THE CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY

MRS. SHERWOOD.

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George Delvé Murray

1863.

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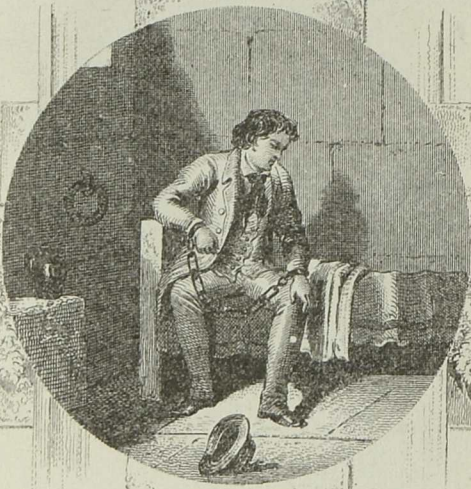
THE CHRISTMAS CAROL,

AND OTHER STORIES.

"And those"? asked the old man pointing his finger to the party under the tree.

The Christmas Carol

BY Mrs SHERWOOD



BENJAMIN IN PRISON.

HALIFAX
MILNER & SOWERBY

THE

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY

MRS. SHERWOOD.

WITH

OTHER STORIES.

HALIFAX:
MILNER AND SOWERBY.

1860.

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.

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My father's house was just such a place as would have led a stranger, passing by on some fine summer's day, to have said, "Oh! what a sweet peaceful scene is that!—how happy may those peasants think themselves who have such a home as that!" It was an old-fashioned, black-timbered cottage, not very small, and was situated in an orchard, on the brink of a clear trout-stream,—its gable ends being covered with ivy, and its old-fashioned porch with eglantine; and this house and orchard were held by our family on a very long lease; the rent being little more than one quarter of its real value. Hence my poor father, had he been what he should have been, might have been numbered among the decent landholders of the parish, and might have brought up his children in respectability, instead of which he was, poor man! the pest and nuisance of the whole neighbourhood; and as I, his eldest son, grew up, there was not a bit of mischief done in a garden or orchard in the parish of which I was not suspected. Our family name is Gamson, and my Christian name is Benjamin, after my father. My mother died when I was

so young, that I do not remember her; she left a fair name behind her, and the neighbours did not scruple to say that she died of a broken heart. I had one own sister, two years younger than myself, and if I loved any thing on earth beside myself, it was Fanny,—and though I quarrelled with her when we were together, from morning till night, yet I would not suffer any other person, not even our father, to give her a harsh word in my presence.

My father had married again, about ten years after my mother's death, and had brought into the house as unfit a woman as was ever set over poor motherless children; hence, all things went on with us from bad to worse. Within and without our pretty dwelling was nought but slovenliness and waste. My sister and I were the two most ragged, forlorn creatures in the whole parish; and four little ones, whom my step-mother gave, one after the other, to my father, were the most disagreeable, pampered, and yet neglected, squalling, dirty, and unhappy brats that ever filled a cottage doorway.

No one knew how the money,—brought in on occasion by my father, for I have seen him put a guinea or more at a time into his wife's hand—went out of the house, for if we had now and then a feast, we had much oftener a fast; and Fanny and I, when little ones, have often gone out to endeavour to satisfy our cravings, with blackberries, raw turnips, and such like trash,—being the scorn of all decent persons, and so insolent and coarse in our habits and manners, that even those who pitied us most, hardly knew how to set about to do us any good.

Morals we had none, though we had a great deal of cunning in avoiding being caught in any mischief,—and as to religion, I have not much more to say. We certainly did know that there is a God, because we often used his name to swear by; we had also heard of a place of punishment for the wicked, and had often wished that our step-mother and her brats were in it,—nor had I scrupled to tell her so sometimes when she offended me; we also knew that there was one called the Saviour —having gathered so much from a certain carol, which I had been made to learn, first by my mother, and in which my memory had been refreshed, in order that I might get a few pence at Christmas, by roaring it at the doors of such houses as were within my reach,—and in those particulars our information was bounded, as it regarded religion; for as to entering a church, it was what we never thought of; the service hours on a Sunday being our harvest times, and therefore not to be thrown away in listening to what did not concern us, as we then thought.

But not to make the worst end of my story the longest, as if I gloried in my shame, and the shame of my father's house, which God forbid! I shall say in as few words as possible, that we all went on from bad to worse, and from worse to worst,—till when I was just turned nineteen, my father and I were taken up together for poaching, and thrown into the county jail, where we stood our trial. My poor father was sentenced to be transported for fourteen years, and I, being pitied on account of my youth, was condemned to solitary con-

finement for several months; my character and that of the family going sorely against me; for to speak the truth, I had been in the House of Correction several times before, for smaller offences, and was known to be one of the most hardened young fellows in all the country side.

And now begins the better part of my story; and truly may I say, that I was found of Him whom I never sought, that I was heard before I called, and that ere I had found a voice for prayer, my prayer had been granted.

Being on the way back from the court to the jail, in the covered cart, I sate opposite to my father,—I was trying to brave it out, and was saying, "Well, I reckon that I shall not quarrel with my company for the next few months," when my father groaned, and looking me hard in the face

"Ben, my boy," he said, "I have wronged thee,"—his voice faltered.

"How so," replied I; "you have made me a fine fellow; one who does not flinch at a few troubles. Father, be of good cheer; 'tis fine living where you are going, they tell me. I only wish I was going along ———"

"Ben," he answered, "thou hadst a mother."

"So have most men, I reckon," I replied.

"She was a good woman," he added; "I had been another sort of man had she lived. Ben, don't follow my example."

We had no time for more discourse; we were already rumbling over a sort of draw-bridge, in the gateway of the jail. My father was permitted to give me a parting embrace, and I had something to do to enable myself to say good-bye, in my usual careless tone; but the

eyes of many were on me, and I turned away from my parent, to follow the man who was to lead me to my cell; stepping along to a tune which I had in my head, and which I was half-minded to whistle aloud, as I followed the turnkey.

I saw the man look hard at me more than once, as much as to say, "you will sing to another tune, youngster, before you have been here many days." However, he said nothing, but led me up one stone gallery and down another, till at length he stopped at a strong door in a low archway, built in the deep wall, which door being opened, he directed me to walk in, closing it after me as soon as I had entered, and then turning the key upon me.

The place into which I had been turned was a low covered stone chamber; it might be ten or twelve feet square, having a bed in a corner, and a small strongly staunchеoned window in the wall as high as the top of my head; this window scarcely admitted full daylight at noon, from being faced by a high wall belonging to some other apartment of the prison, only a few feet distant from it.

My eye was instantly caught by this window; but I saw at once that even could I have forced out the bars, the aperture would not have served to have admitted my shoulders; and more than that, if I could even have got head and shoulders and all clear, I should still be within the jail walls, and should have little or no chance of farther escape; so nothing remained for me but to submit to my fate, such as it was. And thus I began to reason with myself. "Am I a man?" said I; "what is

there then in being shut up like a bird in a cage for a few weeks, that I should not be able to bear it? Do they think to break my spirit in this way? Do they think I want others about me to keep up my courage? I'll let them see that I am not so easily dashed neither. When I get out they shall find what I am made of; and if they catch me again, it shall be for something somewhat graver than nabbing a poor hare, and bagging a few birds."

I then began to imprecate in thought, if not in words,—wishing the judge, the magistrates, the jailer, his people, and all my informers and accusers in a place of everlasting condemnation; cursing them all aloud, and with many oaths; but my voice seemed to return to me in hollow threatening murmurs, and so strangely, that I could not help turning my head round to ascertain if any one was speaking behind me.

It was a queer creeping sensation which I felt on this occasion, and being cold, I threw myself on the bed, and tried to forget myself in sleep; and so I did for a few minutes, but started up again presently, thinking that I heard my father cry, "Ben, Ben! come along, Ben: I am going to look at the gins."

"I'se here," I exclaimed, as I sprang up; for I had a very vulgar way of expressing myself at that time; and there I stood in the middle of my cell for a moment or more, not knowing where I was, for the light had quite faded away, though it was broad day-light, no doubt, at the same time in the open air; but recollection presently returned to my sorrow, and I groped my way back to my bed, and sate down on it, thinking of times past,—of my father and

sister, and the liberty I used to enjoy; and truly I believe that it is never that any one in trouble can think of past days without experiencing a softening and a saddening of the heart, which at any rate tends rather to that which is good, than that which is evil. I have, indeed, known old sinners to chuckle over past offences; and, as it were, thus to live their lives over again; but mind ye, my reader, it is in company, at a carouse, perhaps, when the head is full of the fumes of drink, when bad companions are applauding, or wise ones opposing, that this sort of self-gratulation takes place. I think, for my own part, that very few minds have strength to keep themselves up alone, without praise or blame, without applause or censure; without any one to say, "well done," or "ill done;" for with some minds "ill done" sounds fully as encouraging as "well done." But in my solitary and silent cell, there was no one to say either the one or the other to me, and my mind had nothing whereon to feed for a long time, but my own miserable reflections. Still, however, I fought hard against any thing like good feelings: I tried to think of every thing I could to while away the time; I rubbed up every word which had been said to me by the old folks in the jail, with whom I had associated before I had been brought to trial, and tried to recollect all the tricks they practise to elude the vigilance of justice. These are clever shrewd fellows, thought I, but then another thought came in to cross the first:—clever or not clever, shrewd or not shrewd, they are all in jail, or were so when I talked to them; and they are all suspected, and in con-

sequence avoided and despised ;—they are all poor too, living by shifts and stratagems;—what is it they get by their tricks?—nevertheless they are smart fellows. When I get my liberty I will seek some of them out; poor father was not up to half their contrivances, otherwise he would not have let himself be nabbed as he was. Then again came the second thought, but it was in jail that I made their acquaintance; so, though some of them have had a longer run than father, they have all been laid up in lavender for a shorter or longer time at last. I can't see, then, what all their contrivances come to, but to shame and disgrace in this world, come what will in the next world—the next world—the next world—how those words rang in my ears all that night! for being in the dark, I had got into bed, and there was nothing to disturb my cogitations, especially after every one was in his place for the night; for then there was no sound heard through the whole place, excepting a sort of low chill continued murmur of the wind, sweeping along the passages, and never varying its melancholy note. So, as I said, whilst I lay, trying to dose away my time, for a man cannot sleep most soundly when he wishes it most, these words would be ringing and singing in my ears, viz., "the next world—the next world;" and after a while these words changed into that of eternity—eternity; it having been an expression which I had often used when angry with any one,—viz., "I wish you were ———," but I will not repeat the shocking expression, "all eternity." Eternity then was united in my mind with condemnation;

and so when the one idea came into my head, then was not the other far behind; and there I lay all that night, trying to put the one and the other of these frightful words out of my head by thinking of everything that used to please and divert me, but all in vain; the more I struggled with my uneasy thoughts, the more I got beleaguered with them; so that when the turnkey came in the morning to bring me my allowance,he looked very hard at me, as much as to say, "What! down in the mouth already! I thought thou wouldst have stood it out a little longer!" this man spoke in a rough tone, and although by no means hard in the main, truly a softer heart would not have fitted him for such services as he had to fulfil.

In the manner above related did I pass the first few hours in my cell, and thus passed other days and other nights, only that my mind grew feebler, and fancies came thicker, till it seemed to me almost as if my cell was filled with evil imaginations and phantoms, so that I could hardly distinguish the creations of my own brain from realities; but I was so sullen withal, that when the turnkey asked me if I was sick, which he did once or twice, I would make him either no answer at all, or one so rude that he would turn out of the cell, saying, "Well, please yourself—it is nothing to me; if you won't render a civil answer to a civil question, the next time I ask you how you be, you shall give me a civiller reply."

It is almost like a dream to me, what followed after this, I reckon that I had a pretty smart fever, which came on with such shiverings, that I wrapped myself up in the bed-

clothes: and these shiverings were followed by hot fits, and I was light-headed, both in one and the other, but I had made my own bed, and I must needs sleep upon it. Had I given the turnkey a civil answer at first, he would not have come in and out several days, as he did, without endeavouring to exchange a word with me. Persons were not managed fifty years ago as they are now; there were not so many kind persons as there are now to visit jails, or pious friends, and pious chaplains, to point out to the poor convicts who are suffering for their crimes, that there is a salvation provided for the worst of sinners. We had a chaplain then, it is true; but I, for one, never saw the colour of his face but once, and that was in the chapel, on the Sunday before I was convicted, when he gave us such a discourse as made me resolve never to go into a place of worship again by my own good will. His text was, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations which forget God," and in opening this text he had made it appear to us all, that as we were already all in the way to hell, there was so little chance for us, that it would be but labour in vain to try to get out of it; for he failed not to add to this his first threat, that we were, every man of us, to give an account of our deeds before the judgment seat of Christ, and to abide by them, were they good, or were they bad.

So you see, having only mentioned Christ once through all his discourse; he had then set him forth as a judge and an avenger; and this, I suppose, he would have called Gospel, though, as I have since learned, the very word

Gospel signifies good news. Such chaplains, however, as these, are, I trust, rare in these days; but so it was then, and I was left accordingly entirely to my own company, though I was really very ill, yet I had nothing to complain of, inasmuch as I owed this neglect to my own sullenness.

Now, to give an account of what I suffered during those days of which I speak, would be no easy matter. It happened at that time,—if the word happened is not altogether an heathenish one,—that it being winter, there fell a tremendous heavy snow whilst I lay in my bed, by which my little window was blocked and closed up, so that for many hours I was almost in total darkness, and being light-headed, I took it into my fancy that I was already in that place where I had so often wished to send my step-mother; and what with my hot and my cold fits, and the burning and shooting of my head, and my total absence of hope, surely a hell had begun within me. I thought of God only as an angry judge, and I fancied myself already condemned; nevertheless I had, at least, one gracious feeling granted to me even then, and it was this, that I was made to see that if God allowed every creature to follow his own devices and be as wicked as he would, things could not go on. For, thought I, if such fellows as we now in this jail, were to be let loose in a palace of gold, where every luxury of victuals and drink, and soft clothing, was to be had for the asking, there would be no living till one had made himself the master of all the rest, and then I was brought to see that if one man be the master, why should not that master

be Him who made us, and whose commands, as far as I knew them, were only these, viz., that we should be kind to one another, and leave each other alone; and what, thought I, can be more reasonable than that command, and it is also reasonable to think that the Creator should be angry, when his creatures live in constant breach of his commandments.

The next thought which came was this: Well, if I get out of this I will do better; but then again the words of the preacher came over me, viz., "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and Christ shall come to judge the world, and then every evil thing which we have done, will meet its punishment." Well, thought I, if it be so, I must abide the chance, I cannot undo what I have done.

Again I sank into a fit of despair and groaning for several hours, after which sleep stole over me, and I had a dream, which was so sweet to me, that I awoke all in tears. I thought I was at home and standing by the brook, just where there grew a few rushes, of which my sister and I, when little ones, used to make baskets, and I thought I saw my mother standing on the other side the water, smiling and holding out her arms to me, and almost before I could look at her she had vanished. This was all my dream, but I awoke weeping like an infant, and the same minute the carol I had been taught when a little one came back to my mind.

This carol, as my father had told me, had been a great favourite of my poor mother, and the first verses had been taught to me by herself, ere yet I could clearly pronounce the words.

Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,—
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,—
With th' angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! the herald, &c.

Christ, by highest heaven ador'd,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,—
Late in time, behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb!
Veil'd in flesh, the Godhead see!
Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased, as man, to man t' appear.
Jesus our Immanuel here!
Hark! the herald, &c.

Hail! the heaven-born Prince of Peace?
Hail! the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Rich with healing on his wings!
Mild he lays his glory by,—
Born, that man no more may die,—
Born to raise the sons of earth,—
Born to give a heavenly birth!
Hark! the herald, &c.

Come! desire of nations, come!
Fix in us thy humble home;
Rise, the woman's conquering seed;
Bruise in us the serpent's head!
Adam's likeness now efface!
Stamp thine image in its place!
Second Adam, from above,
Reinstate us in thy love!
Hark! the herald Angels, &c.

Now, I had always been accustomed to repeat these words like a parrot, without a thought of their meaning; but in this hour of my utmost need, when they came back to my mind, and

as it were rung in my ears,—their sense opened to me in a most extraordinary manner, and thus I remember reasoning upon them. Why did the angels sing when Christ was born? Because the new born child brought peace and mercy to men. These were good angels, then —angels who wish well to us poor men;—but who was this new-born Child? and how was He to bring peace to men?

The second verse of the carol answered this inquiry, and with the divine blessing opened to me the mystery,—for truly it is a wonderful mystery, how God was made flesh in the womb of a pure virgin, and became a man, in order by his perfect obedience and death to take away the sins of the world. I don't say that I took this blessed doctrine in at once, in the same fulness in which I have since been enabled to understand it; but I comprehended something of it,—and so much, as to look upon God as a Friend willing to do a great deal for sinful man,—aye, more than any of us would do for a fellow-creature.

