[Illustration]

DO YOU LIKE YOUR SEAT?

On the day after one Fourth of July, I was obliged to go into the city. The cars were crowded with those who were returning, after spending our national anniversary in the country. How much they must have enjoyed that day of release from city labour, and dust, and close streets bounded by high brick houses! How beautiful to them the green fields, the shady trees, and the soft-flowing river! How they gazed on the hills luxuriating in verdure, and the valleys rich with their treasures of wealth and beauty!



“God made the country,” and all his works are perfect. I pity those who are pent up in a large prison-city with nothing but a dwarf-maple before their windows which at all resembles the country, and who have to look up, up, up, before they can get a glimpse of the blue sky, and the fleecy clouds which sail majestically along, ever varying from one form of beauty to another. Thank God, my young friends, that he has given you a country home, and never leave it, unless stern necessity compels you to make your abode in the hot, crowded, feverish city.

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The cars, on the morning of the fifth, were, as I have told you, crowded, and it was difficult to find unoccupied seats. A gentleman and his wife entered a car, near the door of which were two seats with only one person in each. The first was occupied by a boy about fifteen. The gentleman politely asked him if he would sit with another gentleman, that he and the lady who was with him might not be separated. The first impulse of the boy was a civil one, and he started to rise; but the second thought was ungentlemanly, ungenerous, and extremely selfish. "I like my seat very well," he muttered, and drew back to the window and looked out. Perhaps even then he began to feel ashamed of such rudeness.

The gentleman behind him immediately arose, and offered his seat. It was accepted with a bow, and a "thank you, sir." The lady was immediately behind the boy, and, as she seated herself, she said to him, in a low, kind voice, "I fear you will never be a gentleman." He made no reply, nor did he move his face from the window, but his very ears blushed. He was evidently ashamed. During the whole ride he kept nearly the same position, not being willing to meet the eyes of his fellow-passengers, for he must have observed their disapprobation of his ill-manners; and before the cars were entirely within the depot, he went out upon the platform to escape from observation.

I hope the boy will never be rude in this way again, for he evidently was made unhappy by it. There is only one reason why I fear he will not profit by the well-merited rebuke he received, and that is, because I saw one of his cheeks puffed out with a quid of tobacco! I confess I do not expect so much improvement from a boy who indulges in such a filthy habit, as from one who does not.

A gentlemanly boy must always be happier than one who is rough and selfish. The boy in the car did not enjoy his ride, although, as he said, he liked his seat very well. His impoliteness made it unpleasant and the remembrance of it will never afford him gratification. I hope none of you, who read about him, will be guilty of a similar error.

Always try to be accommodating to those about you. If you are asked to do a favour, do it as if it gave you pleasure. You will never have occasion to regret it. Be civil to those in your father's employment. Their love and respect is of value to you. There are very few sunk so low as not to appreciate true politeness. Above all others, be polite to your parents, and your brothers and sisters. Do not indulge in harsh words.

Perhaps the boy of whose history I have given you a single incident never read Peter's instruction to the early Christians, in his epistle to them, and did not know that the apostle considered politeness of sufficient importance to be worthy of the attention of those to whom he wrote. "Be courteous," is his direction to them, and I cannot give you better advice on the same subject.

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[Illustration]

THE LITTLE BEGGAR.

As I was walking up street, a few days since, I met two little girls who looked very much alike, and were nearly of the same age. They wore gingham sun-bonnets, which came far over their good-natured faces. Their calico dresses were neatly made. Their blue woollen stockings looked warm and comfortable, but their shoes were old and much worn.

As I passed, the elder held out her hand in a way which I could not mistake, but I thought I would ask her what she wanted. She replied, "A penny to get mother some sugar for her tea." I talked with the children a few minutes about their mother, and inquired if she sent them out to beg. They said she was obliged to do it, for their father was dead, and she was not able to work.

[Illustration: The elder held out her hand.]

The children had such good, honest faces, and gave such evidence, in their general appearance, of more care than most of this class of children usually receive, that I thought I would go home with them, that I might better judge of the correctness of their story, and of the necessities of their mother. So I said to them—

"Where does your mother live?"

They named the street.

"Will you take me there?"

"Yes, ma'am. We must go this way," and they turned off in the direction of their home.

"What is your name?" I inquired of the elder child.

