ENID'S VICTORY

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"WHAT IS THE MEANING OF ALL THIS NOISE——" *Page 96.*

ENID'S VICTORY.

BY

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CONTENTS.

ENID'S VICTORY.

CHAPTER I.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

THE bright autumn afternoon was drawing towards its close when Miss Prescott, leaning upon the arm of her maid, walked slowly up the laurel-bordered drive that led to The Rookery.

"Perhaps, Prudence, it would have been better," said Miss Prescott, "if I had written to Mrs. Emerson to announce my coming. She may not like——"

Here she paused, as the sound of a young voice was heard calling out gaily, in tones sweet and clear and fresh as those of a lark, "Good-bye! good-bye! good-bye!"

"It must be the child," exclaimed Miss Prescott. "Listen"—raising her hand warningly.

Then the noise of a gate being opened and shut was heard, this was followed by light footsteps, and the next minute there appeared, from the narrow pathway to the right that led into the drive, a little girl of about ten years old, who held clasped in both hands a big nosegay composed principally of wild grasses and scarlet poppies. At sight of the child in her dark frock, white pinafore, and big sun-bonnet, from under which there escaped a perfect tangle of brown curls, Miss Prescott said in a low agitated tone, "Enid."

At the mention of her name the little girl turned a pair of soft smiling dark eyes upon the speaker, and answered, "Yes, I am Enid;" then paused, expecting the stranger to say something more. But, instead of doing this, the lady, who was tall, and whose face Enid could not see very clearly, as it was covered with a somewhat thick lace veil, stepped forward and gently pushed back the big sun-bonnet that Enid wore, thus disclosing to view the rosy young face beneath, and which at this unexpected action bore a look of extreme astonishment.

"So you are Enid!" she said softly.

"Yes," replied the child, "I am Enid," won-

dering how there could be any doubt upon such a well-known fact as this, and wishing that the curious stranger would not look at her so earnestly. "Have you come to see grandmamma?"

"Yes."

"She is at home," Enid hastened to assure her; "but grandpapa has gone down the fields. It was to him that I was calling out 'Good-bye.'"

As she spoke the child turned to lead the way to the house, but Miss Prescott laid a detaining hand upon her shoulder, and said—

"You love them, dear, and are happy with them?"

"Love grandpapa and grandmamma, do you mean?" she exclaimed, opening her eyes wide in surprise at being asked such an extraordinary question. "Of course I do!" she continued indignantly; "I love them with all my heart—with every single bit of it"—hot and resentful at the very idea of any one imagining for an instant that it could be otherwise.

Throwing back her veil, Miss Prescott bent down and kissed the young face, and asked, forgetful that to the child she was but a nameless stranger—

"Will you not try and love me too a little?"

The girl drew back, at a loss how to answer.

Her first impulse had been to refuse the request pointblank, but something in Miss Prescott's face checked the sharp "No" that had risen to her lips. As she hesitated how to reply, for to promise even to try and love a stranger who asked such peculiar questions was quite impossible, the maid, speaking for the first time, came to her rescue.

"Why, ma'am, how can the child make any such promise as that, when she has never set eyes upon you before to-day?"

The woman's words and tones, though abrupt, were not in any way disrespectful, and Enid gave her a grateful look, as her mistress answered—

"True, Prudence, true; I forgot that."

"She does not even know your name, Miss Prescott."

"Miss Prescott!" echoed Enid.

"Yes, dear, I am your aunt Agatha"—putting out her hand to the child as she spoke.

But Enid did not seem to notice it, as she drew back, and said softly to herself, "How surprised grandmamma will be!" Then, looking at her aunt quickly and suspiciously, asked—

"Why have you come?"

"To see you, dear, and take——"

Here Enid broke in passionately, "No; nobody

can take me from them ;" then turned and darted away up the drive, and in a minute was out of sight.

"She is the very image of her father," remarked Miss Prescott, who did not appear to be the least annoyed at the abrupt departure of her little niece. "And if you remember, Prudence," she continued, taking her maid's arm again, "Ralph had just the same impulsive way of doing things."

"Yes, ma'am, I recollect well enough," she answered, as they followed the child, though at a very much slower pace, to The Rookery, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Emerson, with whom little Enid Prescott lived.

The house was a long, low, two-storied building, with a background of tall trees, on whose branches the rooks congregated, and from which the house had gained its name. As Miss Prescott came in sight of it, a little old lady, with snow-white hair, came out of the front door and advanced a few steps down the gravel drive to meet and welcome her visitor; by her side, tightly clasping her left hand, was Enid. The brilliant poppies that had been gathered and arranged with such pride and pleasure, but a short half-hour before, were gone: they had been thrown carelessly upon the table as the child had rushed through the hall on her

way to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Emerson sat at work beside the window.