Then the passage in the third verse, "light and life to all he brings;" to all, thought I,—and stuck a long while there—to all—surely not to all;—for what did our chaplain tell us? that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God. Well, but who are the wicked? for that matter, we are all bad enough. Then, are we all to be excluded from salvation? would God have become man, to save only one or two here, and one or two there?—for I had not then taken in this truth, that all men are sinners. However, I did not not long stick at this point—I had already, I

am well convinced, been brought under the divine teaching; and pleasant thoughts would prevail, and I began to feel that if Christ had already done so much for me, he would not now cast me off when I was wishing to know more of him; and I was very right, though I did not know the ground of my hope,—for the truth is this, that the natural man may fear death and hell when they stare in his face; but whenever any man desires to come to Christ for love of what he has heard of His mercy and goodness—it is certain that the thought has been put into him by God himself; and God having begun to work with him, He will not stop until he has finished his work.

The fourth verse staggered me a bit: but nevertheless, it was in part opened to me, and I was made to have some idea, that I was to ask Christ to come and be with me spiritually, and that he would drive the devil out of my heart.

It was wonderful, it was marvellous, how from that time, without a visible teacher, without the knowledge of a single letter of the alphabet, without having aught to recur to of former holy instruction given in childhood and truly, without another text but my carol, various of the most important truths of true religion opened to my mind.—I have turned the Holy Scriptures over and over again, in after life, to find a case like mine described, and have never been able to find any thing descriptive thereof but in Job xxxiii., where the secret dealings of God with the soul of man, in entire independence of man's ministry is spoken of, Job xxxiii. 14 to 30, inclusive. And this I be-

lieve to be the truth, that it is pride that darkens man's understanding; and that when pride is there, the inflowings of the Lord the Spirit is hidden from man,—then he is made to see that God is wiser than he is, and is ready to close, as it were, with any plan which the Almighty has formed for his good.

If, then, being brought into a state of child-like teachableness through the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, he has but heard the name of his Saviour,—and what man living in a Christian country has not heard that name?—he begins to look into the meaning of the word Saviour, and to find its sweetness, and so he is led on from one thing to another, till every means, however small, is blessed to him, and he finds the earnest of saving love, even in the woods and hills, and fields, the bright colours of the morning, the freshness of showers, the songs of birds, and the warmth of the sun.

Oh! what a different creature was I after my fever and ague had left me, and I was able to sit up upon my bed. They had removed the snow from off my window, and I could get a little glimpse of day-light, and when the turn-key came in, and saw me sitting, all pale and wan as I was, and asked me what ailed me, and I answered civilly, he seemed surprised, and said I should have had help, if I had told before how bad I was.

"It is all my own fault," I replied; "and if I had been left to die, it is only what I have deserved, and no blame to you; only I trust that when I am about again, I may be helped to do better than I have done, and so may God forgive me!"

The turnkey opened his eyes wide, and said giving me a searching look, "You beant canting, be You, to serve some sly end?" and so, without giving me time to answer, he turned out, and locked me in.

I was feeling my corruption rising against him, and even thinking what I should say to him when he came back again the next day, for I did not expect him sooner, when he returned, bringing me a jorum of soup, which he had begged for me, seeing how ill I looked, and thus my reproaches were turned into blessings, and another lesson given me, viz. that my own temper was no more to be trusted to then, even after my heart had been somewhat changed, than it was before though not understanding then the doctrine of human depravity, I could not understand myself. I was very thankful for the soup, and it seemed to do me good; and I spoke so gratefully, that the turnkey said, "I could have got you another favour awhile ago, had you not been so sulky, but I shall speak for you now, if you are so mended."

I was anxious to know what this favour might be; and he replied, that there was a worthy old gentleman who had the privilege to visit such of the prisoners as were desirous of improvement, adding, that he could have made interest for Mr. Colegate to have visited me some time before, had I not been so sulky and perverse.

"I deserved no favour," I answered, "then, nor do I now; but if you would get for me the favour of seeing this good man, you will for ever oblige me;" the turnkey looked hard at me, as not understanding me. However, he

was as good as his word, and sent the good gentleman, who, finding his ground as it were prepared, was so rejoiced that he visited me every day, and gave me much instruction on the essential doctrines of Christianity, laying them out so simply, that what he then taught me has been a guide to me (by God's blessing) ever since.

He first spoke to me of the doctrine of the Trinity, viz., that there were three Persons in one God,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and he made me to understand that the good and happiness of every creature depends on his abiding close to his God. The evil one, he showed me, had made it his business, and succeeded but too well in so doing, to draw the creature man from his Creator, and to lead him to set his will against his heavenly Father, filling his mind through sin, with hard thoughts of his Maker.

"Aye," said I, "you have touched the right nail on the head, Mr. Colegate; it is the persuasion that God is an angry God, and an irreconcileable God, which made me the hardened wretch I was."

"At any rate," replied Mr. Colegate, "although I believe that the soul cannot be drawn to God, but through the power of God, yet whenever man's ministry is used for that work, it is seldom used in the way of threatening and terrifying. Why," added he, "who has not seen a vixen of a mother, at a cottage door, calling to a recreant son, who is running away, and saying, "Come back, I tell you, come back, and I will have it out of you;" and whilst she shakes her fist, and mayhap stamps

her foot, what does the urchin do, but take to his heels, and get as far from her as he can; so it is with the thunders of the law, they drive more away than they ever draw; and so it will ever be, whilst ministers forget that they are, or ought to be, the heralds only of good news."

And then the worthy man took out his Bible, and read many sweet verses to me, one of which was, from that hour, graven on my heart; it was thus—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii. 16.

The second time Mr. Colegate came, he brought me a spelling-book, and would have me begin to learn to read; and he gave me my letters to con, and he encouraged me and he bade me to thank God for his mercy, in appointing that I should be shut up for a time from the world, with leisure and opportunity for improvement.

It is dull work learning the alphabet and spelling small words; but God had given me a willing mind, and I worked hard,—and before my time was out, I had been enabled to master the first chapter in the Old Teseament.

The day before I was to leave the jail, Mr. Colegate called, and we had much talk, and he prayed earnestly with me, and promised soon to come and see me when I was at home; and it was then he gave me a handsome large Bible, as he said, to be used in family worship, for he had given me a little one before; and he put a guinea into my hand, in order, he said, that I might not be tempted to dishonest shifts

before I could earn any wages. He did more, —he spoke to a farmer of our parish, who attended market in the country town, to give me a trial as day labourer, for which I was to have eight shillings a week, and a bottle of drink each day. Thus, through the forecast of Mr. Colegate, all was in my favour, excepting my bad character; and as the old gentleman said, it depended on myself only, with God's blessing to get rid of that burr, which sticks close to every man who has once seen the inside of a jail, in the capacity of a criminal. I well remember the morning, when, having received my dismission, I set out from the gate of the jail to return to my father's house, which is about four miles distant from the town. I had heard nothing of what had been doing at home since my imprisonment. My father, my poor father, was at that time far distant, in what situation I knew not, and I had not even heard what had become of the rest of the family;—indeed, though I saw one or two persons in the street, whom I knew, I was ashamed to speak to them, and scarcely had I got out of the town, than I skulked into bye-ways, and so came into my father's garden the back way, unseen by any one.

I remember that it was a fine morning in the beginning of April; and having been so long shut up from all the works of God in the green fields, I was filled with wonder and delight, and could not help asking myself, how I ever could have thought hardly of Him who causes it "to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground,

and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth." Job xxxviii. 26, 27. It was easy for me to find such a gap in our garden hedge, as would admit me without difficulty, and I could not but be struck with the miserable and neglected appearance of all about the house; for bad as things had been in my father's time, they were now far worse; weeds and rubbish, and rags, were scattered every where; the thatch was open in some places, and the plaster fallen. I had come in at the back of the garden, and turning round the corner of the house, I started at seeing a pauper's funeral go out of the gate into the road. I instantly thought of Fanny, and stood where I was, till it had quite passed away; for I neither could move, nor call. At length, hearing the noise of some one stirring in the house, I came forward and entered the kitchen.

Never had I seen a more wretched place: dirt and slovenliness, and misery, and poverty, were there; the four poor children of my stepmother, the eldest of whom was at that time not eight years old, and the youngest not two, were all cowering round a few embers on the hearth, having scarcely rags to cover them; and an old crone of a woman was sitting on a chair before the fire, smoking a pipe. "Betty!" I exclaimed, as I entered, for I knew the woman well, "tell me in a word, who is dead?"—but before she could answer, the poor orphans all with one voice exclaimed,—"Mammy! mammy! they have taken away poor mammy, to put her in the pit-hole."

"And Fanny," said I, "where is Fanny?"

"So you are come, are you?" replied the old

woman; "where should Fanny be, but gone to the burying?—the poor lass is broken-hearted for you, Ben; but I tells her, you wont bring her no comfort, for you always was a wild one like your father before you,—and always will be one, I reckon," and so saying, she began to puff at her pipe again.

I had dropped into the only empty chair in the kitchen, and resting my forehead on my hand, could not restrain myself from bursting into tears. With that, William and Sally, the two elder of my stepmother's children, came running to me, all ragged, and almost naked as they were born, and putting their little arms round me, we all wept together. "Ben!" said little Sally, after the first burst of grief, "the officers be coming by and bye to take us to the house, —don't let them take us."

"What house?" I asked.

"The workhouse," replied the old woman.

"What for?" I asked.

"Why!" she replied, "the creatures cannot starve. Fanny must go to service,—and who's to keep 'em?"

"I will," I said, "God helping me. I will be their father,—here they shall remain,—and I will work for them."

The old woman laid down her pipe, and laughed, remarking, "and a pretty sort of a daddy will the poor babes have. You will teach Bill to follow your good example, wont you Ben?"

"I deserve this," I answered, "I have a bad name; and what is worse than a bad name? But little ones," I said, "with the blessing of my God, I will take care of you,—so wipe

away your tears,—we will try to do better than we have done. We have all done wrong; but God has promised that he will have mercy on those, whom he has made to repent of their sins."

"I reckon," said the old woman, "that you have been among the Methodists, Ben." I made her no answer, though I felt the blood mounting to my cheeks; but taking up my hat, went strait to the farmer whom Mr. Colegate had engaged to take me as a labourer; he was one of the overseers of the poor. I found him in a field near his house; he received me coldly; but became more friendly when I opened out to him my whole mind, and told him that I knew myself to have been a very bad young man, but that it had been put into my heart to wish to do better; and that I desired to be allowed to take care of my little brothers and sisters, and to fill up to them the place of a father.

Mr. Adams, for such was his name, spoke very satisfactorily in reply to this; telling me that I should be tried; that the parish would allow me one shilling and sixpence a-week for each child, and if with that I would do well for them, they should not be re moved.

"God giving me health and strength, sir, I trust I shall do," I answered; "and if Fanny will but go hand in hand with me, we shall hope to recover the credit of our family."

"Don't speak against Fanny," replied Mr. Adams; "she was already the best of the bunch."

"I believe so, sir," I answered, "and I hope I shall find it so."

Mr. Adams told me that my stepmother had

certainly killed herself by dram drinking; for which purpose she had pawned almost every thing in the house.

It was good news for the little ones which I had to take home, and when I came back again, I found Fanny returned from the funeral, and the old woman gone.

It was a joyful meeting for the poor girl; and when she heard my plan, and how I had the promise of one shilling and sixpence a-week for each little one, she downright wept and sobbed for joy. I sent her out to bring in a pound of bacon, and we had some potatoes in the house, and a joyful dinner we had; and because there were four days left of the week, for I was not to go till the Monday, we set to work to put things in order in the house. I first stopped the breaches in the thatch, and got some plaster to repair what was wanting in that way. Mr. Adams gave me the plaster, and lent me a white-washer's brush; and I washed the house inside and out, between the black beams,—that was my job: and I set all the little ones to pick up the sticks in the garden, and pile them up. Little Billy, however, was able to help me in fetching and carrying; it took me, however, the whole four days to do these jobs; and Mr. Colegate came whilst we were in the thick of it; however, he was vastly pleased, but my sister begged he would not look at the children; "for," said she, "we must clean the house first, before we can begin with them." The good old gentleman did, however, look at them, as we found out afterwards.

On Monday morning, I went to work; and whilst I was out, my sister being very busy

setting things to rights in the inside, the old gentleman came again with a great bundle under his arm, in which was a plain suit of clothes and linen with shoes, for each child. Here, Fanny," he said, "this is just to set you a-going; and when the house is clean, you must thoroughly wash the children, and put on them these wholesome garments, and then gather all the rags together, and when you have scoured them well, you will see what you can make of them."

Fanny set to work with a new heart on being thus encouraged; and when I came back in the evening, there were all things within the house quite smart, every thing being put in its proper place, and pieces of white paper where rags had been stuffed to fill the broken panes.

No one would have believed, had they not seen it, what a change was wrought by a thorough cleaning, and by putting each thing in its place, for we had not an article of new furniture; the children were still in their rags; but Fanny told me of Mr. Colegate's present, and had got water over the fire, to give each one a good washing before bed-time; so I had my supper; we lived chiefly on potatoes, and resolved to do so, till we had got a little forwarder in the world, though my sister insisted that I should have a slice of bacon with my mess, the gravy of which was poured over the children's potatoes; but, as I was going to say,—when I had supped I called Billy into the garden, for there was a vast deal to do to it, and it was a long time before we got it into any order; however, I contrived to get it dug

up and planted with potatoes, before it was too late in the season, and then I mended the hedge, and I employed the little ones to collect round smooth stones out of the brook to lay before the door and along the path to the wicket: the next summer we planted gooseberry and currant slips, which I begged of Mr. Adams; and Mrs. Adams gave us a few flower-seeds, just to set along the borders; and when our hedges were mended, and plucked, and kept clipped, and all the dead wood cut out of our fruit trees, you would not have known us again. My grandfather had used to keep a cow, in our bit of orchard, but we found it better to take sheep; and after a little while Fanny got some washing to do, which brought in what was a great help to us.

I had always, till after I came out of the jail, hated my little brothers and sisters; and whilst their mother lived, and was well, they were what any step-mother might have hated; but misery and starvation had, by the Divine blessing, brought down their spirits,—for the Almighty has many ways of promoting his good works, and I don't remember that William or Sally ever rebelled against me but once, and then I made them understand that I would be obeyed, and so the matter was settled. But little James, the youngest boy, long remained fretful and sickly, and was a great wear to Fanny; however, God gave her grace to bear with him, and he became a fine boy, and to this day is one of her principal earthly comforts.

As soon as ever things were at all straight, I did what Mr. Colegate had desired; that is,

I read a chapter and had a prayer every night, and on Sundays I used to teach Fanny to read; making it a rule, that what she learnt on Sunday, should be taught by her to the little ones during the week.

God was very good to us, very, very good. Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and would understand that they are happy only when living close to him, and deriving their pleasures from him only.

And now I must go on as much as fourteen years from the time I had been in the county jail. Fanny had remained with me till James was twelve years old, at which time she was married to Mr. Adams's gardener and head servant, a very respectable man, and well to do in the world. He was a widower, older than her, having two infant children, and I verily believe that he chose her, because he had seen her patience and tenderness to her little sickly step-brother. James went with her, and worked under her husband; William still lived at home, but worked at a neighbouring farm; Sally was gone to be housemaid at Mrs. Adams's, and a pious good girl she was; and Jenny was still at home, a nice little lively thing, whom I could not find in my heart to part lightly with, especially as I could make her useful where she was.

I, too, had entered into the marriage state having been blessed in my choice of a wife. I had taken a few more acres of ground, and was able to keep two cows and several pigs, so that I was, what my grandfather had been, viz. a sort of little farmer, though we still lived as cottagers, and I did not scorn to earn a little

by labouring for others. My wife was also a good hand at rearing poultry and managing pigs, so that, with one thing and another we were no longer poor. Good Mr. Colegate was become old and infirm, yet he used to come from time to time to see us, and I remember it was on Whit Sunday, a little more than fourteen years after I had left the jail; he had sent us word that he would be with us after evening service, if we would give him some tea; that I asked Fanny and her husband to come, and got permission for Sally and James, and Wilham and Jenny were always with us on Sunday; so there was quite a family meeting of the elder generation, to which were added two of the younger, viz. a little girl of mine in her sixth month, and a boy of two years of age of Fanny's.

It was a fine evening, and we had set our tea-table under a tree in the garden, and the dear old gentleman was come, and was looking about upon us all as if we were his own children. And were we not so? for did we not owe to him, humanly speaking, as much as a child does to a natural father?—and he had already begun, as it were, to improve the occasion in his own way, which was always lively and short, by pointing out that this happy meeting was the earnest of that future, glorious, and interminable union of the redeemed with their God, which had been effected by Christ, our Lord, when he became man, and as man performed that work of perfect obedience, by which he cancelled the debt, which stood in the divine books against the rebellious human race. But whilst he was yet speaking, there

appeared in the road, just without the garden gate, a very infirm old man, who stood awhile looking at the cheerful party within, having his hand upon the latch, yet not, as it were, having resolution to raise it.

I sent Jenny to inquire what the person wanted, and she came back, saying, "it is an old man, and he asked if you live here, brother."

"Did he mention my name, Jenny," I asked.

"He called you Benjamin," she replied, "he said, 'Does Benjamin live here?'"