"Mary Ann ——."

"And what is your's?"

"Ellen ——," answered the younger.

"Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"We have one sister and one brother. Her name is Joanna, and his is Michael. A man took Michael away the fifth of July—the day after the Fourth—and we haven't seen him since. Mother thinks we shall never see him again."

They told me that their father was a stone-picker, and while he lived, they did very well, and went to school; but since he died, their mother had been ill, and had bled at the lungs, and was not strong enough to work.

I was pleased to see the children take each other by the hand, and walk along quite lovingly by my side. They appeared kind and polite to each other, and seemed to think that in me they had found a friend. They talked very fast, and told me many things about themselves and their way of life.

“We save our money to pay the rent.”

“How much does your mother pay?”

“Three dollars.”

“Three dollars a month!” I said, thinking how much it was for a poor woman, who had herself and three children to feed and clothe.

“I don’t know whether it is a month, or a week, or how long; I only know it is three dollars.

“Once we were turned out in the snow. Oh! how cold my feet were!” The remembrance of her sufferings seemed almost to make her shiver.

“What did you do?”

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"A woman took us in her house."

"It is a long walk for you," said Mary Ann, as we crossed one of the broad avenues, "and we live in the top of the house."

When we reached the house where the children lived, Mary Ann and Ellen ran up before me so fast that I lost sight of them. The hall was so dark that I could not see the stairs, but I could hear their feet pattering quickly on, and I followed as best I could. The last flight of stairs I could see distinctly, for the sky-light was just over them. They were brown with age, but they were evidently often swept and washed. I entered a room in which I saw the children. The woman there they introduced as their mother. She did not receive me with much cordiality. I suppose she wondered why I had come there. Her room was small and scantily furnished. It was heated by a small furnace. The great gray cat was dozing in the corner.

I seated myself on a clean wooden chair, and began to talk with the mother about her children. She told me of her only son, "as fine a boy as ever stood on two feet," and her anxiety in regard to him. I attempted to encourage her to hope that so soon as navigation closed, he would return to her, for he had been employed on a coal-boat; but she refused to be comforted. She wished to find a place for Joanna in the city.

Mary Ann, who is nine years old, said she should like to go to the country. She thought she could wash dishes, set the table, and sweep, and I thought so too, for she seemed to me one of the smartest little girls I ever saw. She would have been quite willing to accompany me to the country, if her mother had consented, and I could have taken her.

The children's mother came to this country when she was quite young, and lived for several years as a servant in different families. She showed me several papers which she carefully preserved in a basket. One was a certificate from a physician—another from the person who had employed her husband. As she opened her trunk I observed its contents were nicely folded and arranged, as if she had a love of order. She told me she was able to do nothing but sew and could not procure much of that.

After the children came in, they combed their hair, and braided it, and washed their hands and faces.

I inquired if the children could read. Ellen got her "Easy Lessons," and came and stood by my side while she read in it. Mary Ann read very well in her geography, and Joanna in some "Reading Lessons" which she had used at school. I asked them if they could write.

"I can," replied Mary Ann. "I can write my name, or I could your's if I knew it."

I gave each of the children a piece of silver. They immediately handed it, with a bright smile, to their mother. I told them I would call again and see them some time, but I could not do it often. When I bade them good-by, they all followed me to the door, and looked so pleased and happy that I felt amply repaid for my long walk. I had gone but a few steps, when Mary Ann came bounding along, and asked, "When will you come to see us again?" I took her hand, and we walked together to the next street.

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There are many children as destitute as these little girls, and many, very many, who have not even a feeble mother to care for them. Many poor children are sent out to gather the coal from the streets, or bits of wood where new buildings are being erected, and their bread they beg from door to door.

In some of our cities benevolent people have opened schools for these miserable children, where they are taught to sew and read, and to observe to some extent the decencies and proprieties of life. In some, a dinner is given to its pupils, and, where it is possible, a home for the homeless in the country.

Children often save a part of their money for missionary or other benevolent purposes. I cannot conceive a more suitable object for their benefactions than other children who are poor and destitute. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," the Bible tells us.

I hope you do not forget to thank God for the comforts and happiness of home, which you enjoy; and I hope, also, that you will not forget that we have the poor with us always, and must do them all the good in our power.