At Enid's sudden entrance she had looked up and asked with a smile, "What, now, little whirlwind?"

"Oh, granny," panted the child, flinging herself into the kindly arms where she felt so sure of finding a safe and loving shelter, "she has come—Aunt Agatha! but you won't let her take me away from you?"

"Hush, my birdie, hush!" she answered soothingly, and not understanding the cause of the girl's great excitement. "Try and be calm, and tell me quietly what you mean."

Enid strove to obey and explain, while still keeping close to the shelter of granny's arms, how she had met Miss Prescott and her maid in the drive, and had discovered, by the latter mentioning her mistress's name, who the stranger was that had asked her so many questions, and, among others, to try and love her a little.

"But I shan't, granny, not a bit," ended Enid, positively, "if she has come to take me away."

"That is not right, my child."

"But gran——"

"We will talk about that by-and-by, dear. Now we must go and welcome your aunt, or"—this with

a smile—"she will think us both sadly wanting in kindness and good manners."

Mrs. Emerson rose and put away her work, then held out her hand to the child, who seized it and pleaded—

"Don't let her take me away. I'll be good, really, if you only promise that."

"My Enid," said granny, gravely, "I would gladly do so if I could, but I cannot; so we must both try to be good, not merely for what we shall get in return, but because it is right."

Enid made no answer, and, after a short pause, Mrs. Emerson asked—

"Am I to go alone, dear?"

Slowly, reluctantly, there came, "I will go, and——"

"Yes, it is hard to make, but, once given, I am sure my little girl will strive to keep her promise."

"I will try and be good," said Enid, with a little sigh, and lifting her face for the kiss which was granny's sole reply; then together they left the drawing-room.

As they passed through the hall, Enid pointed to the poor neglected poppies that lay scattered over the table, and said, "I picked those for you."

"Thank you, dear; they are just what I wanted. But we must not forget to put them into water, or

they will die. See, they are already beginning to droop."

At the front door they paused for a moment, and Enid whispered eagerly, "There she is," adding, in a low tone of indignation, "Fancy, she actually asked if I loved you and grandpapa, and if I was happy here!"

"Oh, that was because she did not know us, dear."

Then Mrs. Emerson went forward and welcomed her unexpected visitor, in kindly terms, that found, alas, no echo in Enid's heart.

Not a smile came to the child's face. Not a word passed her lips while Miss Prescott explained and apologized for not having given any notice of her intended visit; indeed, she scarcely heard what was being said, so full was her mind of one idea, which was, "how to prevent Aunt Agatha taking her away from The Rookery:" for Enid felt quite certain that this was the object of Miss Prescott's visit, for had not granny often said that "some day" she would have to go and stay with her aunt Agatha and grandfather Prescott? And now it really appeared as if that day—that had always seemed to Enid very far away—had really come; and the young heart was full of sorrow at the thought of the parting that might be in store for

her, and the little brain was busy with all sorts of plans, as to how "Miss Prescott was to be persuaded to go away without her"—plans that only came to be dismissed by the remembrance of the promise given to granny "to try and be good."

Not until she was addressed by name did Enid attend to what was being said and done around her.

"Your aunt was asking if you were always so quiet and silent," explained Mrs. Emerson, in answer to the child's look of inquiry. "Now I want you to take Prudence to have some tea with Phœbe," she continued, as they all turned to go into the house, thus saving Enid from the necessity of giving any reply. "And tell them, dear, to bring some tea into the drawing-room also."

"Yes, granny."

"And then will you try and find grandpapa, and let him know that Miss Prescott is here?"

As Enid obeyed and led the way, followed by Prudence, to the back of the house, Miss Prescott made some remark about "settling things" that the child failed to hear distinctly. Stopping short in her walk, she turned and demanded of Prudence—

"What has she come to settle?"

"Your aunt will tell you that herself, Miss Enid."

"Don't you know?"

"Yes, I do know, but it's not my place to tell you."

At this answer Enid frowned and looked down; then, after a moment's thought, raised her eyes and said, with a reproachful glance—

"How would you like some one to come and take you away from your home and everybody?"

"Well, it does sound hard, put like that, but we all have to do things that we don't much care about at times. I would not fret over what has to be, Miss Enid. And your aunt is a good kind lady, as——"

But here Enid turned away with an impatient gesture, and walked quickly on, for she was not in the mood just then to listen to her aunt's praises.