"Go back," I said, "and ask him what his business may be; mayhap he wants refreshment, and seeing us here, has tempted him to stop."

Jenny went back, and said, "Do you wish to see my brother, or do you want a drink? We are making tea, shall I bring you some?"

"Who are you, my fair little lass?" said the old man.

"I am Jenny," she answered; "and this house is my brother Benjamin Gamson's."

"And those?" asked the old man, pointing his finger to the party under the tree.

"Brothers and sisters," she replied.

"What all! all!" he exclaimed.—"My God!" and down he fell, as if in a fainting fit.

Jenny screamed, and I and my brothers ran to the gate, and, lifting up the poor man, we brought him into the garden, and laid him on a bank of grass, near where we had set our table.

His eyes had been closed for a moment; and though I was looking intently at him, I did not

know him till he opened them, and trying to raise himself said, "Benjamin! poor boy! hast thee quite forgotten me?"

"My father!" I exclaimed, "My father!" and down I was on the grass, clasping him in my arms.

"Hast thee forgotten me, Benjamin?" he said: "hast thee cast me off?—I have deserved it—I was a wretch to thee—but, art thou doing well? Tell me, hast thou followed me in my ways? Tell me, that thou hast hated my ways; and though I am cast out from hence for ever, yet will I rejoice."

"My father!" I answered, "God has been good to me. I have been enabled to desire to forsake the evil, and to pursue the good."

"God be praised!" he answered, clasping his thin hands; and seeing him endeavouring to rise, William and I lifted him upon a chair, and he was relieved by a violent burst of tears. We made him some tea, which so far refreshed him, that he was able to look round on each and all of his children. He inquired who Mr. Colegate was; and being told how he had strengthened and supported, and instructed us in the way of holiness, he thanked him with a depth of feeling such as I had never seen before.

It was an overpowering meeting: the feelings of that hour were too much for me. Not so will be the meetings of wives and husbands, children and parents, in the presence of the Lord the Saviour, when death shall be swallowed up in victory, and every tear shall be wiped from every eye. My wife had hastened to prepare a bed for my father, in a little room

which, since we had got on in the world, we had fitted up in case any of the family should be sick, and there we presently placed him, and entreated him to consider it as his home from henceforward.

Mr. Colegate went to him when he was in bed, and returning to us half an hour afterwards, gave us pleasure by saying, that he was assured that the old man's mind was in such a state of contrition and humility, that it was prepared, he trusted, divinely to receive with thankfulness the blessed and consoling doctrines of salvation by Christ alone.

Twenty years are passed since that eventful evening; and those who then met have never all together met again on earth. As Mr. Colegate said, that meeting was an earnest—a faint, though certain earnest, of a re-union still more glorious, to be effected by the same paternal goodness, at a period in which those that are without, shall be brought in, and the breadth, the depth,—in one word, the completeness of the work of salvation by the incarnate Son of God.

Of those who met that Easter Sunday many are already passed away. Of these, the worthy Mr. Colegate, and my poor, penitent father, are not the only ones. The ties that bound some of our youngest, and our fairest to mortality, are also dissolved, Sally is no more, she entered into perfect peace; and my eldest daughter, who died in infancy, sleeps by her side; and Fanny is now the tender, and only parent of her own and her husband's children. The course of years must bring other bereavements to those who live the longest—but be it

so. This world is not our home: and if they, who are led through this present life, to a glorious eternity of joy unspeakable, derived from the presence of their blessed Saviour, should meet with a few thorns in their pilgrimage, let them remember him, whose bleeding brow was crowned with thorns, and thank their divine Deliverer, who hath assured unto all his children a speedy termination of every kind of suffering.

THE CLOAK.

The title of my little story may, perhaps, lead my young friends to think I am about to give an account of some such wonderful garments as rendered the hobgoblin prince invisible in the palace of Calm Delights, or adorned the persons of those peerless damsels who abound in the renowned histories of the Thousand-and-One Nights; but My Cloak had nothing remarkable in its form or texture: it was neither composed of silk nor embroidered stuffs, nor a fine lace—it had no external beauty; but it was warm and substantial, and was as much prized and admired in its day as ever was mantle from the looms of Tyre or Babylon. Nevertheless, the history of this Cloak will not want its interest with those who have a delight in observing that simplicity of thought and act, which prevailed in the family to which it appertained; and, surely, it will be painful to my readers to consider how very seldom that same simplicity and ignorance of the vain and foolish ideas of the world prevail in these present days among the children of religious persons, as once exhibited itself in the little society of which I am about to speak. I say,

once ; for assuredly the world has not failed to do its utmost to disturb the minds of those young people, now advanced to maturer age—filling them with far other cares than those which then only occupied their calm and peaceful breasts—namely, how best they might attain unto that rest which is prepared for the children of God, and be made partakers of that glorious inheritance which is assured to those whose anchor is fixed on the rock of ages.

But I will now proceed with my history. Mr. and Mrs. Seward had beed married many years. Mr. Seward had been a military man from the time when he had become of age ; and, in consequence, had led a wandering life, seeing much of the world in various points of view, and being thus enabled to estimate the real worthlessness of earthly pomp and earthly glory ; for they who live always in one place are apt to look on the great man of their own town or village as an Alexander or a Julius Cæsar ; whilst those who travel have an opportunity of judging of the little importance of any one individual, and of the smallness of the circle over which the influence of any one man is able to extend.

Mr Seward had been in countries where death—untimely and sudden death—lurked beneath every circumstance of pomp, and where infi delity and contempt of religion went hand in hand with pride and fulness of bread ; and he had occasion to bless that fatherly mercy by which he had been redeemed from amidst the thousands of careless ones with whom he dwelt, and compelled, as it were, to take heed to the interests of his immortal soul. He had,

therefore, been brought early in the career of his military life to determine that, if ever he married, to choose a wife from among those who, like himself, desired to enter through Christ the heavenly gate, and to follow that narrow path which leads to the Shepherd's tent. In consequence of this, he neither made beauty, riches, nor talents his chief object; but being, we trust, divinely led, he obtained a help-meet fitted for him in every way he could desire.

Mrs. Seward was the daughter of a pious clergyman, who had, with the greatest care, bestowed on his children that best of earthly gifts, a good education. She had been taught to endeavour, as far as in her lay, to promote the glory of God, and to advance the kingdom of Christ upon earth. It is but little, nay, it is nothing, that any of us can do. Nevertheless, as a good tree cannot bear evil fruit, neither can those who have been adopted into the family of Christ delight in the pomps and grandeurs of this wicked world, or take a delight in its vain pleasures and idle and empty distinctions. On the contrary, such persons cannot but endeavour to serve their God; and if they have been made the humble instruments in the hands of their heavenly Father, of doing any good to their fellow-creatures, they cannot but consider the promise that they that "be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever," as being infinitely more worthy of their consideration than any assurance which could be given them of any earthly inheritance, however magnificent and glorious.

But my young reader may, perhaps, inquire what is intended by the words "adopted into the family of Christ?"—To *adopt*, means to receive a stranger into a family, and to give him the privileges of a son. We are all by nature the children of the evil one, and the heirs of hell. Those who are of the number of the blessed are adopted by the Father, and admitted to the privileges of children: a new nature is given to such persons, and every means are taken to fit them for their glorious inheritance. Hence, those who are adopted by the Father are never permitted to rest in sin, but when they do wrong, they are chastised, and made to suffer, as the Bible says:—"For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

But I am making the beginning of my story very long, and I doubt not but my young reader wishes to hear about the Cloak. Well, I will hasten on with my history, and we shall soon be made acquainted with this wonderful Cloak.

As Mr. and Mrs. Seward agreed so well in their ways of thinking, it cannot be doubted but that they were very happy in each other; and though for many years after their marriage, they never had a settled home, but were constantly moving from place to place—being at one time the inhabitants of beautiful mansions, among groves of oranges and bowers of jasmine, in places where palm-trees lifted their tufted heads towards a cloudless sky, and again shut up in the dark cabin of a ship, and tossed on the troubled sea—yet they found comfort in every scene, and under every trial, for their

God was with them and with their little ones; and they used often to join together in singing the traveller's hymn, whilst their eyes were filled with sweet tears of heartfelt love and gratitude.

> How are thy servants bless'd, O Lord!
> How sure is their defence?
> Eternal Wisdom is their guard,
> Their help Omnipotence.

They did not expect perfect happiness in this world; therefore, if they met with some thorns in the hedge which bounded their path, it was no more than they expected, and no more than they felt needful for their everlasting welfare; therefore they did not murmur—nay, they sometimes found sweetness in that broken and contrite spirit which the divine blessing (shed on their affliction) not unseldom produced within their breasts. It is only those whose hearts are fixed on things present who can complain; for they have voluntarily given up the joys of a future world for the chances of happiness in that which is present; and if such are disappointed, as they surely will be, it is strange if they do not murmur. But I am wandering again from my story. I will, therefore, proceed without loss of time to say, that Mr. and Mrs. Seward finding, after many years of wandering, that their family was becoming too large to be carried about with convenience and profit, resolved to give up the army and return to England.

I shall say nothing of the long journey by land, and the still longer voyage by sea; but hasten to the period in which they settled themselves in their native country.

The spot which they chose as a home and resting-place, after their many wanderings, was a beautiful cottage, beautiful as to its situation among the fields and gardens, in England, that country which is, perhaps, unequalled by any other, when all its advantages are duly considered. Mr. Seward's household consisted at this time of his wife, four daughters, one son, and two little orphan girls, whom he had brought with him from his last residence, some thousand miles removed towards the rising of the sun. Mr. Seward's fortune was not large; and inasmuch as those who depended upon him were numerous, it was needful for the family to study economy. It might be asked, Why, then, did he burden himself with the children of strangers? But these were the adopted ones of Mrs. Seward: she had taken them from the arms of dying mothers, and she had taught them to go;—could she, then, have forsaken them, and could a kind and pious husband have required it of her? It was, however, out of Mr. Seward's power to keep many servants, or to receive many visitors, neither did he desire it. He soon found abundant employment in working in his garden, and in visiting a Sunday and day-school, which he established in his immediate neighbourhood; whilst Mrs. Seward undertook the instruction of her children, who were at that time very young.

And now she found the advantage of that education which her beloved parents had given her. She spent nearly the whole of every day with her little fair ones. Neither was there an advantage of instruction, or a single plea-

sant scheme, in which Maria and Susan, the little orphans above mentioned, had not their part. Much reason had these poor children to thank their God, "who is the father of the fatherless, and without whose knowledge not even a sparrow can fall to the ground," for his providential care in finding them such a home. These orphans are not sisters, neither in any way connected with each other, excepting by being members of the same little flock, which included all the children of the family into which they were adopted.

As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Seward found themselves established in their house, they laid down for themselves a certain set of rules, by which, with the blessing of God, they hoped to regulate their family; and, in the first place, I must inform my little friends, that from the daily study of the Bible, Mr. and Mrs. Seward had learned that the whole race of mankind inherit a corrupt nature from Adam, who, by disobedience to God's commands, fell from his original righteousness;—that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually; and that, as one of the articles of our church affirms, "man is very far gone from his original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil;" therefore every person born into this world deserveth God's wrath, and is, in fact, condemned to eternal death by the justice of God; which justice, being perfect in its nature, cannot so far depart from its perfection as to forgive sin —having no other means of escaping the divine vengeance, but in that way which the divine mercy has prepared, namely, by a close and

entire union with Christ our Lord; who being God, paid the price of our transgressions to divine justice by his own perfect obedience and sufferings;—thus opening a way for us to escape; causing those who died in the first Adam, to live again in Him, the second Adam; he being to those who are brought to believe in him as a head, and they being as the members; and thus, as the head cannot be exalted unless the members partake of the exaltation, ensuring our everlasting happiness, as long as his glory and exaltation shall continue, and that is for ever and ever.

Thus Mr. and Mrs. Seward had been brought, through the influences of God the Spirit, to understand the truth, and thus they taught their little ones; for they considered themselves as accountable to God for those children whom he had placed in their hands; and knowing that "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but that the rod of correction shall drive it far from him," they neither refrained from precept nor needful chastisement. Yet that which, perhaps, was more remarkable, and more peculiarly blessed than any other mode of instruction or management which they were led to adopt, was the extreme care which they took to preserve their children from imbibing worldly principles, or entering into the vain gossip of worldly persons, whereby any confusion might originate in their minds between the importance of temporal and eternal things. There was no conversation in this happy family in those simple days about fortune, or beauty, or high rank, or fine clothes, or coaches and horses, and magnifi-

cent houses and furniture. Mr. Seward's own children, and the little orphans, who were nearly of the age of the elder of these, never had a pleasure or possession in which all, if possible, did not share ; they, therefore, neither on one side, nor the other, comprehended the difference of their respective ranks ; neither would the Bible teach them wherein the child of a humble person might not be equal in the respect of the world, if the education and conduct were equal. This was a lesson which both parties had to learn in after life—a bitter and a painful lesson ; but one which, perhaps, was necessary in the present order of things.

Yet there was a sweet and holy simplicity in this ignorance of the world's opinion, and one which at that period added much to the happiness of these blessed children. True religion, in its simplest form, unmixed with the gossip of the religious world, was, therefore, the first object of instruction in this family; but other attainments were not neglected. Some of the sisters learned the ancient languages with their little brother, and they were made useful in various ways, without neglecting the more elegant studies. Mr. Seward's daughters were Harriet, Louisa, Amelia, and Cecilia. The last of these was not of an age to study with the rest of the family, and many of the simple family plans were altered before she entered her twelfth year ; for this life is a changing scene ; a rising family soon passes from infancy to maturer years ; and if the dear elders of a family are not actually removed by death, they are often otherwise prevented from being the same watchful and incessant

guardians of their children which they were in their infant years. Oh! may these views of the shortness and uncertainty of life "teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

It was the custom of this family to rise early, and the passengers who walked by the side of their garden on a summer's morning, might hear the voices of the parents and children all uniting in the sweet morning hymn. All the forenoon was given to study; the dinner was early; and then the evening walk, when the weather would permit. How sweet were those evening walks! When will that same party meet and walk together again on earth? Never, in this present state of things, we will presume to say—the little flock is scattered, who shall gather them together again? He alone who has sworn that none shall be lost whom his Father has given to him—even the good Shepherd. How various were the innocent gambols and devices of these little ones as they ran before and behind their parents—sometimes they would vie with each other in collecting the most beautiful assortment of leaves, and sometimes they would assemble round their parents on the grass, to hearken to some story which had either happened to their dear parents themselves, or of which they had heard in their wanderings; sometimes they would run races for nuts, produced from their father's pocket, and sometimes they would load themselves with huge nosegays of wild flowers, or twist them in garlands round their hats.

How sweet was the tea and white bread with which they were regaled on their return.

The reading of scripture, or of some improving book then followed, and as the day was begun with a hymn, so did it conclude; a hymn in which every infant voice united; Mr. Seward having carefully pointed out that psalmody was an act of worship, in which the expression of a holy and religious mind would be more acceptable to the Almighty, than the sweetest tones of the human voice. Thus passed many days, yea, months and years, diversified by little else than changing seasons, and now and then a birth-day, or gala-day.

But how shall I describe the various delights of these holidays; and who would comprehend their charms, were I to describe them?

It was a custom of Mrs. Seward, on a birth-day, to give each of her children three-pence, wherewith they were to provide a supper. With this they commonly purchased curds and whey, a penny loaf, and a pat of butter bought of an old woman who lived at the bottom of Mr. Seward's garden, and who kept a cow, and a small shop for such articles as are required in villages.

It was a particular delight to these little ones, to fetch the supplies for their suppers themselves, and then to arrange their purchases in much order in their bower or play-room, when the little personage whose birth-day it happened to be, presided at the feast. Again, they had a treat of another kind, when all the children of the village-school were invited, and they waited on them themselves, being provided with work-bags and needle-books for the girls, and tops, and balls, and knives for the boys; a feast, the preparation for which

generally occupied them for months before, and drained their purses to the bottom. But the galas of which I speak, were chiefly their summer amusements : they had their winter pleasures too—pleasures for long dark evenings, and for those hours of twilight, commonly the dullest of the day.

It was at these periods, the hours between dinner and tea, that their mamma used to come up into the play-room, and then, when the windows were shut, and before the candles were lighted, and whilst only the glowing embers in the room gave light to counteract the gloom, she caused all the little ones to sit down, whilst she recounted some tale, or part of a tale, which her quick fancy and various experience enabled her to invent on the spot. The stories she thus told on a Sunday were always on religious subjects; but on other days she indulged the fancies of her little ones, according to their special desires—sometimes she would carry them into fairy land, and bring before them all the bright visions of that region of imaginary wonders, where every palace is built with crystal, and set with rubies and diamonds—where fountains flow with milk, and streets are paved with gold.