"Have pity on them, for their life
Is full of grief and care;
You do not know one half the woes
The very poor must bear;
You do not see the silent tears
By many a mother shed,
As childhood offers up the prayer,
'Give us our daily bread.'"

LITTLE CHARLEY.

Charley was a sweet little babe. It was a pleasure to kiss his plump cheek, and pat his fat and dimpled arms. He was a dear babe, and we all loved him, and our blessed Saviour loved him even more than we did.

Before Charley was two years old, he became ill. All that physicians could do was done for him, but he daily grew more and more feeble. The bright blue eyes lost their brilliancy, and became faded and dim. The plump and rosy cheek became hollow and pale. The fat and rounded limbs grew thin and weak, and we all felt that little Charley would soon be taken from us.

The same sweet smile lingered about his mouth, although pain and suffering had saddened that baby-face. He no longer tottered about the floor, but was confined constantly to his bed. Not there even was he to remain more than a few short weeks. The angel of death came, and bore him to the Saviour's bosom. His friends looked at

the beautiful casket, and felt that the spirit which had inhabited it, and made it precious, was no more there. They committed it tearfully to the grave, and, lonely and sorrowing, returned to their desolate home. The crib was vacant—the tiny shoe had no owner—the rattle lay neglected. There was no need of the noiseless step lest the sleeper should be awakened. Little Charley slept in death.

How sad and broken those loving hearts! Those parents were Christian parents, and they sorrowed not as those without hope. Jesus, their Saviour, had wept, and they knew their tears were not forbidden. One of the cords which bound them to earth was snapped asunder. They had one child in heaven, there to be a pure and sinless spirit in the immediate presence of his Father—God. There was comfort in the thought that Charley's tiny bark had safely passed over the sea of life, and was securely anchored in the haven of eternal rest.

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Charley had a brother, Willie, two years older than himself. Little could he know of death—but he knew he had no baby-brother now, and his mother told him Charley was in heaven.

“I hope, mother,” said he, “the apostles will not get him.”

“Why, my child?”

“Because they did not want little children to go to Jesus,” was his artless reply.

This little boy has recently removed, with his parents, to the city. He does not like it as he did the green grass and shaded fields of the country. He feels lonely without the companionship of the trees and the birds, and he wishes that “God would take him right up to heaven to play with Charley.”

How is it with you, my dear child? Are you ready to be taken “right up to heaven?” Do you love your Saviour? Do you obey your parents? Are you truthful and conscientious? Do you study your Bible to learn all you can about God, and what he would have you be and do? Do you pray to him daily for His blessing, and ask Him to keep you from sin? Do you seek His forgiveness for all you have done that is wrong?

So live, that when the angel of death comes for you, he may carry you where Charley is, into the blessed home prepared for all who love God. *When* He will come, you cannot know. Be always ready, and then He will not find you unprepared.

[Illustration]

DARLING WILLIE.

Willie was an active little boy, just large enough to be dressed in frock and pantaloons. He was very affectionate, and everybody who knew him loved him.

When he left the green fields in the country, to come with his parents to the city, he did not feel so happy as in his pleasant home by the river side, where the wild birds sung to him, and where he could watch the branches of the old elm swaying in the breeze.

It was autumn when he came to town, and there were no flowers in the yard attached to his city home. The grass was brown and frost-bitten, and soon the white snow came and covered it. The stone walks were swept, and when it was not too cold, Willie could ride around the little square, seated on his velocipede. In his mother’s parlour, he could make houses with his blocks, or stables for his tin horses, and often he went out to walk or drive with his mother, who always enjoyed taking him with her.

The winter passed away, and every month the strong cords of love were binding him still more closely to the hearts of his friends. Spring came—the fresh grass sprung up, and the dandelions opened their blossoms in Willie’s playground. How he loved to look at them! Those blades of grass, and the yellow flowers, filled his heart with gladness. His eyes sparkled, and he could scarcely stand still as he talked about them.

Willie was, one day, sitting with his grandmother by the open window. The sun had just sunk below the horizon, and the clouds were gorgeously tinted with his parting rays. Some of them were of a rich golden hue, and others were dyed with rosy light. It was an exceedingly beautiful sunset, and Willie, who loved all nature, gazed for some time in silent admiration. Then, looking up to his grandmother’s face, and pointing to the west,

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"See, grandmother," said he, "what a beautiful home Charley has!"