When Mrs. Emerson's message had been delivered and Prudence handed over to the care of Phœbe, Enid started off in search of her grandfather with lagging steps and a heart full of conflicting feelings of anger, doubt, fear, and sorrow. The whole of the child's young life had been passed at The Rookery with the grandparents whom she so dearly loved, and who had filled for her the place of the father and mother whom she had lost when quite a tiny, too young even to realize her loss. The child had but very few

near relatives, both her parents having been only children: those nearest to her on her father's side were the aunt Agatha whose unexpected arrival had caused such dismay and astonishment; and her brother, Mr. Prescott, Enid's other grandfather. Of these, however, she had known nothing, except their names, until to-day; for never before had they taken any direct notice of the child, so it was not surprising that Enid should wonder "why Aunt Agatha had come." And with this wonder there mingled the fear, that was almost a certainty, how that this visit meant parting from home and all she loved.

"It's all very well," she told herself, "for granny to say that I ought to know them and to love them; but I don't and I won't, and I don't even want to," she exclaimed, with a little burst of wrath. "I think it horrid of her coming here when nobody asked her or wants to see her. What can I do to make her go away again? Perhaps if I walk very, very slowly, and don't go back for a long time, she will get tired of waiting." In this hope Enid slackened her already slow pace into the merest crawl. "I am afraid it won't be any good; but I'll try it, because I don't know what else to do." After a few minutes of this tardy mode of progress a loud cheery voice called out—

"Hulloa, little woman, have you gone to sleep?"

At this question Enid looked up, and saw Mr. Emerson, who had entered the field in which she was, by the gate at the farther end, and was coming to meet her with rapid strides.

"Oh, please don't walk so fast," she called back, eagerly waving her hands at the same time to keep him away. "Do try and be as slow as ever you can."

"Perhaps I had better stand still," he answered, laughing at the peculiar request, stopping in his walk. He watched Enid's slow pace for a few moments with a smile, then said, "I supposed, seeing you come back, that I had been sent for."

"So you have."

At this reply Mr. Emerson came forward quickly.

"But I don't want you to go back soon."

"Why, Enid, what is the meaning of all this? Who sent for me?"

"Granny."

"And you don't want to do what granny asks? Surely it can't be that, my bird," looking—for by this time they had met—gravely but kindly into the flushed downcast young face.

"Not that; but because Aunt Agatha is there."

"Who is there?"

"Aunt Agatha; and I thought that perhaps

if we didn't go back soon she might go away again."

"You inhospitable little woman! I am afraid Miss Prescott will think that we have taught our child very badly."

"She could not think that."

"It depends upon you, Enid, whether she thinks so or not," he answered, in a grave warning voice, as, taking her hand, he walked on quickly in the direction of the house.

"Depends upon me!" she exclaimed, with a startled look.

"Yes; upon your behaviour towards her and your grandfather."

'Oh, you won't let her take me away from you! Promise—promise!" she pleaded, looking up at him with beseeching eyes, which were very hard to resist.

"We must hope that they won't want to take you away from us altogether."

"But I don't want to go with them at all," she wailed out, in tones so loud and shrill that Mr. Emerson feared Miss Prescott would overhear the child's words, for by this they were near the house, so said quickly—

"Hush, Enid, hush! your aunt will hear you."

"I don't——" began Enid, but had not time

to finish her sentence; for Mrs. Emerson, at the sound of their voices, had opened the drawing-room window, and now called to them to enter by that way.

"Had you very far to go, dear, before you found him?" she asked, drawing Enid to her side.

"No; but"—here she lowered her voice—"I walked very slowly."

Granny understood quite well the meaning of the whispered words and sad looks, and, if the truth had been known, her old heart was fuller of pain than was Enid's young one, for she knew what the latter only feared was the reason of Miss Prescott's visit.

"Well, you are just in time for tea; Phœbe has only this minute brought it in," granny said cheerfully, avoiding all comment upon either Enid's answer or her dejected air. "Now I will pour it out, and you shall take a cup to your aunt."

Although she would gladly have escaped this duty, Enid never for a moment thought of disobeying granny, and at once went to her aunt and placed the cup of tea upon a small table by her side.

"She is our little maid-of-all-work, you see," said Mr. Emerson, jokingly, and stroking back the

brown curls that fell about Enid's face fondly as he spoke, for the sun-bonnet had been taken off when she came into the drawing-room.

"And I am always going to be your little maid —yours and granny's."

"Won't you be mine too, Enid?" asked Miss Prescott, kindly.