Again she would tell wonderful histories of thieves dwelling in caverns, and digging under walls and scaling towers; and she had histories of enchanted ladies, in tapestried walls, of knights in armour, and of dark forests and lone hermitages, with dwarfs, and giants, and fiery dragons;

> With stories of Cambuscan bold,
> Of Cambal, and of Algarsife,
> And who had Canace to wife ;

and then, on another occasion, she would call up the names of real personages, of kings and champions, renowned in ancient records, telling of the historians of Charlemagne and the peers of France, the heroes of Roncevalles; not forgetting king Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table, with the wonderful exploits of the enchanter Merlin; and then the end of this hero, so set forth in fabulous renown, would raise many questions; for we can hardly suppose that persons could ever have been so superstitious, as to believe that this celebrated champion still hovered amongst his ancient haunts in the variegated plumage of the jay. I say we, for I have been favoured more than once in being admitted to this rare and delightful species of entertainment; there was, it seems, no end of the sweet and wonderful histories which Mrs. Seward was enabled to recount, and it might, perhaps, be apprehended that her religious instructions, when the Sunday evening recurred, might fail of exciting an equal interest in the minds of the young people; but not so, and they indeed must be ignorant of the nature of true religion, who can suppose that it may not be rendered as much more captivating to the young and pious mind, than any the fairest tale of fiction, as the light of the sun surpasses that of the diamond, which shines only with reflected, not inherent splendour. Yet Mrs. Seward, in her instructions, adhered close to Scripture, never permitting herself to wander in these subjects into the regions of fancy; nor need it so have been, when she had such materials to work with as those which follow.

On these occasions the children always had their Bibles, to find the verses to which their dear mamma referred; and then it was that she loved to speak to them of that blessed time when Christ shall reign over all the earth, and there shall be but one Lord and one Prince; and when the Redeemer shall speak peace to the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the end of the earth, Zech. xi. 10. The New Jerusalem, also, formed a frequent subject of her discourse; that glorious city which was to come down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband—at that blessed period when sin and sorrow, pain and death, being banished from the world, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Into this New Jerusalem, she would say, "there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," Rev. xxi. 27. Let us then, my little ones, beware, "lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it," Heb. iv. 1. But we will trust our God; he is faithful who has called us, and we shall be washed in the blood of Christ, and clothed in his righteousness. I have confidence, and am assured, that none of you, my little ones, whom I have been led to confide to His paternal care, will be wanting in the day of His coming. Such were the happy hours we spent on a Sunday evening, and those blessed periods were always finished with a hymn and a prayer, led by the beloved

parent. Oh! those hours of holy and innocent delight! will they not be remembered to the last moments of these children's lives? Yet, I would not have my readers suppose, that sin will not creep into and disturb the peace of the most advanced Christian society. Yes, indeed, sin sometimes busied itself even in this happy family, and disturbed the calm tenor of many hours, which otherwise would have been those of unmingled peace. But, let it not be believed that sin ever had the dominion in that well-regulated family—these children had been brought to see the corruption of their nature in its true light; and knew to whom to apply in the hour of need.

It was a plan of Mr. and Mrs. Seward, and one which they had observed from the time in which each child could be supposed to be old enough to learn the value of money, to reward their young people for each duty performed by tickets. These tickets, being of a certain value, were changed into money once a week, and as no individual was able to obtain more than two-pence or three-pence per week, it was needful for them to purchase with strict ecomony, and to be exceedingly careful of those small matters with which they were to supply themselves from their earnings, in order that they might have something to spare to give away; and, more especially, that they might be provided for the annual visit of the children of the village.

And now I am about to proceed to the more immediate history of the Cloak. It was one cool afternoon, in the middle of the autumn, when this little happy party set out to walk. The

father and mother were in the middle, the little ones were running before, whilst Harriet and Maria, tht two eldest of the family, fell behind. I shall not describe those beautiful scenes through which they passed : the fair meadow, rich with the fading flowers of autumn, the beautiful trees, which were beginning to scatter their yellow and brown leaves, or the clear mountain stream which ran roaring and rushing over an embankment, which had been there placed for the convenience of a mill ; but Maria and Harriet walked on a while without speaking ; at length Maria said, "Look, Harriet, look at mamma ; do you not see her cloak ? how shabby it is getting ! I cannot bear to see mamma in such a cloak ; yet I know very well why she wears so shabby a cloak ; it is not that she could not afford herself a better, if she were a selfish person, and cared only for her own children ; but then she could not do what she does for Susan and me ; and you know that she would rather do without any thing than not provide for us. Susan and I were talking about this only last night, and we were thinking what we could do ; it is the cloak that vexes us ; it is not fit for dear mamma to wear. We have been planning something ; but I fear that it will be a long time before Susan and I can bring it to pass."

"Please to tell me what it is," asked Harriet. "It is to buy mamma a new cloak," replied Maria. "And we will help—we will all help !" exclaimed Harriet ; "I have two shillings : if that will assist, you shall have it." —"And I have a half a crown," returned Maria ; "and now there are four shillings and

sixpence already;" and her young features brightened with the hope inspired by the addition of the two shillings which were to be added to her own. Nevertheless, the turn which the conversation had taken had rendered both the young people very sad; it affected them to think of the kindness of that dear mother who would deprive herself of things almost necessary to her station in life; not for her own children only, but for her adopted ones. And it brought them, by the divine blessing, to a more clear understanding than they had ever had before of the exceeding love of God for His redeemed ones; as shown forth in that beautiful passage of Isaiah: "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will I not forget thee." Whilst they were speaking upon this subject, three others of the little girls came bounding back to inquire what Harriet and Maria could possibly be doing. Some minutes, however, had passed before the elder girls could make the two youngest understand the subject of their serious discussion; though Susan, who was a warm-hearted child, and had already entered with Maria into the affair, did all that in her lay to facilitate the explanation. But when this was effected, all with one voice promised their assistance in procuring a new cloak for their mamma. It was pleasant to hear their various propositions; and first, Susan spoke, taking, as was her frequent habit, more time for speaking than for previous reflection. "You know that we have all new cloaks; and that we are to wear them

on Christmas-day. Mamma shall have mine, and I will wear my old one. Mamma will love me just as well in my old cloak as in my new one. And I do not care what other people may think; for I am sure, when I was a poor little orphan baby, nobody would have cared for me, if mamma had not made me her own dear child."—"But Susan," said Louisa, "think how little your cloak would be upon mamma: perhaps we could piece my cloak to it, and so make it large enough," remarked Louisa. "No, that will not do," said Amelia; "no, we had better put our money together, and try to buy a cloak. Saturday next is Maria's birth-day, and then we shall have three-pence a piece for our feast; seven three-pences make one shilling and nine-pence; and then we shall be paid for our tickets every week; I am sure we shall soon get the money; and we have all a little in our purses."

"I have only sixpence in my purse," remarked Susan; "I am so sorry; but I was obliged to buy a new thimble yesterday. I ran out from my work to feed the fowls, and I was measuring the barley, you know, Louisa, with my thimble, and I have never seen it since."

"How many thimbles'-full of barley do you give your chickens every day?" asked Harriet. "Do you remember the story of the Frenchman, who wished to use his horse to live without eating, and he had actually brought him to a straw a day, when he died? Do you mean to give your chickens a thimble-full less every day?"

"Do not laugh at me," replied the little

girl, "for I could cry for my own carelessness; as I not only spent my own money for the thimble, but was assisted by Louisa, or I could not have bought my thimble. And now I understand what mamma has often told me, that careless people cannot do half the good to others which careful people can."

"It was fair, that I should pay for part of the thimble," remarked Louisa, "because it was my plan to measure the barley." The little ones then began to reckon how much money they should have when every one had brought all that they possessed; and to their great joy, they found that it amounted to eight shillings and nine-pence.

Nothing more at that time was said on the subject, as their papa called them to run races for a handful of lions' eggs, as the children were in the habit of calling the sugared almonds, which were often found in the kind father's pocket.

The various little plans for collecting money for this same cloak were put into effect, and the sum which was thought necessary was obtained sooner than had been hoped for. But now a new difficulty arose: they lived some miles from any town, and they were puzzled to know how they could obtain such a cloak as they wished for; but this difficulty also was soon overcome. Mrs. Potter, the person who kept the shop at the bottom of Mr. Seward's garden, informed the family about this time, that she was going to town in a few days, in a market cart, and the good old woman understanding the wishes of the little people, and doubting her own ability to make a proper

choice, undertook to persuade the linen-draper to trust her with a few of the desired articles, from which a selection might be made.

Oh, what an anxious and long day was that in which Mrs. Potter went to town, and how was the re-appearance of the market-cart before the cottage door watched from the playroom window! When, at length, it was seen, how quickly did all the young party run down the garden! they were at the cottage door before Mrs. Potter had well alighted; but the good-natured woman did not keep them long in suspense—she presently produced her bundle of cloaks; one of which was scarlet, another green, and a third of a sober grey, bound with a braiding of the same colour. When these were duly spread on Mrs. Potter's counter, and every one of the little subscribers were at liberty to give their opinions, a very warm discussion ensued, and there was some fear lest the various tastes and opinions which each brought forward, with no small vehemence, might have led to the disturbance of that peace, which, as the Scripture says, "is more sweet than the precious ointment poured on the head of Aaron," if Mrs. Potter had not proposed that she should take up the three cloaks to mamma, and, saying that one was for a present, use the occasion to obtain her opinion upon the subject.

The cloaks were therefore carried up to the house, and Mrs. Potter showed them to Mrs. Seward, the young people followed and flocking about with such mysterious importance in their manner, that it was surprising their mamma did not suspect some little device. To

the amazement, however, of some, and the mortification of others, the cloak of sober grey obtained the favour of Mrs. Seward, and Mrs. Potter, therefore, took occasion before she left the house, to consign it to the care of Maria, having received the money at the same time.

It was tea-time before all this was concluded, and Maria was accordingly detained a little while after the rest of the party were assembled around the table ; but when she appeared again, her smiling countenance, indicating that all was as it should be, every young heart was filled anew with joy, and much address and cleverness was shown, as the little people thought it, in the various attempts which they made to look unconcerned, and to speak with indifference whenever Mrs. Potter and her cloaks were mentioned : and yet this cloak was no other than a cloak of grey cloth, of the humblest form ; and it was for one who had sat down at the tables of nobles and princes ; and her simple little ones had no notion but that she would be delighted with it. Neither were they mistaken ; for the next morning, when, at an early hour, George and Clara knocked at her door with a large parcel neatly made up, and directed to her ; and she opened it, and saw the cloak, and learned that it was a present from all her little lovely ones, she burst into tears, and thanked her God for the inestimable blessings she possessed, in these her precious children. It was Sunday morning when this present was made, and it was a cold morning ; and Mrs. Seward gave notice that every one was to put on her new cloak, and George his new great coat, on that happy

day; but which of the little ones thought of his or her new cloak? Not one of the young party walked before their parents that day to church, but all went behind, in order to see how nicely the grey cloak fitted their dear mamma.

The affair of the Cloak afforded many discussions during the winter; but Spring, with its flowers arrived at last, and all the transactions and all the innocent excitements which it had occasioned, passed away from the minds of the young people; and were little thought of for months, or even years from that time. Nevertheless, as I happened to pay a visit to Mrs. Seward about the period, I heard a history of the Cloak. It was told me by the mamma herself, one day when I came into her room, just as she happened to be folding it up, with extraordinary care, and laying it in a drawer.

But time went on, and various and rapid changes took place in Mr. Seward's family, ere the Cloak had lost its freshness. Several of the young people married; the son went to the university; and the father and mother, having only two daughters left with them, quitted their cottage, which they began to feel a solitary place, and the little society which was, as it were, a small world of itself. A garden inclosed in the midst of a desert being broken up, its members were compelled to know, what in their happy childhood they had never suspected, that in their intercourse with the world at large, such attention to worldly customs and habits would be required of them

as in the simplicity of their early lives they had not formed the conception of.

It is painful to dwell on these things; and it was particularly painful to the children of Mr. Seward, to find that their adopted sisters could not be received in the world as they were. Yet, no doubt, this painful discovery was good for them, inasmuch as it made them desire more earnestly that glorious time, when every believer shall be united in the Redeemer, and be as the members of one body, of which Christ is the glorious head.

It has often been remarked, that the days of the childhood of our sons and daughters, are the happiest of our lives: and why is this? is it not because we are allowed, by all well-intentioned persons, to keep our children in simplicity whilst they are children? the world allows that there is good taste in so doing; and religious persons judge it right. But when the days of childhood are past, the world will not tolerate simplicity; and even religious persons count it dangerous and unwise. Well, be it so; it only teaches us less to value this present state of being, and to aspire more ardently after that period, in which "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a littlt child shall lead them." Isaiah xi. 6.

I had not been apprised of the entire breaking up of Mr. Seward's family; when, last Summer, visiting a friend who resides about six miles distant from his former residence, I took the first occasion which offered, to proceed from my friend's house to the well-known

beautiful cottage, once occupied by this beloved family—where I hoped to find at least the parents, though I did not expect to see the whole assembled group of young people.

I made the greater part of my little excursion in a public conveyance; and being arrived within half a mile of the house, I got out of the carriage, and walked across the fields. Directly before me, on a rising ground, was the house, peeping from among the trees; there was the well known play-room window; but I saw no young faces there, as in past days; yet a sweet odour of many flowers blew from the garden as in the days that were gone.

When I entered the garden gate, I thought that there was something in the air of things around, which spoke of the place being in other hands. Yet I could not have exactly said what gave me the idea; however, I went on; and, knocking at the door, a servant informed me that Mr. Seward was gone, and the house occupied by other persons. I asked many questions, but could obtain no information; and I turned away with that chillness of feeling, which every one must have experienced, who has ever found a stranger where he has expected to meet a friend. I quitted the premises; yet I lingered awhile without the gate, to look about me, and recal the days which were past. Where, thought I, are all those little fair ones, whose voices of innocent merriment used to resound through all these scenes? living, I trust, and serving God; yet never, perhaps, all to meet together, on earth. Oh, merciful Father! what would the state of man be, but for thy redeeming love?

My heart was too full, and I turned away and crept down the hill, by the side of a hedge which had been planted by Mr. Seward. Soon being arrived at the end of this hedge, where Mrs. Potter's cottage stands in a garden, I saw that a little habitation, consisting of a very few rooms, had been added to one end of it. This last cottage was more agreeable than the former, inasmuch as it opened upon a field, where I had often walked with Mr. Seward's children; a field which was haunted by the cuckoo in the spring, and where cowslips grew in rich abundance. I turned into the little wicket which led to this cottage, and coming round the corner, saw a young woman sitting under a large tree before the door of her cottage; she was plainly but neatly dressed; she was busy with her needle, having a table before her under the tree, a little fair-headed boy, of about two years of age, was sitting at her feet, with his lap filled with daisies. For an instant I did not recollect her; but looking again, I saw it was Maria. She knew me immediately, and hastened to meet me; I sat down with her under the tree; and when I asked her after those who had brought her up, she informed me that they were gone indeed, but that she had met with many kind friends; and though living in a cottage, was as happy as any one could be in this changing and imperfect world; for although educated most tenderly, she added, "I was always made to work, and ever taught that happiness does not consist in riches, but in peace of mind, and holiness of life; and, above all, in that depend-

ence on our blessed Saviour, which takes away all anxious thoughts for the future."

She then spoke kindly of her husband; and, leading me into her neat cottage, showed me a lovely little girl sleeping in a cradle. "I see, Maria," I said, "I see you have your comforts; I can believe that you are happy, though in a cottage."

"Do not speak of living in a cottage, Ma'am, as of an evil," she answered. "I should myself have thought it a terrible thing at one time; but thank God, that time is past. I will not hide it from you, Ma'am; but last winter, in the very excess of the cold, when this my little girl was born, my husband had no work, and we were reduced to extreme poverty; we then knew the dread of wanting bread; but our adopted parents helped us—they did not let us want, and now all is right again with us. And there was one thing, Ma'am, that was very sweet—you will like to hear of it; but before I speak of it, will you please to sit down again under the tree? and if you will condescend to take some refreshment, all that is in this house is at your service."

I did not decline her kind offer; there were young potatoes boiling on the fire, and she added some eggs and a few slices of bacon, which she fried, and with a clean cloth and a loaf of bread, we dined like princes—the baby being on her lap, and the little boy feeding in his favourite place upon the grass. We had our minstrels also; for a blackbird had settled on a neighbouring thorn.

"It was very cold," said Maria, resuming

her story, "and the snow was on the ground, and dear Mrs. Seward,—I still would call her mamma,—was then very near to us. Ah, she is not with us now! I cannot take my babes to her on a Sunday evening as I used to do. And Louisa was there, and little Clara; and my little ones had no coats, neither could I afford to get them any. But my adopted mother would have me come to see her one evening when she had no company, and she brought a cloak from her stores. 'Your babes want warm coats,' she said, 'and this I can spare; let us set to work, and we will see if we cannot make two little coats out of this cloak this very evening.'

"We set to work, whilst one was reading aloud—it was like past hours renewed; our dear parent presided, and she decorated the capes and borders with narrow blue ribbons: and we had nearly concluded the work, when some one asked; 'What cloak was this, mamma?—Where did you get it? How long have you had it?'

"'It has lain by long,' she answered. 'I cannot precisely say where I got it; but the proud world has told me something since that I must not wear a cloak like this. And, perhaps, the world is right in this particular. But, oh! for that simplicity we once enjoyed; —yet it may not be.'