[Illustration: Willie was one day sitting with his grandmother by the open window.]

Charley was Willie's little brother, whom the angels had taken from earth, and carried to live with Jesus.

He thought Charley must have felt lonely when he first went to heaven; but, as he would say, "now he has got acquainted, he is very happy."

Sometimes Willie would ask his mother, "Would you be lonesome without me, mother?" It was always a pleasant thought to him that he might early die and go to Jesus.

Willie liked to look at the blue sky. Perhaps it was because he thought it was Charley's home. He watched every evening for the moon, with her silvery light, and for the twinkling stars.

At one time, a cousin of his called to see him. He brought a basket with him. Raising the cover, he said—

"Willie, come, look in my basket."

Willie came as requested.

"Oh! I know what it is! It is a rabbit for me!"

So it was. George opened the basket, and out jumped a white rabbit, with pink eyes. It was a beautiful animal. Willie capered with delight. He had a live plaything, and it pleased him more than the velocipede, or his blocks, or any of his toys.

Willie said he loved his cousin George for bringing him the rabbit, and his cousin Walter for sending it to him. They were happy because they had made him so happy.

Not long after this rabbit was added to Willie's amusements, very sad tidings came to the home of George and Walter. It was said that Willie was dead. It seemed scarcely possible—for it was only a few days since he had sent a message of love to them.

Some member of the family immediately went to town, and called on Willie's father. It was indeed true that Willie was not there! He had gone to be with the angels. God had heard his prayer. Heaven was a better, safer, happier place for him than even his pleasant home, with his fond parents, and he was taken "right up there," as he wished, to be with Charley.

Saturday evening Willie went to his bed in apparent health. Sabbath morning he complained of not feeling entirely well, and on Wednesday he laid aside his garment of

mortality, and put on the beautiful robes made white in the blood of the Lamb, in the spirit-world. He was a lovely child when he dwelt with us here below; how very lovely he must be in the bright world to which he has gone!

His mother often weeps when she thinks of him, and she misses him more than any one but a mother can. There is no one to play with his blocks, or his tin horses, or his pretty rabbit. Yet Willie is very happy, and his mother has no wish to recall him to earth, lonely and desolate as is their once cheerful home.

Willie will shed no more tears. He will never feel sad or lonely. He will suffer neither pain, nor hunger, nor weariness. But we, who love him, may weep, as did Jesus when Lazarus lay in the grave; and we shall never forget the sweet child, so full of life and love, who was given us for a little while, and then taken home to glory.

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Dear children, who read about Willie, are you prepared to follow him and Charley, where they are gone to dwell with that Saviour who, when he was on earth, took little children in his arms, and blessed them, and said, "*of such is the kingdom of heaven?*"

[Illustration]

WIDOW CAHOON AND HER GRANDSON.

"I wish to make a call in —— street," said a lady to me, as we together were visiting some of the poor of the city. "There is a Mrs. Smith living there, a poor old woman nearly eighty years old. She is infirm and partially blind. She has a little grandson, and she has no means with which to take care of him. We hope to persuade her to give him to us, and let us find a good home, by adoption, for him."

It was a warm winter's morning. Snow had fallen the day before, but it was rapidly disappearing. The foot sank in the melting mass at every step. The crossings were muddy, and it required some skill to pick our way along dry-shod.

We turned into the street, and sought for the number which had been given us. We found it on the door of a low, shed-like building, old and out of repair.

"Does Mrs. Smith live here?" we inquired.

"No, ma'am."

"Is there an old lady, who is almost blind, and who has a little grandson, in the house?"—we further asked, thinking Mrs. Smith might not be known by name.

"No, ma'am. There is no such person here."

"Does she live in the neighbourhood?"

"She may be in No. ——."

We made inquiries at several doors, dodging in quickly to avoid the great drops which came pattering down on the pavement from the gutterless eaves, but we could learn nothing of the object of our search.

At length we came to a grocery, and, stepping in by the mackerel barrels which stood at the door, we repeated our inquiry—

"Can you tell us where Mrs. Smith lives? She is an old lady, almost blind, and has a little grandson."

“Oh, yes! I know her well. She is a deserving, needy woman.”