"Yes, while you are here. Granny likes me to wait on her visitors." And Enid smiled, quite proud of having shown Aunt Agatha in a polite way that she was not expected to remain, that she was a mere visitor in Enid's home; and she threw a swift glance at grandpapa, expecting to see reflected upon his face the same pleased smile that had come to her own. But instead of this, there was a look of grave warning and reproof that made her hang her head and feel ashamed and uncomfortable.

Miss Prescott had seen the look also, and said kindly—

"Enid naturally looks upon me as a stranger, for it is true that we have not seemed to care for her. But it was only seeming, dear; for I loved your poor father, my dear boy Ralph, and——" Here she broke down, and as she wiped away her tears there was a silence that was broken by Enid, who said softly—

"Don't cry any more, please Aunt Agatha. I am sorry that I was rude; but I was cross and unhappy because I thought that you——" Here came a little sob from the child, and Miss Prescott finished the sentence for her by exclaiming, in a glad, eager voice, "Didn't love you, dear," at the same time taking the little girl into her arms and kissing her fondly. "Was not that what you wanted to say, dear?"

"No, Aunt Agatha," came from Enid, slowly but clearly. "I meant that I thought you had come to take me away from here, from my home, and from them,"—with a little nod in the direction of her grandparents.

At the child's words there came a look of disappointment into Miss Prescott's face, but with it there mingled no shade of anger or annoyance, as Mrs. Emerson feared might be the case.

"We have always taught her to speak the truth, Miss Prescott, at whatever hazard to herself."

"For which I am indeed glad," was the warm and ready answer. "So, when Enid can tell me that she has a little love to spare for her old aunt, I shall know that it is truly given."

"I don't think that time will be long in coming," replied Mrs. Emerson with a smile.

"I should have been sadly disappointed in

Ralph's child if she had not felt sorrow at leaving those who——"

"Oh, then it is true!" broke in Enid; "you do want to take me away! But I won't go, I can't go. I can't leave them, we love one another so much."

CHAPTER II.

A LITTLE SOLDIER.

THERE are a great many things in this life that look at first as if they could not be done, and yet which, when Necessity says "Must" are found to be quite possible, as poor Enid was to discover; for Mr. and Mrs. Emerson, much as they felt at parting with their little granddaughter, the joy and darling of their old age, decided that it was right she should go; therefore there was nothing for the child to do but submit as cheerfully as she could.

Miss Prescott would have liked to return to London that same evening, but at Mrs. Emerson's earnest desire she consented to remain until the following morning; and as the time was so short, all the remainder of the day was spent in busy preparations for the journey on the morrow.

At last these were finished, and Enid had been

safely tucked up by Phœbe in her little white-curtained bed. But sleep was very far from the young eyes that night, and the child's gaze wandered slowly and sorrowfully round the dear familiar room, now wearing a somewhat forlorn look, for many of the little treasures that usually adorned it were packed safely away in the trunk that stood in the corner.

The girl had felt confused and bewildered all the evening at the suddenness of this change in her life, and could scarcely realize even yet that, ere many hours should have passed, she would have left her home and dear ones, and gone forth among strangers into a strange new life, that, Enid was quite sure, would be very very different from the only one she had ever known. But now, as her dark eyes, so full of sadness and trouble, rested upon the trunk so carefully packed by granny, the truth that she was really going away came before her so vividly, that, burying her face in the pillow, she sobbed out—

"How can they let me go? how can they?"

"It is very hard to do, darling," answered a loving voice beside her. Granny had come in just in time to hear Enid's words.

"Then why do it, granny? Grown-up people needn't do things that they don't like."

"Not even when it is right, Enid?"

"But why is it right to send me away?"

"We are not sending you away; but long ago, dear, when you were a wee baby, I promised that if ever your father's relations wished you to visit them, I would let you go; and now the time has come for me to fulfil my promise."

"But you are sorry, granny, aren't you?"

"More sorry than I can tell you, dear. We will be very lonely without our little birdie to cheer us. You won't add to our sorrow, Enid?"

"Me add to it?"—reproachfully.

"Yes, dear; for it would increase our sorrow very much if we thought that you were unhappy."

"How can I help being that?"

"Don't you know?"

The child, who was now lying encircled by granny's arms, here sat up, and, after an inquiring glance at the speaker, shook her head thoughtfully.

"Who is it that says He loves a cheerful giver?"

"God," was the softly whispered answer. "Yes, and that means we are not to give our services in a grudging spirit, but willingly and from the heart."

"Do you really mean," she asked in a wondering voice, "that I ought to be glad to leave you?"

"No, I don't think you could be glad to leave us, but that, as it is your duty to go, you should try and do it bravely and cheerfully."