"Then said some of us," continued Maria, "This is the cloak, the very cloak, the dear old cloak, the lovely cloak! And then, Ma'am, how curious it was, to think that this cloak should have been taken care of, and laid by

for my poor little babes; and it looks so well, so handsome, with its little blue border.

"But that evening, Ma'am," continued Maria, "that was almost the last evening I spent with my adopted mother. As we had not met in this quiet way for some time, we had much discourse of days gone by--of happiness which is now as a dream. For although, (continued Maria), we are assured that blessings are still in store for us, yet they must be altogether different from those which are past. We talked of our walks, our school, and our happy Sundays; when after listening to the glorious descriptions of the New Jerusalem, and the heavenly Canaan—a peace not to be described would take possession of our hearts, and we would all unite in that beautiful hymn—

> 'Distinct, and more distinct, and clear,
> Canaan's purple hills appear;
> And Zion's everlasting light
> Bursts all glorious on our sight.'"

It was sweet and affecting to hear Maria discourse to this effect. I trusted that Mr. and Mrs. Seward had not lost their labour with this young woman, although they had not lifted her above a cottage. And when I arose to take my leave, I laid a piece of gold on the table, thanking her for one of the sweetest hours I had spent for a very long time.

ANNIE BROWNE.

—oo—

Little Annie Browne was an only child, that is, her parents had no little boys at all, and only this one little girl; so you may be sure they loved this little girl very much indeed, and were all the time doing every thing to make her happy. Now I wonder if the dear little boy, or girl, who is reading this, can guess the means that Annie's father and mother took to make her happy.

Did they give her plenty of candy? No. Did they buy new play things for her every day? No. Did they take her very often to the Museum, or the Circus, or the Menagerie? No. This was not the way. I will tell you what they did; and I will tell you what Annie did, for one whole day, when she was about five years old, and that will give you a very good idea of the way they took to make her *good*, for then she was *sure* to be *happy*.

Well, one day Annie woke up very early in the morning, and, sitting up in her little bed which was close by the side of her Mamma's, she first rubbed her eyes, and then she looked all round the room, and saw a narrow streak of bright light on the wall. It was made by the sun shining through a crack in the shutter.

She began to sing softly this little song, that she had learned in school—

"What is it shines so very bright,
That quick dispels the dusky night ?
It is the sun, the sun,
Shedding around its cheerful light—
It is the sun, the sun."

Presently she looked round again, and saw her Mamma sleeping. She said in a soft little voice—"Mamma, Mamma, good morning, dear Mamma."

But her Mamma did not wake up. Then she crept over her to where her Papa was sleeping, and said—

"Papa, Papa, good morning, dear Papa."

But her Papa was too fast asleep to hear her. So she gave her Papa a little kiss on the end of his nose, and laid gently down between them.

In a few minutes, her Papa woke up, and said—

"Why! what little monkey is this in the bed?" which made Annie laugh very much. She then jumped out of bed, and put on her stockings and shoes herself, as all little boys and girls of five years old ought, and put on her clothes; and her Mamma, who was now awake, fastened them, and brushed her hair nicely, and washed her face and hands. After that, she said some little prayers, that her Mamma had taught her—and then ran down stairs, singing as gay as a lark, and dancing as light as a fairy.

After breakfast, Her Mamma got her school basket, (it was a cunning little basket,) and put in it a nice slice of bread and butter, and a

peach, and gave her a little bouquet of flowers to present to her teacher, whom little Annie loved dearly; and then her Mamma said, "Good bye, my darling," and Annie made her such a funny little curtsey, that she nearly tumbled over, and off she went to school with her Papa, who always saw her safe to the door.

Annie staid in school from nine o'clock until two. When she came home, her mother kissed her, and said—

"Have you been a good little girl in school to-day?"

"I think I have," said Annie; "Miss Harriet said that I was very diligent. What is diligent, Mamma?"

"To be diligent, my dear," answered her Mamma, "means to study your lesson all the time, without thinking of play, or any thing else, until you know it perfectly."

Annie said she was glad it meant such good things, and added, "Mamma, will you play 'I am a lady, coming to see you,' if you are not too busy?"

Her Mamma said she would. So Annie got her two dollys. One was a very pretty wax doll, with eyes that could open and shut. Her name was Emily; and the other was not wax but was larger. Her name was Augusta. She put on their hats and visits, and dressed herself in an old hat, with a green veil, and came near her Mamma, and made believe ring a bell, and said, "Ting a ling, ting a ling."

"Come in," said her Mamma.

Little Annie shook hands with her Mamma, and said, "How do you do Mrs. Browne?"

"Thank you, I am very well," said her

Mamma. "Take a seat, my dear Mrs. Frisby," that was Annie's name. "How are your children, Mrs. Frisby?"

"Oh! they are very sick," answered Annie; "one has the toothache, and the other has a little square hole in the back of her head, and it has made her head ache."

"Dear me, Mrs. Frisby," said her Mamma, "I am very sorry to hear it; you ought to go to the doctor with them."

Then Annie pretended to go to the doctor, and she took out of the drawer a little bit of sugar for medicine. She eat the medicine up herself, and said that it had done the dollys a great deal of good. In this pleasant way she amused herself until dinner time.

After dinner, her Papa and Mamma took her to Union Park, as it was pleasant; and there Annie jumped the rope with other little girls, or rolled a great hoop. She could roll the hoop very well.

Then she came skipping home, and had her tea; and after that her mother undressed her and heard her say her prayers, and kissed her for good night; and she jumped into bed, and in a moment was fast asleep. Don't you think Annie was a happy little girl? *I* think she was, for all her days passed in this pleasant manner. Some other time, perhaps, I will tell you more about little Annie Browne.

THE THREE BEARS.

LAURA and Fanny came one Saturday to spend the day with their Grandmamma. The moment they got into the house, little Laura ran to the book-case, to get a book to read; and Fanny asked for a needle and thread, and began to sew up a corner of the red cloth that was on the work-table.

Both these little girls were very fond of coming to see their Grandmamma, and she liked to have them come; for they gave her no trouble, and were very good and polite to every body.

Pretty soon Laura said, "Oh, dear! this is not a very interesting book, I am tired of reading it. I wonder where Aunt Fanny is. I believe I will go find her, and get her to tell me a story."

"A story!" said Fanny, "then I will go too." So she stuck her needle in her work, and they both ran out of the room.

They found their Aunt Fanny in the next room. She was sitting at her writing-desk, writing a letter.

"Oh, Auntie!" said Laura, coming up to the desk, "how much you have written; I am

sure you must be tired. Suppose you stop a little while, and rest yourself by telling us a story."

Her Aunt laughed, and said that was a very clever way of getting a story out of her, and asked the children what kind of a story they would like.

"I like a fairy tale," said little Fanny.

"And I like a ghost story," said Laura. "I think a ghost story is great fun, for I never believe a word of it."

"But you know I never tell ghost stories," replied her Aunt; "they are very silly things. I will tell you a story about three bears, which I read a long while ago. I do not remember it exactly, but I think I can make it do for you."

"Oh, yes! yes!" cried the children, "three bears!—that will be funny I know."

So their kind Aunt laid down her pen, and took little Fanny upon her lap, and told Laura to get a bench and sit by her side, and commenced her story.*

"Once upon a time there were three bears, that lived in a thick wood. One was a GREAT BIG BEAR, one a MIDDLING SIZED BEAR, and the third a *tiny bit of a bear*. The GREAT BIG BEAR lived in a GREAT BIG HOUSE; the MIDDLING SIZED BEAR lived in a MIDDLING SIZED HOUSE; and the *tiny bit of a bear* lived in

* This story should be read aloud. When the reader comes to the "great big bear," or to any thing he says or does, he (the reader) should read in a loud gruff voice; all about the "middling sized bear," in the ordinary voice; and all about the "tiny bit of a bear," in a high small squeaking voice.

a little speck of a house; and the houses were close together.

"Well, one day the bears went off to take a walk; and, while they were gone, a little ragged dirty old woman came through the wood. All at once, she spied the three houses; so she hobbled up to see who lived in them. First she went into the great big bear's house, and there she saw a great big bowl of porridge on the table. She tasted it. It was a great deal too hot. Then she came out of the house, and went into the middling sized bear's house, and there she saw a middling sized bowl of porridge. So she tasted it, and found it was a little too hot. She came out, and went into the tiny bit of a bear's house, and there she saw a little mite of a bowl of porridge. She tasted it, and it was just right, so the little ragged dirty old woman eat it all up. Then she went up stairs and laid down on the bit of a bear's bed, and was very soon fast asleep.

"By and by, the bears came home. The great big bear went into his house, and looked on the table. Then he said, in a tremendous voice—

"'Somebody has been at my bowl of porridge.'

"The middling sized bear went into his house, and, looking on the table, he said in a middling sized voice—

"'Somebody has been at my bowl of porridge.'

"Then the tiny bit of a bear went into his house, and, looking on the table, he said, in a little squeaking voice—

"'Somebody has been at my bowl of porridge, and eat it all up.'

"Oh, how angry he was. He went to the door, and called the other bears, and they all three went up stairs together, to search for the thief; and there they found the thief, in the shape of the little ragged dirty old woman that was fast asleep, and snoring like a trumpeter, on the bed. The great big bear went and stood at the head of the bed; the middling sized bear went and stood at the middle of the bed; and the tiny bit of a bear went and stood at the foot of the bed. Then the great big bear said—

"'Who is this in the bed?'

"The middling sized bear said—

"'It looks like a dirty old woman.'

"'And there's some of my porridge sticking on her lips,' said the tiny bit of a bear. As he said this, the old woman awoke, and opened her eyes.

"When she saw the bears, she was frightened almost out of her wits; so she started up, and jumped right out of the window, that was close to the bed, and ran off with all her might and main. Then the bears tumbled down stairs head over heels, pell-mell, and rushed out of the house, to catch her and eat her up; but they were so fat, they could not run as fast as she could; so the little ragged dirty old woman got off, all out of breath, but safe and sound."

"What did the tiny bit of a bear do for his dinner?" asked Fanny.

"He had to suck his paws, I suppose,"

answered her aunt; "but I do not know, for that was the end of the story."

The children had laughed very much at this story, because their aunt had told it to them in a way that made it very amusing. They thanked her, and said they hoped she would tell it to them again, the next Saturday. She promised she would, and told them to run off, as she wanted to finish her letter. So the little girls went off, and spent the rest of the day in various ways, taking care not to be troublesome or noisy; and when they went home, they told their mother, as well as they could, the funny story of the three bears.

ABOUT MINDING QUICKLY.

—oo—

Emma was one day sitting by the fire, on a little bench. She was trying to cut a mouse out of a piece of paper. She had a pair of scissors, with round ends. Her mother had given her these scissors for her own, because they were safer for her to use than scissors with pointed ends.

Presently her mother said, "Come here to me, Emma."

"Wait a minute, mother," said Emma.

"Do you know," said her mother, "that it was naughty for you to say that?"

"Why, you can wait a *little* minute," said Emma; "I am very busy. Don't you see that I am making a mouse?"

"Emma," replied her mother, "do you know that I ought to punish you because you do not mind?"

"I am coming right away," cried Emma, dropping her scissors and her paper mouse, and running up to her mother.

Her mother took her up on her lap, and said, "My little girl, this will *never* do. You must learn to come at once when you are called; you *must* obey quickly. If you continue in this very naughty habit of not minding until

you are told to do a thing two or three times, you will grow up a very disagreeable girl, and nobody will love you."

Emma looked up mournfully into her mother's face, and said, "Mother, I will try to do better."

She was a good-tempered child, and was seldom cross or sullen; but she had this one bad habit, and it was a very bad habit indeed—she waited to be told twice, and sometimes oftener, and many times she made her kind mother very unhappy.

For a few days after this Emma remembered what her mother had said to her, and always came the first time she was called. She came presently, for it is very important to mind presently, and did every thing she was told to do right away, and her mother loved her dearly, and hoped she was quite cured of her naughty ways.

But I am very sorry to have to say that a time came when Emma entirely forgot her promise. You shall hear how it happened.

One morning Emma's mother said to her, "Emma, it is time for you to get up, and put on your stockings and shoes."

Emma did not move. She lay with her eyes wide open, watching a fly on the wall, that was scrubbing his thin wings with his hind legs.

"Did you hear me, Emma? Put on your stockings and shoes."

Emma got up very slowly. She put one foot out of bed, and then looked again at the fly. This time he was scrubbing his face with his fore legs. So she sat there, and said to herself, "I wonder how that funny little fly can stay

upon the wall. I can't walk up the wall as the fly can. What a little round black head he has got."

"Emma!" said her mother, and this time she spoke in a very severe tone.

Emma started, and put her other foot out of bed, and took up one of her stockings.

Her mother got out of her bed, which was close to Emma's crib, and began to dress herself. When she was dressed, she looked round and saw Emma, with one stocking half on, and the other rolled up in a little ball, which she was throwing up in the air.

Her mother was angry with her. She went up to her, and took her stocking away from her, and told her to get into bed again, for if she would not dress herself when her mother bid her, she would be punished by being made to lie in bed. She shut up the window shutters, and took all the books out of the room, and telling Emma not to get up until she gave her leave, she went down stairs to breakfast.

Now children don't like to be put to bed in the daytime; at least I have never heard of any one that did; and Emma was soon tired of lying in bed, in a dark room, wide awake, with nothing to do, and no pleasant thoughts, for she could think of nothing but her naughty behaviour. So this was a very severe punishment, and she began to cry, and wish she had minded quickly, and she would have been down stairs, where the sun was shining brightly into the windows. She would have been sitting in her chair, with her dear little kitten in her lap, and a nice bowl of bread and milk for her breakfast. She always saved a little milk in

the bottom of the bowl for Daisy her kitten, and after she had done, she would give the rest to Daisy. So you see that Emma lost a great deal by not minding quickly and what was worse than all, she had displeased her mother and made her unhappy.

Oh, how weary she got. How she longed to get up. She did not dare to disobey her mother, and she lay in her crib a long, long time, and thought she never could be so naughty again.

At last her mother came into the room. She opened the shutters, and said, "Emma, you may get up and put on your stockings and shoes."

Emma jumped up quickly, and had them on in two minutes, and then she took off her night-gown and put on her day clothes, which hung over the back of the chair by her crib, and went to her mother to have them fastened, for she could not fasten them herself. Her mother fastened her clothes, and then taking her little girl's hand, she said, "My dear little Emma, you have made me feel very unhappy this morning. I do not like to punish you, but it is my duty to try to cure you of all your naughty ways, and it is your duty to try to overcome them. If you do not, some day you may meet with some terrible misfortune, like that which happened to a boy I used to know when I was young. I will tell it to you. This boy, like you, grieved his parents often, by not minding quickly; and he suffered for it in a way that he will never forget, as long as he lives. He was one day standing on the steps of the house where he lived, and I was

standing at the window of the house opposite, where I lived. I was watching some men that were on the top of this boy's house, fixing the roof. The roof was covered with loose pieces of slate, and nails and rubbish.

"Presently one of the men on the roof cried out, 'Go in, little boy; go in.' But the boy was looking at a kite that some other boys had in the street, and he did not choose to go in. The man thought that he had minded what he told him, and without looking again, he tumbled down a great heap of slates and rubbish. The house was quite high, and a large and sharp piece of slate came down very swiftly, and struck the boy on the side of his head, and cut off nearly the whole of his ear. In a moment the blood poured down his neck and over his clothes, and I thought he would bleed to death. Oh Emma! what a dreadful punishment for not minding quickly!

"For a long time he went about with his head bound up, and when he got well again the side of his face looked very bad indeed, for where his ear had been there was a dreadful scar that never went away. Now he is a man, and he often tells children how he got this dreadful scar, and all because he did not mind quickly."

The tears had rolled down Emma's face, while her mother was telling her this story. When she had finished it, Emma put her arms around her mother's neck, and told her that indeed she would try to obey at once, and be a good little girl, so that her dear mother would never be unhappy about her again.

Her mother kissed her, and took her down

stairs, and gave her some breakfast, and all this day, and ever after, she did try very hard to be good. Whenever she felt herself going about any thing slowly, the thought of the poor boy who had lost his ear would come into her mind, and she would jump at once, when her mother called her, and do whatever she wanted her to do, pleasantly and quickly.

THE MAY QUEEN.

——oo——

"Mother," said Frederick Stanley, "is it not wrong to treat servants unkindly?"

"What makes you ask that question?" answered his mother. "What can have put that into your head?"

"Nothing—I don't know," replied he, looking at his sister Kate, who was sitting near him working a pair of slippers.

Mrs. Stanley saw that there was something on their minds, so she laid down her book, and tried to draw it out. She began:

"What is the reason that your little Scottish friend Jessie has not been here lately? I thought that you, Kate, could not take a walk, with any pleasure, without her, and Fred has become quite a beau, since her arrival. I am afraid you have done or said something to offend her."

"Fred," said Kate,—who was two years younger than her brother, and much smaller, and had a great respect for him,—"Fred, do you tell mother."