The man followed us to the street to point out the house where she lived. As he was telling us, a woman passed by. He spoke to her, saying,

“You know where Mrs. Smith lives—the old lady who is almost blind, and who has a little grandson?”

“Yes.”

“Will you show these ladies the place?”

“Yes.”

She walked on with us till she came to a large tenement building, and then directed us to a room in the upper story. We thanked her, and entered the narrow hall, and passed up the still narrower staircase.

We knocked at the door, and were bidden to enter. The old lady was not there. We inquired for her again, and learned that she had just gone out. The woman said she would send for her. A boy, ten or twelve years old, went to find her. While he was gone, we talked with his mother,—a round-faced, good-natured, intelligent Irish woman. We asked her where Mrs. Smith lived, and she said she was most of the time with her. Poor woman! she had only a living-room and a bed-room for herself and four children, yet she was willing to share them with another as poor and more helpless than herself.

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She was a widow, too, and had no one to depend upon. Her husband died last spring. During the summer she had provided for her family by washing and cleaning, but this winter she finds it almost impossible to get work. One of the children is a babe, who was lying on a rough, unpainted board-cradle, rudely put together by some unaccustomed hand. This infant had been taken care of during the summer by his brother, not more than ten or twelve years old, while his mother was absent at work. There was a little girl, about eight years old, who attends the Industrial School. She was quite unwell, and had not been able to go out for several days. She sat in the great rocking-chair, looking sad and disconsolate, as most sick children do. She was comfortably clothed. Her dress she had received at the school, and had sewed on it herself doing all her little fingers could do to make it. Her hair was neatly combed. She was feverish and very thirsty. Sometimes she went to the pail herself for a cup of water, and sometimes her brother would get it for her. He seemed kind, gentle, and sympathizing—a good example for some more favoured boys.

Pretty soon the door opened, and an aged woman, bent with years and breathing hard and painfully, entered the room. A boy, with a complexion fair and transparent, through which the blue veins showed themselves, immediately followed her. She greeted us kindly, and took a chair by my side, bending towards us that she might hear more easily, for she was almost deaf. She told us that since her daughter's death she had been entirely dependent on charity.

After talking with her a short time, Mrs. B——, the lady accompanying me, gave her little grandson a penny to buy some candy. She did so, because she wished to talk with his grandmother about him, and thought he had, perhaps, better not be in the room. So soon as he left, she asked the old lady if she had made up her mind to part with the child. She had been spoken to a fortnight previously in regard to it by another lady, and seemed then unwilling that he should leave her. She said she had come to the conclusion that she must give him up, for she was too old and feeble to take care of him, and she was constantly anxious about him. She could not do for him all that he needed, and she knew it would be much better for him to be adopted in some kind family, where he could be brought up as a son. She spoke of him most tenderly and affectionately. He was her earthly all. She had taken care of him from his infancy. She came from Ireland for that very purpose. His father had died before he was old enough to remember him, and his mother had supported him by her own industry.

The grandmother's name was not Smith, as we called her. It was, as she said, widow Cahoon. The daughter's name was Smith, and the sunny-haired boy was David. Last May, Mrs. Smith died of cholera, leaving her aged mother homeless, and her beautiful boy an orphan.

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When David returned with a great piece of molasses-candy, he did not keep it all himself. He divided it among the other children without being told to do so. This showed that he was a generous child, and loved to make others happy. When he had eaten his portion, his grandmother washed his face, neck, and hands, and put on his best clothes, which his mother had made for him before her death. He looked very tidy and comfortable in his brown overcoat and his new boots—a New-Year's present.

The grandmother tied up a pair of shoes and a few socks in a little bundle. When she handed it to David, he burst into tears. He felt that he was really going from his dearest friend. She wept aloud for a few minutes, but when she saw how much it affected him, she wiped away her tears, and attempted to cheer him. He summoned his resolution and became once more calm.

Mrs. B—— took him by the hand, and led him down stairs. As he left the room, I gave mine to his grandmother, who uplifted it in both her's, as if pleading, in silent agony, for strength to bear this new trial. I shall never forget the expression of that wrinkled, up-turned face. Dear old grandmother! Who will comfort her now? David will not forget her, but he cannot put his arms around her neck, nor cheer her with the sunlight of his bright face. She is alone—none of her kindred near. The lady who took charge of David will do what she can for her, but her heart must yearn for the dear boy that poverty and age compelled her to give to the fostering care of strangers.