Fred gave his pantaloons a little pull, shook the hair away from his face, half laughed, and

did not speak a word; but Kate, like a real little woman, could not keep the secret a moment longer. "We have had a quarrel, mother, that's all!"

"'A quarrel! that's all!'" said her mother. "That's a great deal too much; but what *did* you find to quarrel about?"

"Why, mother," answered Fred, getting over his bashfulness, now that the secret was out, "it was all about treating those who were beneath us with kindness."

"Well done!" exclaimed his mother. "Let us hear what you had to say upon the subject."

"I said it was a shame to abuse those who were poorer than we are; that in God's eyes all were equal. I could not bear to hear Jessie say that she had her own servant at home, and when this servant did any thing to displease her she would pinch and slap her. I told her she was a downright wicked girl."

"Oh, shocking! shocking!" said Mrs. Stanley. "And my sweet little Kate, did you too stand up for kindness to servants?"

"I did all I could, dear mother," she replied, "but Fred did the most."

"Well, tell me, what else did you say."

"I told her," said Fred, hesitating a little, that here in our own country, we said 'if you please' and 'thank you,' when a servant did any thing for us, and that she had better go back to Scotland, and not stay another day in a place where she was deprived of the pleasure of pinching people."

"Oh, Frederick! Frederick! how could a boy

of your politeness be so rude to a young lady? That was a great mistake."

Frederick looked mortified, and Kate hung her head. "But what happened after that?" asked Mrs. Stanley

"Oh, she was so angry that she went away, and we have not seen her since. I am very sorry; but it can't be helped now."

"No," said Kate, "we can't help it now."

"But, my dear children," said their mother, "I think you owe Jessie an apology."

"I have no objections," said Fred, after reflecting a moment, "if you think I have been so very impolite; but it will do no good."

"Well," said Mrs. Stanley, "it must be done. Perhaps I can assist you in making up the quarrel. Next Thursday, you know, is the first of May. You shall have a little party, and Jessie shall be Queen of May. That will be certain to please her."

"Jessie! Queen!" exclaimed Kate. "You can't, mother, you can't. Jessie will not come; I am sure she will not come. I do not believe she will ever speak to us again."

"I tell you she will come," said her mother; "and she will be Queen. I will manage it for you."

"Ah, well, mother," said Fred, looking at his sister, "you don't know Jessie as well as we do. She won't forgive us so easily."

Company now came in, and the children went to their studies. In the afternoon Mrs. Stanley sent a polite invitation to Jessie and her parents to pass the next Thursday evening at her house, and as they were sitting at the tea-table, the answer was returned.

"There," said Mrs. Stanley, "one point is gained; they will all come,"

"They may come," said Frederick, "but she won't be civil to us, I know.

The next day was spent in preparing the crown, throne, and flowers, &c., and Frederick set himself to work to learn by heart some lines his mother had written for the occasion.

Thursday evening arrived, and the children, though afraid of Jessie's cold looks, were in good spirits. Kate came into the parlour, and found Fred before a large glass, making his speech, and practising the most graceful bows and gestures.

"Goodness!" she exclaimed, "how light and beautiful the room looks! Oh, Fred, I hope we shall have a pleasant time."

The arrival of the company now interrupted them, and when nearly all had come, Mrs. Stanley told her plan with regard to Jessie; and this important matter was just settled, when that young lady and her parents entered.

Jessie not knowing the honour awaiting her, was very stiff and grave in her salutations. Her large dark eyes were turned away from Fred and Kate, yet an expression about her pretty mouth seemed to say,

"I am not so very angry as you think."

"She *looks* like a Queen, don't she?" whispered Fred to his sister.

"She is stiff enough, at any rate," said Kate.

"I wonder who she will choose for her King?" said Fred.

"I am sure I don't know," answered Kate, looking round. "I suppose the biggest boy."

"Dear me!" said Fred, "I forget that I

must go out until it is time for the Address," and he left the room, to await his mother's signal.

Refreshments were now handed round the room, and many a sly glance was cast upon the unconscious Jessie, who was still looking very grave, and almost cross, till, at a hint from his mother, Fred made his appearance, and with blushing face, but firm voice, pronounced the following lines:

"O! valiant knights, and ladies fair!
I'm very glad to see you here;
Your happy looks and eyes so bright,
Have quite inspired me to-night.
Though I'm unused to courtly ways,
My choice from you will meet with praise.
Our Western land, so brave and free,
Where waves the flag of liberty,
Can yet, while all our hearts approve,
The British stranger fondly love.
(No looks of grave distrust are seen,)
Fair Jessie! I proclaim you Queen!
And kneeling lowly at your feet,
To be your knight I do entreat.
Now deign to say what happy one
Amongst us all shall share your throne."

Fred rose from his knees, and awaited Jessie's reply.

Her anger was all gone, but she was so surprised that she looked down and did not say a word.

"Well," thought Fred, "I knew she would act so. I suppose every body is laughing at me."

"Jessie," said her mother, "speak quickly. Whom will you have for King?"

Jessie blushed, and smiled, and whispered in a soft little voice, "Frederick."

Astonished and delighted by this kindness, Fred again kneeled down, then rising he took her little white hand, and led her in triumph, followed by all the company, to the next room, where a splendid throne had been erected. A beautiful crown of flowers was placed on Jessie's head, and gave new beauty to her soft and curling brown hair. Frederick also had a handsome crown. Sceptres were placed in their hands, and then they arranged their court. Kate was made a Duchess, at which she grew quite dignified; there were plenty of Earls and Countesses, and the sweet little maids of honour and the pages stood behind the throne.

They then formed a procession, to return to the parlour, and in an instant a march burst forth from a band of music which had been concealed for the purpose.

At this unexpected event, his Majesty jumped so high that his crown tumbled off, and the Queen was in such a delightful agitation that she could not confine her steps to a walk, and the King, and the Queen, and the Duchess, and all the maids of honour and pages, ran helter-skelter, as fast as they could, and took places for dancing.

Never were merrier hearts or brighter eyes than now leaped and shone in that little party. The Queen was the gayest of all, and the King was nearly out of his wits with joy, to find himself and Jessie once more friends. Little Kate got so tired of being a Duchess that she skipped about like a little fairy, and all the lords and ladies, and maids of honour and pages, were so merry and so full of innocent fun, that they looked a great deal more like

little republicans. And so the happy evening concluded, to the satisfaction of all.

The next morning, Mrs. Stanley asked her children if they had had a pleasant party.

"Oh, yes!" they both answered; "it was perfectly delightful; and Jessie was as pleasant as she could be, and seemed to have forgotten all about the quarrel."

"She behaved very well indeed," said Mrs. Stanley, and I think after this you will not allow any thing to disturb your friendship. Jessie is a good, warm-hearted girl, but she has been allowed to indulge sometimes in fits of ill-temper, and has not been taught to be good to those who wait upon her. If you were to talk to her with kindness and forbearance, you would convince her that this was wrong. Her own heart would soon tell her so. You must not expect her to do better all at once; but no doubt, with a little patience on your part, and a little trying on hers, she will find her happiness much increased by being kind to those beneath her, and in time she will feel that in this country all are equals, though for one night she *was* a May Queen."

THE APPLE DUMPLING.

——oo——

A long time ago, there was a little old woman that lived away off in the woods. She lived all by herself, in a little cottage with only two rooms in it, and she made her living by knitting blue woollen stockings, and selling them.

One morning the old woman brushed up the hearth all clean, and put every thing in order; then she went to the pantry and took out a great black pot, and filled it full of water, and hung it over the fire, and then she sat down in her arm-chair by the fire. She took her spectacles out of her pocket and put them on her nose, and began to knit on a great blue woollen stocking.

Pretty soon she said to herself, "I wonder what I shall have for dinner? I believe I will make an apple dumpling." So she put her knitting down, and took her spectacles off from her nose, and put them in her pocket, and getting out of her arm-chair, she went to the cupboard and got three nice rosy-cheeked apples. Then she went to the knife-box and got a knife, and then she took a yellow dish from the dresser, and sat down in her arm-chair, and began to pare the apples.

After she had pared the apples, she cut each one into four quarters. Then she got up again and set the dish of apples on the table, and went to the cupboard, and got some flour and a lump of butter. Then she took a pitcher, and went out of doors to a little spring of water close by, and filled the pitcher with clear, cold water. So she mixed up the flour and butter, and made them into a nice paste with the water; and then she went behind the door and took down a rolling-pin that was hung up by a string, and rolled out the paste, and put the apples inside, and covered the apples all up with the paste. "That looks nice," said the old woman. So she tied up the dumpling in a nice clean cloth, and put it into the great black pot that was over the fire.

After she had brushed up the hearth again, and put all the things she had used away, she sat down in her arm-chair by the fire, and took her spectacles out of her pocket and put them on her nose, and began to knit on the big blue woollen stocking.

She knit eight times round the stocking, and then she said to herself, "I wonder if the dumpling is done?" So she laid down her knitting, and took a steel fork from the mantelpiece, and lifted the lid of the pot and looked in.

As she was looking in, her spectacles tumbled off her nose, and fell into the pot.

"Oh dear! Oh dear!—that's bad, that's bad," said the old woman.

She got the tongs, and fished up her spectacles, and wiped them with the corner of her apron, and put them on her nose again, and

then she stuck the fork into the apple dumpling.

The apples were hard. "No, no, no," she said, "it is not done yet."

So she put on the lid of the pot, and laid the fork on the mantelpiece, and sat down in her arm-chair, and began to knit again on the big blue woollen stocking.

She knit six times round the stocking, and then she said to herself—"I wonder if the dumpling is done?"

So she put her knitting down, and took the fork from the mantelpiece, and lifted the lid of the pot, and looked in

As she was looking in, her spectacles tumbled off her nose, and fell into the pot.

"Oh dear! Oh dear!—that's bad, that's bad," said the old woman.

She got the tongs and fished up her spectacles, and wiped them with the corner of her apron, and put them on her nose again, and took the fork and stuck it into the dumpling. The apples were just beginning to get soft.

"No, no, no; it is not quite done yet," said the old woman.

So she put on the lid of the pot, and laid the fork on the mantelpiece, and sat down in her arm-chair, and began to knit again on the big blue woollen stocking.

She knit twice round the stocking, and then she said to herself—"I wonder if the dumpling is done?"

So she laid down her knitting, and took the fork from the mantelpiece, and lifted the lid of the pot, and looked in.

As she was looking in, her spectacles tumbled off of her nose, and fell into the pot.

"Oh dear! Oh dear!—that's bad, that's bad," said the old woman.

She got the tongs and fished up her spectacles, and wiped them with the corner of her apron, and put them on her nose again, and took the fork and stuck it into the dumpling.

The apples were quite soft. "Yes, yes, yes; the dumpling is done," said the old woman.

So she took the dumpling out of the pot, and untied the cloth, and turned it into a yellow dish, and set it upon the table.

Then she went to the cupboard and got a plate, and then to the knife-box and got a knife; then she took the fork from the mantelpiece, and drew her arm-chair close up to the table, and sat down in it, and cut off a piece of dumpling, and put it on her plate.

It was very hot, and it smoked a great deal so the old woman began to blow it. She blew very hard. As she was blowing, her spectacles tumbled off her nose, and fell into the dumpling

"Oh dear! Oh dear!—that's bad, that's bad," said the old woman.

She took her spectacles out of her plate, and wiped them with the corner of her apron, and said to herself—"I must get a new nose. My nose is so little, that my spectacles will not stick on my nose."

So she put her spectacles into her pocket, and began to eat the dumpling.

It was quite cool now. So the old woman ate it all up, and said it was very good indeed.

THE DENTIST.

—oo—

One day little Emily's grandma said to her—"My dear child, you must go with me to-day to the dentist's, and have some of these teeth pulled out. They are growing so fast and so crooked, that you have not room enough in your mouth for them all."

"Dear grandma," said the little girl, "will it hurt me *very* much?"

"Yes, my dear," replied her grandma, "it will hurt you a great deal, but you must try to bear the pain; it will not be long."

Poor little Emily sighed, and the tears stood in her eyes. She knew that her grandmother always told her the exact truth. She knew that she would suffer a great deal of pain, because her grandma had told her so.

It is always the best way to tell a little boy or girl the exact truth. If Emily's grandma had said that it would not hurt her to have her teeth pulled out, it would have been very wrong, and Emily would not have believed her another time, when she was to have any thing done to her.

This little girl had no mother. Her mother was dead, and her grandma took care of her, and was very kind to her, and Emily loved her dearly, and so she made up her mind to go and

have her teeth out, without any trouble, because her grandma was in bad health, and she knew that if she cried and made a great fuss about it it would trouble her, and perhaps make her sick.

Now was not this thoughtful and good, in a little girl, only seven years old? I hope all the little boys and girls that read this will try to be as good.

After dinner, Emily and her grandma put on their things, and went to the dentist's house. The little girl trembled when the door was opened, but she walked in without saying a word.

They went into the parlour, for there were some persons up stairs in the dentist's room, and they had to wait.

"Grandma," said Emily, "may I look at the books on the table? It will keep me from thinking about my teeth."

Her grandma said she might, and the little girl was soon quite interested in looking at the pictures in the books, and showing them to her grandma.

In a little while the servant came to tell her she could go up stairs. Her heart beat fast, but she went up to her grandmother, and said, "Dear grandma, you are not well; you look quite pale to-day. Do not go with me; I will go alone, and I promise you I will be a brave little girl."

She kissed her grandma, and ran out of the room.

When she entered the room up stairs, she saw two ladies there. She stopped; but the dentist said, "Come in, my little girl, do not be afraid, I will be as gentle as I can."

The ladies saw that she was alone, so one of them went up to her and took her hand. She was an old lady, and wore spectacles, and she looked very kind and good. So the dear little girl let the dentist lift her into the great chair, and take off her hat, and the old lady kept hold of her hand, and said, "It will be over in a minute, my dear child," and then she pressed her little hand so kindly, that Emily felt quite comforted.

The other lady was a young lady, and she too felt sorry that Emily was to suffer. She wanted to smooth her hair, and give her a kiss; but she thought that the little girl might be afraid of so many strangers, so she sit down very quietly.

When the dentist had looked into Emily's mouth, he saw that four teeth must come out. So he got the instrument, and held her hand tight with his arm.

Emily turned pale, but she kept quite still, and did not cry or scream; and the dentist pulled out the four teeth, one after the other, without a sound from her lips.

When they were all out, some large tears came from her eyes, and rolled down her cheeks; but she only said "Thank you," to the lady that held her hand; and, putting her handkerchief to her mouth, she ran down stairs.

"My darling child," said her grandma, "how well you have behaved; I did not hear the least noise."

"No, grandma," replied Emily, "I tried very hard not to scream; I was determined to be quite still; and a good old lady like you,

grandma, held my hand, which was a great comfort. But, oh! grandma, it *did* hurt me most terribly."

"My dear child, I know it did," said her grandma; "you are the best little girl in the world, and a happiness and a treasure to me."

After Emily had gone, the ladies who had witnessed her good conduct, and admired her courage, asked her name and where she lived, and one of them, the young lady, sent her a pretty little gold ring with a blue stone in it, and a little note containing these words:

"For the dear little girl, who had the courage to bear a great pain nobly."

Emily was very much pleased with this little present; it was so unexpected. She could not find out who had sent it to her.

I hope all the little boys and girls will read this story with attention, and when they go to the dentist's they will think of Emily, and try to imitate her good conduct.

THE WIG.

——oo——

JULIA and her brother James were very early, one cold winter morning, sitting in the basement. They were not wicked children, but they were very thoughtless, and sometimes they did a great deal of mischief.

I am afraid they were doing mischief now, for Julia was sitting by the window, cutting up mamma's apron to make a dress for her doll; and James was kneeling on the rug, pulling pieces of worsted out of it and throwing them into the fire, and seemed very much amused as he watched them rolling about and curling up with the heat.

While they were thus employed, two children passed the window.

"Only look, brother," said Julia, "at these poor children. How cold they must be! see, the little boy has no hat on, and his toes are coming out of his shoes, and the little girl's frock is all ragged."

"Let us call them in," said James, "and they can warm themselves by the fire."

As James said this, he tapped on the window, and the little children came to the basement door. James ran and opened the door, and said, "Come in, poor children, and warm yourselves." He placed his own and his sister's

little chair for them by the fire, and then Julia and he went into a corner of the room to consult together what they should give them to make them warm.

Now the father of these children had had the misfortune to lose his hair, and he was obliged to wear a wig. Every night, when he went to bed, he used to take off his wig, and hang it upon a nail in his dressing-room, and put on a white night-cap with a long tassel at the end of it.

The morning I am telling about, he was not yet up, as it was very early; and the wig was hanging on the nail, as I have told you.

James looked at the poor little boy. He saw that his ears were very red with the cold, and he said to his sister, "I will go up stairs, and find something to put on his head."

So he ran up stairs very fast, and went into his father's dressing-room and looked all round. Presently he saw the wig hanging on the nail. "Oh!" said he to himself, "that is just the thing. It will come all over the poor boy's ears, and keep them very warm indeed."

So this thoughtless little fellow climbed up on a chair, and pulled the wig off the nail, and then went into the closet and got a pair of new boots of his own; and running down as fast as he could, he pulled the wig over the poor boy's ears, and helped him on with the boots. They fitted exactly, for James and he were very nearly of the same size.