When David reached the street, the tears were tracing their way over his round, plump cheek, but soon a smile played around his mouth. Mrs. B—— took him into a toy-shop, and purchased for him a tin horse suspended in a wheel, which he could roll about the room. He selected this himself, and it was delightful to see with how much pleasure he looked at it, as he carried it in his hand.

We concluded to make no more calls that day, but to take David directly to Mrs. B——'s. When his coat and cap were taken off, he began to roll the horse across the floor. Sometimes he would come and stand by my side, and examine it closely. I said to him
—

“Have you ever been in the country?”

“Oh, yes. I was there a month, when we buried mother.”

“Where were you?”

“We were with Elek, grandma's son.”

“Why doesn't your grandmother live with him?”

“He isn't kind to her.”

“Was his wife kind?”

“No; she said she wouldn’t live with him if grandma did.”

“What did you see in the country?”

“I saw the fields, and the trees, and horses, and cows.”

“Did Elek have a cow?”

“Yes; and she went away every day, and at night she came home, and they milked her.”

“Did you see any birds?”

“I saw birds no bigger than that,” said he, putting his hand over his horse so as to hide more than half of it, “and they sang all the time. And there were some chickens, that laid eggs, and then Elek’s wife sold the eggs to the baker to pay for bread.”

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“And had you apples or peaches?”

“I used to throw small stones at the apples, and knock them off. The peaches I could reach with my hand. I had just as many as I wanted.”

The little orphan’s month in the country had been a sunny spot in his memory, clouded only by the unkindness of Elek towards the grandmother he loved so much.

How strange it is that children can ever forget how much they owe their parents! When the widow Cahoon was young, she had watched over his infancy. She had carried him in her arms, unmindful of her own weariness, and had done all for him that his helplessness required. But now she is old; her eyes are dim; her hearing is impaired; her hands are tremulous, and she is unable to provide for herself. Yet Elek’s heart is hard. He has forgotten all her love, and will not even give her a home. He cannot prosper.

I well remember, when a child, what a fearful impression a passage from the “words of Agur” made on my mind: “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.” “Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,)” Paul writes to the Ephesian children, “that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”

I should fear to hear Elek’s future history. It must be dark and sorrowful. His poor old mother uttered a groan, when, as she was talking about David’s mother, I asked if she had any other children. “He isn’t kind to her,” explained its meaning.

“Sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is
To have a thankless child.”

I left David with Mrs. B——, who will find him a home in some family where they wish to adopt a little son. “He will make friends for himself,”—she said, confidently, and I felt so also, for his sweet, intelligent face is too attractive and winning not to find its way to some loving heart.

When Mrs. B—— talked with him about his mother, he wept. She soon comforted him, and told him that God would provide for him. He seems to possess a sensitive nature, with, at the same time, the power of self-control.

Who of you would like this orphan for an adopted brother? He is only five years old. I have written to a kind lady of my acquaintance, who has adopted two little girls, to inquire if she does not wish to add David to her household treasures. There are many such homeless children in New York, and it is an act of Christian charity to adopt and

educate them, and one which is rich in blessings to every heart that is open to receive the fatherless and motherless.

Mrs. B—— would like to have adopted David herself but she has so much to do for so many orphan children, that she concluded she had not the time to devote to him. She sent him to a place known as the Home of the Friendless. This is a large brick house, built on purpose to shelter those who have no home of their own. There are always many children there, who are kindly taken care of till homes can be obtained for them. Those who are large enough attend school.

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I was so much interested in David that I often called to see him. The first call was made one day just before dinner. I looked about for my little friend, and found him in the wash-room. He was standing by a great towel, and wiping his fair, plump face as nicely as he could. I kissed his clean, rosy cheek, and inquired if he remembered me. He smiled, and said, "Yes, ma'am." He appeared quite happy and contented. His teacher told me that he was a remarkably good boy.

Several applications were made for David by those who heard his story, and found room in their hearts and houses for the fatherless and motherless boy. His grandmother, knowing that she was too aged and feeble to take care of him, gave him to the Home. It was a great trial to do so, but she loved him too well not to seek his best interests. She was willing to live alone, uncheered by the presence and affection of her darling grandchild, if she could only feel that he would be kindly treated and educated by Christian people.