While he was doing this, Julia had dressed the little girl in a nice warm frock of her own, and also made her a present of her school muff, and the little beggar children went away, high-

ly delighted with their good fortune, and were out of sight long before any one had come into the room to prevent all this mischief.

When their father got up, he opened the door of his bed-room, which led into the dressing-room, and began to dress dimself. Presently he went to the side of the room where he had hung up his wig the night before. The nail was empty. There was no wig on it. He looked down on the carpet, and on all the chairs, and in all the drawers, but there was no wig to be found. He rang the bell, and said to the servant, "Do you know any think about my wig?"

But the servant said she had not been in the room. She did not know where it was.

Now only see, what trouble these children had made for their kind father; and how ashamed and frightened they were, when they saw him come into the basement room with his night-cap on, and their mother with him, looking very grave, for she was afraid that the children knew more about the wig than any body else.

"James," said his father, "do you know where my wig is?"

At first James was afraid to speak; but although these children were heedless, and fond of doing mischief, they were not liars. So James came close to his father, and said, "Dear Papa, I will tell you the truth. I am afraid I have been very naughty. I gave your wig to a poor boy who had no hat, and I gave him my new boots too, for his shoes were full of holes. I am very sorry, papa. Please to punish me, and forgive Julia."

"Why, what has Julia been doing?" said her mamma and papa at the same time.

"I gave the little girl my new frock, and my school muff," said Julia, "she looked so cold. Her little hands were nearly frozen."

'My dear children," said their father, "I do not blame you for wishing to be kind to the poor, but do you not see how wrong it is to be so thoughtless, and what trouble you give your mother and me by such conduct? If you do not think before you act, you will always be in mischief, and perhaps do a great deal of injury To make you remember this—you, Julia, must go to school for two weeks without a muff, and wear your old dress; and you, James, must have your old boots patched, and wear them instead of the new ones which you gave to the poor boy."

The children submitted to this punishment without a murmur; but they were dreadfully grieved when they saw the trouble they had made for their dear father, who could not leave the house, or attend to his business for two whole days, as it took all that time to have another wig made for him. They even could not laugh when the kitten climbed up the back of his chair, and tried to play with the tassel of his night-cap; and ever after, when they were going to do a thoughtless thing, they would recollect their father's wig in time to stop; and at last they got to be as careful and thoughtful, as they were before heedless and mischievous.

THE BOY'S SCHOOL.

——oo——

Not very long ago, Mr. Harrison kept a boarding-school for little boys, in a delightful village in Connecticut. He took twenty boys to educate, and he was so kind, and had such a pleasant way of teaching, that the boys were happier with him than they would have been at home.

When the boys came in the spring, Mr. Harrison gave to each of them a little plot of ground for a garden; and the little fellows were very busy during play-hours, in preparing and arranging their gardens. They had permission to go to the gardener and get just what seeds they wanted; so some of the boys planted melons and cucumbers, and some pumpkins and radishes, and two of them made an elegant flower-garden. They put their ground together, and erected a little hill in the centre, with a path all round it, and all the borders they planted with lady-slippers, and coxcombs, and mignonette, and sweet alysum, and many other pretty flowers; and when the flowers came out their garden gave quite a brilliant appearance to the place.

The boys had also a very large play-ground, and in it, their kind teacher had had a number

of gymnastic fixtures put up, for their healthy exercise and amusement. There was a very high pole, with four strong ropes fastened to the top of it, and an iron ring at the ends of the ropes. The boys would take hold of the rings, and run round as fast as they could; then lifting their feet off the ground, away they would fly in the air, round and round like so many little crazy monkeys. There was one little chap that could climb up one of the ropes like a cat, and hang upon the top of the pole.

Then they had swinging bars, and jumping bars, with a spring-board to jump from, and wooden horses, and a climbing pole, and several other things; but what was better than all, they had a funny little ragged pony, and a short-legged, long-eared donkey, for their especial use, and many were the fine rides they had on their backs.

Sometimes, to be sure, the pony had a fashion of dancing a slow jig on his hind legs, with his fore feet in the air; but the boys were used to that, and stuck on like wax, until the dance was finished; then the pony would trot off very peaceably.

The donkey, too, had a way of putting his nose to the ground, and pitching his rider, head over heels, on the grass. But the boys were used to that too, and did not mind it in the least. They would jump up and shake themselves, and try again, and by dint of poking and punching the sides of the sulky little animal, he would after a while make up his mind to go. When he had once done *that*, it was all right. You would think he was the most amiable donkey in the world. The

pony's name was Napoleon, and the boys called the donkey "Old Pudding-head."

Twice a week, during the summer, Mr. Harrison took the boys to bathe in a fine pond, where such as could would swim, and the rest would tumble about in the water; and altogether, he was so kind to them that the boys thought there never was a better teacher, or such a famous boarding-school.

I have not yet told you that they learned any thing. I suppose you all think that playing was the principal thing they went to that school for. But if you do, you make a great mistake, for the greater part of every day was spent in the school-room.

Mr. Harrison made school-time very pleasant. He seldom had to punish a boy for bad conduct or neglect in getting his lessons. He always encouraged them to ask questions about their studies, and told them never to learn any thing by rote, like a parrot, but to come to him when they did not understand a lesson; and he always made it so clear that it was a pleasure to learn. Sometimes a boy would ask a foolish question, which would make the rest laugh; but then Mr. Harrison would say it was better to be laughed at for trying to learn, than to grow up a dunce.

In this way the boys would improve so much both in mind and body, that their parents left them with Mr. Harrison as long as he could keep them; and both the boys and their parents were very sorry when the time came for them to leave, for Mr. Harrison would not take any boy after he was fourteen years of age.

One afternoon, after school, the boys were all busy weeding in their gardens, when one of them suddenly cried out, "Phil, do you know how long it is to the Fourth of July?"

"To be sure I do," answered Philip; "it is just four weeks and four days."

"So it is, I declare," said Thomas, the first boy who had spoken. "Boys, I'll tell you what we will do. Let us all write to our parents, for an immense lot of fireworks; then, we will club together, and keep all, except the crackers, for a grand display of fireworks, in the evening."

"Oh yes, yes," cried all the boys, "that is an excellent idea."

"I will ask Mr. Harrison," said Phil, "to help us fix the wheels and so forth, for all I ever fixed myself, stuck fast, and would not go round at all."

"I mean to write for lots of Roman candles," said Frank, "they look so beautiful going up. They look like planets with wings."

"*I* will go largely into the snakes and grasshoppers," said another boy; "it is such fun to see the boys cutting round to get out of the way."

"We'll make some wooden pistols, to put the crackers in," said another boy.

"Yes, and I will send for a little brass cannon that my uncle Major Brown gave me," said another.

Just then the bell rang for tea, and the boys, putting their little rakes and hoes into their tool-house, ran in to wash their faces and hands and brush their hair. Then they took off their overalls or coarse pantaloons, which they wore

when at work in the garden, and hung them up in the play-room. They had a nice large play-room for playing when the weather was unpleasant.

It was astonishing what large quantities of bread and butter, and apple-sauce, these boys consumed for their supper, for working out of doors in the fresh country air, is sure to make people hungry, and boys especially are always ready for eating. After supper Mr. Harrison made a prayer, while all the boys knelt at their chairs around the table. Then they were permitted to play out of doors again until the sunset. Phil and Frank allowed themselves to be harnessed to a hand-wagon, and galloped off at full speed, with two of the smaller boys in it. The rest had a game at leap-frog, and Mr. Harrison and his family sat in the porch watching and admiring the gorgeous tints lent to the clouds by the rays of the setting sun, and sometimes laughing heartily at the capers of the boys.

At length the sun sank beneath the horizon, and Mr. Harrison said, "Come in, boys." He never had to speak more than once, for the boys were so well governed that they found it to their advantage and happiness to obey directly. So they came in as quietly as they could, and went into the study, where Mr. Harrison soon joined them, and read aloud an interesting book of travels for an hour. Then they went up stairs to bed.

One evening, not long after this, the boys were all together in the sitting-room. Philip was reading a book in which was an anecdote about a bad boy who had frightened another,

by coming into his room at night with his face apparently in a blaze, and looking, as the terrified child thought like a flaming dragon. All at once Phil shut the book, and said, "I say fellows, I will show you a funny thing, if you will put out the light, and it will be useful to you too. But first, let me read this story to you, and then we will try the game, and none of you little chaps will be frightened, because you will know what it is."

So saying, he read the story, which interested the boys very much indeed, and made them all eager for Philip's experiment.

Phil took a box of locofoco matches from the mantelpiece, and gave some to each of the boys but suddenly he cried, "Wait a moment: I will be back before you can say Jack Robinson," and ran out of the room.

He went out to ask Mr. Harrison's permission to try this experiment. Mr. Harrison said, "I am glad, my dear boy, you have come first to me; I believe I can always trust you. You may try your plan, and I will go with you and join in your amusement."

The boys were glad to see their teacher. He often helped them in their plays; and they were never afraid to frolic and laugh before him.

So Phil blew out the light, and then told the boys to take a match, and wet it on the tip of the tongue, and rub it on the the sides of their faces, and they would soon have a pair of fiery whiskers apiece, without its burning them in the least.

In a moment all the boys had flaming whiskers, and streaks of flame all over their faces.

Peals of laughter resounded from all sides. Such a troop of little blazing imps were never seen before. Some had noses on fire, some ears; some made fiery circles round their eyes, and some rubbed their fingers with the matches—always taking care to wet them first—and ran after the rest.

Only one person was frightened; and that was because she had not been let into the secret. This was a servant girl, who opened the door, and seeing a room full of dark figures, with faces on fire, dancing, and laughing, and capering about, she ran, screaming, up stairs, crying murder! fire! help! with all her might, which made the boys laugh till they were nearly suffocated. But Phil ran after her and with much difficulty persuaded her that they were really human beings, and good friends of hers.

After they had danced about for some time, Mr. Harrison advised them to go and wash their faces, and said that they had better not play this game again, as some accident might occur: a match might get lighted and set fire to their clothes. He said he had been willing to let them try it once, for then they would not be frightened if any wicked or thoughtless person should play a trick of this kind upon them. So the boys put up the matches, and went off to bed full of the fun they had had, and saying, that if they saw a person with his nose on fire, coming into their rooms at night, they would take hold of it, and give it a good pinching.

During this time each of the boys had written home for fireworks; and for two or three days before the glorious Fourth, all kinds of

boxes, directed to the different boys, had been left at Mr. Harrison's house, and safely locked up by him, until the right time.

At last the day came. The boys tumbled out of bed in the greatest hurry, dressed, and went out on the lawn, where they gave nine hearty cheers; three for the day, three for Mr. Harrison, and three for fun. After that they all ran into the play-room, where they found the boxes, which had been put there the night before.

Never were boxes opened so quickly. They tore off the tops, and for some moments nothing was heard on all sides but, "Only look here," and "Just see *here;* "Fellows, here is my cannon;" "Here are lots of Roman candles," &c.

They had crackers enough between them all to keep them busy the whole day, and they soon got to work at them, and such a popping and cracking began, as frightened all the cats and dogs about the house into the woods.

It was fortunate that the house was situated on a hill, away from any other; so Mr. Harrison let them make as much noise as they pleased, without fear of disturbing any neighbours.

Presently the bell rang for prayers, and directly after that they had breakfast; but the nice hasty-pudding and molasses were not so much in favour as usual, for the boys were so full of the Fourth of July, that they had no room for pudding.

Nearly all the fireworks were piled up on a seat against the wall in the play-room. The boys were firing their crackers from their wooden pistols, at some distance from the house.

For some time every thing went on well. Mr. Harrison had strictly forbidden them to have any fire in or near the play-room, and they were careful to obey him. But, alas! I must tell you what happened through the thoughtlessness of one of the boys. He was the youngest and smallest of them all. He had fired off the crackers he had taken out, and he ran into the play-room to get more. He held in his hand a piece of punk. All boys know that this is what they use to light their fireworks, as it burns very slowly, and lasts very long. The punk which the little fellow held was burning. He had forgotten to lay it down. He went to the seat where the fireworks were, and began to pull them about to find his crackers.

As he was leaning over, the punk slipped from his fingers, and fell into the midst of the combustibles.

The little fellow was so terribly frightened at this, that he rushed out of the room, without trying to pick it up.

In a moment the fireworks all began to go off together. Pop! crack! fizz! bang! whizz! went the elegant wheels and the crackers, the grasshoppers, the Roman candles and the snakes, while the smoke rushed through the house.

Mr. Harrison ran out of his room where he was reading, and saw, instantly, that the house was in great danger of burning up. The boys heard the noise, and came flying back to the play-room, to save what they could; but it was impossible to enter. The room was black

with smoke, and they looked on dismayed, as they heard the popping and banging of their precious fireworks, while "Who did it?" "Who did it?" was asked on all sides.

Mr. Harrison instantly shut all the doors leading to the play-room, and, quicker than I can tell you, he got some pails of water, and threw them into the room. After some effort, he succeeded in quenching the fire, and ending this display of fireworks, which was a very different one from what had been intended.

But what a sight presented itself! There lay the blackened remnants of the wheels and Roman candles, and a large hole was bnrned in the side of the room. The overalls of the boys, which hung just above, were burned, some one leg, some both; and the room looked like desolation.

After the fright, and hurry, and confusion were over, Mr. Harrison called all the boys into the study. He looked very much offended, indeed; and asked in a stern voice, "Which boy went into the play-room with fire?"

The poor little fellow who had done the mischief was crying bitterly. It was very easy to see that he was the guilty one, for the rest looked grave, but not confused.

"Come to me, Edwin," said Mr. Harrison, "and tell me if you have disobeyed me; don't be afraid to speak the truth."

"I did not mean to do it," sobbed the little boy. "I forgot to leave my punk outside, and I dropped it by accident. I am very, very sorry, Mr. Harrison. I am afraid all the boys will hate me, because I have spoiled their sport.

I hope you will forgive me, sir." And here his tears and sobs redoubled.

"Edwin," said his kind teacher, "do you not know that my house might have been burned to the ground by your carelessness?—and this night, which we expected to spend so joyfully, we might have been without a roof to cover us. I must punish you to make you remember this accident, which your thoughtless disobedience has occasioned. You must remain in the study until dinner-time. The rest of the boys may go out."

When the boys were out on the lawn again they got together in a knot, to talk about the accident. Some were very angry with Edwin, and said Mr. Harrison ought to have given him a tremendous flogging; but others were more generous. They were just as sorry for the loss of their fireworks; but, when they looked towards the house, and saw little Edwin gazing mournfully at them from the study window, and wiping away the tears that fell from his eyes, they were more sorry for him, and wished that he could be out among them. Still, they knew it was right that he should be punished.

"Come, fellows," said Phil, when they had been standing there talking some time,—"come, let us go and see if anything is left."

They all ran to the play-room, and some of the boys cried out to Edwin, "Don't cry, little fellow, we forgive you."

"Why here," shouted Phil—"here's a lot of Roman candles all safe and sound. Hurra!!"

"And here are six wheels in this corner," cried Thomas. "We are not so badly off, after all."

The boys at this good news began to rummage under the pile of ruins, and managed to collect quite a respectable quantity of fireworks. There were enough left to make a display with in the evening, though not near so splendid as they had intended.

"Hurra!" cried the boys, "we have plenty of Fourth of July left—we ain't dead yet."

"I have lots of crackers outside," said Phil; "but we won't fire them off now. They will do for the small fellows to-night. Let us go to the stable, and pay our respects to Napoleon, and Old Pudding-head. They will think themselves quite neglected on this glorious occasion."

So they sallied off to the stable, and saddled the pony and the donkey, and led them out to the play-ground, where Napoleon treated them in turn to a very fine dance on his hind legs, and Old Pudding-head, not to be behindhand in politeness, gave all the little boys a somerset over his nose. They had a first-rate frolic, and did not think once of the lost fireworks.

After dinner, and a fine dinner they had of chickens, and goose pie, and custard, Mr. Harrison took the boys (little Edwin too) down into the village, where a band of musicians were playing and parading through the street. Every little while they would stop playing and hurra! The boys always hurraed when the band did, for boys in general are not slow about making a noise. So they made all the noise they possibly could, and came back to tea, each one so hoarse, that Mrs. Harrison asked them if they had bull-frogs in their throats.

At last the evening came, and a still and beautiful evening it was. The stars peeped out, one by one, and the moon staid in—that is, she did not make her appearance until very late. They could not have had a finer night for the grand display.

The family were all assembled on the lawn, and Mr. Harrison fixed the wheels so nicely, that they whizzed round in the most astonishing manner. The Roman candles went up beautifully, and the grasshoppers and snakes sent the little fellows laughing and scampering in all directions.

The hurraing was tremendous, and the shouts of laughter were tremendous too.

Altogether they had a very nice time, and went off to bed tired, it is true, but highly pleased with the day's enjoyment—all except little Elwin. He sighed many times, and could hardly get to sleep; but his carelessness was a good lesson to him, for it afterwards made him the most careful boy in the school.