A lady in Illinois wrote that she had a dear little son in heaven, and wanted David to come to her to supply his place in the home circle, where he would find those whom he might call "father, mother, and grandmother." A clergyman in Connecticut proposed to adopt him, and was coming to New York the first of May to take him home, if it should be thought best.

While David was at the Home for the Friendless, his grandmother occupied a room not far from Mrs. B——'s. It was on the lower floor, so that she was no longer exhausted by going up so many flights of stairs. Several ladies united, and each sent her a dinner one day in the week, and saw that she was provided with breakfast and tea. They furnished her with comfortable clothing, for which she manifested much gratitude.

It was always pleasant to call upon "Widow Cahoon," and hear her talk about herself and her previous charge. She told us about his parents and grandparents. His father's father was a Methodist clergyman, and his grandmother, Smith, was a most devout woman. She loved to talk of their excellencies of character, and the good they had accomplished. I never heard her without being reminded of God's faithfulness in showing mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments.

One day, when I was at Mrs. B——'s, "Widow Cahoon" was ushered into her private room—a back parlour on the second story. She was much out of breath, and it required some time for her to recover herself sufficiently to talk. At length she spoke of her children, some of whom she hoped were living. Two sons and a daughter had come to America long before she did, and had gone to Pennsylvania. She had not heard from them for twelve years. She had often prayed that she might see them before she died, and she hoped still that she should. She had been the mother of eleven children, and here she was entirely alone,—no relative near her to care for her in her age and helplessness.

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She was very desirous Mrs. B—— should write to Pennsylvania to make inquiries about her children. It seemed almost a hopeless effort, but, to gratify her, Mrs. B—— wrote to the postmaster of the town where her sons were last heard from. In about a week an answer came from the postmaster saying that he was well acquainted with James, and had seen him a short time previously. He spoke highly of him, as an industrious and respectable man, and one who would be happy to provide for his mother. In regard to her other son, he said he did not know him personally. His reputation was good, and his circumstances were such that he could assist in the care of his mother. From James the “Widow Cahoon” afterwards learned that her daughter had married and moved farther west, but she had not been heard from for ten years. When Mrs. B—— read the letter to her, she was much overcome, and the tears chased each other down her furrowed cheeks. “Glory be to God!” she exclaimed. “He has lifted a load off my heart. I shall see my sons before I die. Bless the Lord that I ever saw the like of you! I have been trying seven years to get that letter written!”

I had the pleasure of carrying to her a letter from James, and reading it to her myself. As I entered the room she was sitting by the little stove in a large rocking-chair, looking as comfortable as one could wish. She seemed very happy, and told me about the prospect of seeing her sons. “They will send for me, and I shall go to them,” was a cheering and delightful thought. She said she was expecting every day a letter from James. When I told her I had brought it, her face lighted up, and she uttered expressions of thankfulness, evidently from a full and overflowing heart. She spoke of David, and of being once more with him, if “the boys should send for him.” She wished to do what was best for the child, and was still willing he should be adopted, if it was thought desirable. She expressed the utmost confidence in Mrs. B——, and was willing to leave it all to her judgment. This was the last time I ever saw the “Widow Cahoon,” and we shall probably never meet again. She had no earthly treasure to confer upon me, but she gave me her blessing, and, I doubt not, will remember me in her prayers so long as she remains upon earth; and when the spirit-world is our home, I shall expect her face, unwrinkled by sorrow or age, to beam upon me a heavenly welcome. It was but little I did for this poor widow, and yet that little has been rich in blessings to me, and may be to mine, for whom she fervently prayed.

James, in his second letter, sent a check to his mother to pay her fare from New York to Pennsylvania with a request that David might accompany her. He will provide for them both in future.

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So soon as arrangements could be made, the now happy widow and her little grandson started, under the protection of a friend, for her new home in the country where, I suppose, they now are. What a pleasure it must be to James to have his mother once more with him, and to be able to do something for her who has done so much for him! Little David will again see the birds and the chickens, and be surrounded by kind and loving friends. The ladies of the Home will occasionally inquire about him, and if he needs their care they will provide for him, as his grandmother made them his legal protectors. If I ever hear more about David which I think will interest you, I shall write you again in regard to him.

[Illustration: Finis]