After the glorious Fourth, the boys settled down into their usual employments. Their gardens were carefully tended, and many a fine cucumber and bunch of radishes were presented with pride and pleasure to Mrs. Harrison. They ate pumpkin pie made with their own pumpkins, and thought them the most delicious pumpkins that ever grew; and their melons were the sweetest melons they ever tasted in all their lives.

They were very attentive in school also, and at the end of the term, when the boys were preparing to go home for the vacation, they

all said, it was the pleasantest term they had ever spent together. They parted with their kind teacher with many thanks for his kindness, and hopes that after vacation, all would meet together again, and be happy and glad to come.

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY.

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Mr. and Mrs. Percy had seven grandchildren, all very pretty and very good. These children did not all have the same father and mother, that is, Mr. and Mrs. Percy's eldest son had three children, whose names were Mary, and Carry, and Thomas; and one of their daughters was married, and had three children; their names were Willy, and Bella, and Fanny; and their youngest son was married and had one child. Her name was Sarah. She was the youngest of the children, and they all loved her very much, and her grandma made a great pet of her.

The children and their parents had been invited to eat a Christmas dinner with their grandma, and they had been promised a little dance in the evening. Even little Sarah was to go, and stay to the Ball, as she called it. They were glad; for they liked to go to their dear grandma's very much.

At last Christmas came. It was a bright, frosty day; the icicles that hung from the iron railing sparkled as the sun shone upon them,

and the little boys in the street made sliding ponds of the gutters, and did not mind a bit when they came down on their backs, but jumped up and tried it again; and a great many people were hurrying along with large turkeys to cook for their Christmas dinner, and every body looked very happy indeed.

After these children, about whom I am telling you, came back from church, they were dressed very nicely, and although they lived in three different houses, they all got to their grandma's very nearly at the same time. The first thing they did was to run up to their grandma, and wish her a merry Christmas, and kiss her, and say that they hoped she felt quite well. Then they did the same to their grandpa and aunties, for they had two dear, kind aunts who lived with their grandparents. Then they all hugged and kissed each other and jumped about so much, that some kissed noses and some kissed chins, and little Sarah was almost crazy with delight, for she had never been to so large a party before.

"Grandma," said Willy, "I hung up my stocking last night, and what do you think I got in it?"

His grandma guessed that he got a birch rod.

"No," said Willy, laughing, "I got a doughnut in the shape of a monkey with a long tail. I eat the monkey for my breakfast, and it was very good indeed."

The children all laughed at this, and Bella, Willy's sister, who was the oldest of all the children, said she thought Willy had a monkey *look* about him. So he went by the name of the monkey-eater for the rest of the day.

Soon the bell rang for dinner, and they all went down stairs; for the children and grown people were to dine together. It was now quite dark, and the gas chandelier that hung over the table was lighted, the curtains were drawn close, the fire burnt brightly, and the table-cloth was so white and fine that it looked like satin.

The happy party sat down at a large round table, and the children's eyes looked so bright and their cheeks so rosy, that it was the pleasantest sight in the world to see. Little Sarah could not help having a great many little laughs all to herself. She could not keep them in. She was only four years old, so you may suppose she could not look very grave and stiff on such a delightful occasion.

When Willy saw his little cousin Sarah trying to hide her sparkling eyes, and her funny little laugh behind her mother's arm, he felt just as if somebody was tickling him. So he pinched his lips together very tight indeed, and cast his eyes up to the ceiling, and tried to look as grave as a judge. But it would not do; he burst out into such a fit of laughing, that every body else laughed too, and it was a long time before they could get their faces straight enough to eat their dinner.

Would you like to know what they had for dinner? Well, I will tell you. After their grandpa had asked a blessing, they had some very nice soup. The children did not care for soup. Then they had a fish stuffed with all sorts of things, and stewed, and the grown people said the fish was very nice; but the little ones did not care for that either. Then

they had some roast beef and a boiled turkey with oysters. The children all took turkey; Willy asked for a drum-stick, and his cousin Mary said he wanted it to beat the monkey he eat in the morning. Bella choose a merry-thought; little Sarah liked a hug-me-fast; Carry took a wishing bone; Thomas said he would have the other drum-stick to help to beat the monkey, and Fanny thanked her grandma for a wing, so that she could fly away when the beating of the monkey took place.

But this was not half the good things, for they afterwards had some delicious game, such as partridges, and woodcocks, and some fried oysters. All this pleased the grown people most. The children saved their appetites for the dessert. Well, after this the cloth was taken off, and under that was another table-cloth just as white and fine as the first.

Then came something that was quite astonishing. What do you think it was? It was a great plum-pudding all on fire! it blazed away terribly, and Willy thought they had better send for the fire-egines to put it out; but it was blown out very easily, and the children each had a very small piece, because it was too rich to eat much of, and their parents did not wish them to get sick.

After that there came ice-cream, and jellies, and sweetmeats, that were perfectly delicious; and then the other white cloth was taken off, and under that was a beautiful red one. Then the servants put on the table what the children liked best of all, and that was a dish of fine mottoes, and oranges and grapes and other nice fine fruits.

The children sent the mottoes to each other, and had a great deal of sport. Some one sent Willy this:

"Oh William, William, 'tis quite plain to see
That all your life, you will a monkey be."

He thought his cousin Mary had sent it, because he saw that she was trying very hard to look grave—so he sent this to her:

"Dear Mary, you are too severe,
You are too bad, I do declare;
Your motto has upset me quite,
I shan't get over it to-night."

Mary laughed when she read it, and said she had been just as cruel to Thomas, for she had sent him this—

"The rose is red, the violet blue,
The grass is green, and so are you."

They had a good laugh at Thomas, but as he laughed as hard as any one, it did no harm. Little Sarah had a great many mottoes. Her mamma read them to her, and it pleased her very much. She said it was a very nice play, but she was tired with sitting such a long time at table, so her mother let her slip down from her chair.

Very soon all the rest got up, and went up stairs in the parlour. But what was that in the middle of the room? It seemed to be a large table covered all over with a cloth. What could it be? Willy said, "Grandma, that table looks as if something was on it;" and little Sarah

said, "Grandma, I guess Santa Claus has been here."

"Yes, dear children," said their grandma, "Santa Claus has been here, and this time he looked very much like your grandpa. He will be up soon, and then we will see what is on the table."

Oh how the children did wish to peep! They could not look at any thing else; they danced and jumped round the table, and were in a great hurry for their grandpa. In a few minutes he came into the room, and all the children ran up to him and said, "Dear grandpa, do let us see what you have got on the table."

He smiled, and went to the table and took the cloth off. The children were so astonished that they could not say a single word; the table was covered with beautiful things, and under it was something that looked like a little red-brick house.

"Well," said their kind grandpa, "my dear children, you did not think you were going to be treated to such a fine show as this; you may go up to the table, and see if you can find out who they are for." The children gathered round the table, and Willy took from the top a fine brig with all her sails set, and colours flying. His eyes sparkled when he saw written on a slip of paper which lay on the desk, these words, "For my dear Willy." The children clapped their hands, and nothing was heard, but "How beautiful!" "What a fine ship!" "It is a brig of war," said Willy: "only look at the little brass guns on her deck! thank you,

dear grandpa; it will shoot all the enemies of America! What is the name of my ship?"

"Her name is painted on her stern," said his grandpa. Willy looked and saw that she was called the "Louisa." He blushed, and looked very funny, and the other children laughed, for Willy knew a very pretty little girl, whose name was Louisa, and he liked her very much; and that was what made them laugh when they heard the name.

After they had all admired the brig, they went back to the table, and there were two beautiful books, full of engravings or pictures, one for Bella and one for Mary; and next to these was a large wax doll for Carry and another for Fanny. Carry's doll was dressed in blue satin, with a white satin hat and a lace veil, and Fanny's doll was dressed in pink satin with a black velvet hat and feathers—their eyes opened and shut, and they had beautiful faces.

How delighted the little girls were! They hugged their dolls to their little breasts, and then ran to hug and kiss their grandpa. Carry said, "My dolly's name shall be Rose;" and Fanny said, "My dolly's name shall be Christmas, because I got her on Christmas day."

Well, I must hurry and tell you the rest, for I am afraid my story is getting too long. Thomas found for him a splendid menagerie, and all the animals made noises like real animals. There were roaring lions, and yelling tigers, and laughing hyenas, and braying asses, and chattering monkeys, and growling bears, and many other wild beasts. Oh how pleased Thomas was, and all the children!

Little Sarah did nothing but jump up and down and say, "So many things! So many things! I never saw so many things!"

But who was to have the little house under the table, I wonder? There was a little piece of paper sticking out of the chimney, and Sarah pulled it out and carried it to her grandpa. He took her up in his arms and read it to her. What was written on it was, "A baby-house for my little darling Sarah."

"Why, I guess this must be for you," said he.

"Yes, it is for me," said the little girl; "my name is Sarah, and it must be for me."

Her grandpa put her down, and led her to the table. He drew the little house out, and opened it. The whole front of the house opened, and there, inside, were two rooms; one was a parlour, and one a bedroom. The children all cried out, "What a fine baby-house! Look at the centre-table, and the red velvet chairs; and only see the elegant curtains! Oh dear! how beautiful it is!"

Little Sarah did not say a word. She stood before the baby-house with her hands stretched out, and jumped up and down, her eyes shining like diamonds. She was too much pleased to speak. She looked so funny jumpiug up and down all the time, that she made Willy laugh again, and then every body laughed.

At last Sarah said, "There is a young lady sitting in the chair with a red sash on. I think she wants to come out."

"Well, you may take her out," said her grandpa. So Sarah took the young lady out,

and then took up the chairs and sofa, one by one, and smoothed the velvet, and looked at the little clock on the mantel-piece, and opened the little drawers of the bureau; and then putting them down, she began to jump again.

There was never such a happy party before. The children hardly wished to dance, they were so busy looking at their presents, but after a little while they had a very nice dance. One of their aunts played for them; she played so well, and kept such nice time, that it was quite a pleasure to hear her.

It was now quite late, and little Sarah had fallen fast asleep on the sofa, with the young lady out of the baby-house clasped tight to her little bosom. So they wrapped her up, doll and all, in a great shawl, and the rest put on their nice warm coats and cloaks; and after a great deal of hugging and kissing, they got into the carriages with their parents, and went home happy and delighted.

Thus ended this joyful Christmas day.

THE SPIDER.

—oo—

Little Harry was afraid of spiders. He would scream and run to get into his mother's lap, if he saw the least spider in the world.

The reason he was so afraid was, that his nurse, when he was a very little fellow, had told him very often, that if he did not go to sleep, she would catch a spider and put it on him. Now this was very wicked indeed in the nurse, and when his mother found out that she had been telling Harry this, she was very angry, and sent her directly out of the house.

Harry's mother had tried very hard to cure him of his foolish fears about spiders; but he did not get over them, and they often made him miserable.

One day Harry went with his mother to visit a friend. This lady had a little daughter about two years old, a very pretty and good-humored child. She was sitting on the carpet when Harry came in, playing with a little woolly dog and making it bark. She knew Harry, for he had been there before with his mother. So she held the dog out to him and said, "Tum here, Henny." She could not speak plain, and what she said sounded very funny.

Harry sat down on the carpet by her, and took the dog, and made it say, "bow wow wow!"

Little Mary laughed and clapped her hands, and said, "Do it aden, Henny."

So Harry pressed the spring again, and made the dog say, "bow wow wow," when just as he was going to give it back to little Mary, she stooped down and cried, "Look, look, Henny, what a pretty little 'pider, only see the little 'pider."

Harry threw down the dog and began to scream with all his might. He ran to his mother and hid his face on her shoulder, and cried, "Take it away! Oh take it away!"

All this time little Mary had been looking at him with surprise. She did not cry, for she was not afraid of the poor spider. It was of the kind that children call a 'daddy long-legs,' and Mary thought it was very funny to see it straddling over the carpet, trying to get away as fast as it could.

"Oh Harry! for shame," said his mother; "why, which is the biggest—the spider or you; Only see—little Mary is laughing at you."

Henry raised his head from his mother's shoulder, and looked at Mary. He stopped crying, and began to feel ashamed. He saw the spider crawling over little Mary's frock, and she sat quite still, and let it go just where it wanted to go. His mother said to him, "Go, Harry, and count the long legs of the spider, and see if you can find his mouth—it cannot hurt you."

But Harry trembled, and said he did not want to go near it, he would not touch it for

any thing. His mother was not angry with him, for she knew he had tried to overcome his fears, and he could not help them; she knew it was the fault of the wicked nurse, who had made him suffer all this pain. So she took his hand and wiped the tears from his cheeks, and went home with him.

As Harry grew older, he was not so much afraid of spiders, but he never could bear to see one near him; even when he was a great boy of fourteen years, he would get away from a spider as fast as he could. He knew it was foolish, and tried to overcome his fears, but he never got entirely over them.

Parents cannot be too watchful or careful about their nurses, for sometimes a thoughtless or wicked nurse, will do worse things to a child than Harry's nurse did to him. If parents would forbid nurses when they are first employed from saying or doing the least thing to frighten their children, many a poor little victim would be saved a great deal of present and future misery.

THE TRUANT.

——oo——

JOHNNY thought he knew better than his mother what was best for boys. Johnny's mother thought it was not safe for boys to play about the streets. Johnny thought that was all nonsense. As Johnny could not get leave to play in the street, he thought he would play there without leave. One fine day, he snatched his cap slily, when his mother was busy, and stepped out at the front door, and whipped round the corner in less time than I have taken to tell you about it. Wasn't it delightful? What was the use of being a boy, if he must be tied to his mother's apron-string, like a whimpering cry-baby of a girl? Other boys played in the street, plenty of them. True, they did not always have whole rims to their hats, and their jackets were buttonless, and their knees were through their trowsers; but what of that? They were "first-rate fellows to play." True, they used bad words now and then, but he, Johnny, was not obliged to do so. His mother was a very nice mother, and he loved her; but his mother never was a boy, and how could she tell what boys wanted? He did not mean to disobey her—oh, no; he only meant—

pshaw! what was the use of wasting time thinking about that. Halloo! there's an organ-grinder with a monkey; and there's a man with three little fat pups to sell, black pups, with white paws, and curly drooping ears, and tails so short that they can't even wag them; and there's a shop-window with marbles and fire-crackers—what a pity he had no pence! And there's a boy stealing molasses out of a hole in a hogshead by sucking it through a straw; and there are two boys at a fruit-stall—one talks to the old woman who keeps it, while the other slily pockets an apple, without paying for it; and there's a boy sprawling in the middle of the street, who tried to steal a ride on an omnibus step, and got a smart cut on his temple for his pains; and there—yes—there's Tom Thumb's carriage on a high cart. What funny little ponies. How Johnny wishes he were General Tom Thumb, instead of plain Johnny Scott. Silly boy, as if it were not better to be a fine full-grown man, able to fight for his country if she needed him, as Johnny will be some day, than to be passed round the country for a little hop o' my thumb puppet show? And yonder is a great stone building. What can it be? Perhaps a bank. No, it is too big for that. What a great heavy door it has. It is not a meeting-house. No—and Johnny drew nearer. Now the big gate opens, and a crowd of people gather outside. Johnny goes a little nearer; nearer, nearer still; now he sees a cart stop before the door. 'Tis not a baker's cart, nor a grocer's cart, nor a milk-man's cart—but never mind the cart.

See! inside the gate across that fenced yard,

come a dozen or more boys, about Johnny's age, and a man with them. Who are they? What are they there for? Why is that man with them? And where are they going? Johnny edges a little nearer. Now he has one foot inside the gate, for the little boys are passing through, and he wants to look at them. Now they have all passed through. Where are they going in that cart?

"Come along, you little scapegrace. None of your lagging behind," says the man who was with the boys, seizing Johnny roughly by the shoulder. "Come along, don't you pull away from me. Come, it is no use crying for your mother—you should have thought of her before you stole those peaches. Where are you going? You know well enough that the Judge has sent the whole gang of you to Blackwell's Island, and there's the city cart to take you there; and I am the man to put you into it, and see that you go. None of your kicking, now. Come along, or it will be the worse for you." And he seized Johnny, and lifting him by his trowsers into the cart as easily as you would handle a kitten, he locked him in with the other boys, and told the driver to go ahead. "Stop there," said a man in the street to the driver; "stop there. That little fellow don't belong to those bad boys. His name is little Johnny Scott. His mother is a neighbour of mine, a very nice woman too. I know her very well. He was only looking round the gate of 'The Tombs' to see what was going on. Let him out, I say. I will see him safe home. Oh, Johnny, Johnny, this comes of running about the street. You might have been carried to

Blackwell's Island, had it not been for me. What do you suppose your mother would say to see you here?"

Sure enough, that's what Johnny thought, as he clambered out of the prison-wagon and wiped his eyes on his jacket sleeve. Sure enough, how could he ever look her in the face?

But his mother did not punish him. No, she thought rightly that he had punished himself enough; and so he had. It was a good lesson to him, and for a long time he was ashamed to go into the street, for fear some boy who was looking on that day, and had seen him pushed into the prison-cart, would halloo after him, "There goes a Blackwell Island boy."

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