There was silence for a few minutes after this, while Enid thought over what granny had said; then came, in a very puzzled tone—

"But why do they want me? They don't love me. And Phœbe says that he—Grandfather Prescott——"

"Never mind what Phœbe says. She does not know your grandfather."

"But do you think that he likes me?"

"Yes, dear, I do, or why should he wish to see you? And that Aunt Agatha does, we know."

Enid reluctantly admitted, "Perhaps she does; but——"

"But what"—as the child hesitated. "Cannot you tell me, dear?"

"I meant," she whispered, "that I don't want them to like me."

"Not want them to like you, Enid!" she repeated. "Why not?"

"Because then they would send me home to you again quickly."

"Is that right, darling?" No answer came to this, so granny continued: "I thought my little girl could not say 'Yes.' Listen, Enid: my wish

and hope is that they will love you very dearly, and that you will love them in the same way. Will you not try and fulfil this wish of mine?"

Enid hesitated; she did not want to give this promise, and, for the reason she had already confessed, had no desire to win the love of these unknown relations, so she looked up and down and round the room, anywhere and everywhere rather than into the face beside her, whose owner was patiently waiting for the answer that was being delayed so long. At last there came with an effort—

"I can't."

"Can't, or won't?"

"Oh, granny, not 'won't'!"

"Quite sure, Enid?"

Instead of a reply there came the wistful question, "Would it really make you happy?"

"To know that our child was doing her duty well and bravely, like a true little soldier of Christ, would make us very happy."

"More than having me with you?" she asked, in rather a wondering tone.

"Yes; even more than that, Enid. Would it not be a very selfish affection that thought more of its own pleasure than the good of the loved one?"

This was a view of the matter that had not

occurred to Enid before, and she pondered over it with a very troubled little face. Although the child's life had hitherto been a very happy one, full of sunshine and peace, she was not altogether unprepared to meet trouble and disappointment, for she had been taught from Whom to ask for strength to do rightly, and where to seek the armour without which no Christian soldier can fight successfully against wrong.

Gradually the young face brightened, and Enid was able to look into granny's face and say—"I can promise now. I'll try and make you happy. But if they don't love me?"

"Don't be afraid of that, my pet. Our little soldier must always remember that love wins love; and she knows, too, where to find the help that will insure her the victory over all things."

"I'm such a very little soldier," sighed the child. "Though I wouldn't mind that if you were with me."

"That cannot be, darling. And you will not be alone, Enid, neither day nor night; far better help than any granny can give you will be yours."

"And perhaps it won't be for very long," she remarked hopefully, after a short pause; for Enid had the happy disposition that is always more given to look at the bright than the dark side of

things. Already the shadow and trouble that had filled her heart since Aunt Agatha's arrival was passing away, and, as she nestled more closely in granny's embrace, she was able to talk quite hopefully of coming home. "I have things to do for both you and grandpapa. He said that it depends upon me—my behaviour—whether they think you have taught me well or not. Of course," she added hastily, "I know you have; but children don't always learn their lessons well, do they gran?"

"No, darling; some lessons take a long time, and are very hard to learn."

"I'm going to try and remember all yours, that's what I have to do for grandpapa and for you. I am to be a brave——"

"Not for me, Enid," corrected granny, "but for your Master and mine. If you serve Him well, be His brave little soldier, you will make the old folks at home happy indeed."

So, instead of tears, there were bright hopes; instead of murmurs, were brave resolves; and there was actually a smile upon the rosy lips when they murmured a sleepy "Good night" to granny.

It was not quite so easy to be cheerful the next morning, especially as the first sight that met Enid's eyes was the trunk granny had packed the

evening before, and neatly labelled with her name and the address of her grandfather's house in London. But Enid was determined to try and keep her promise, so resolutely turned her back to the particular corner in which the box stood; and, to do this all the time she was dressing, had to move about in such a peculiar crab-like manner that Phœbe, who came into the room, burst out laughing, and asked—

"Whatever are you going about backwards like that for, Miss Enid?"

"I don't want to see the trunk, Phœbe," she answered gravely. "It makes me feel—uncomfortable."

"Poor lamb! I'd have taken it out overnight, if I'd only thought you'd mind its being here."

"Who'll brush my hair for me, Phœbe?" she asked abruptly.

"Why, me, miss, to be sure; that's what I've come for."

"To-morrow, I meant,"—with a sigh this was said.

"Prudence, I expect, or maybe there is some one kept specially to see to you and the little boy that is stopping there."

"Oh—Garry; I forgot all about him. Did Prudence say what he is like? Is he nice?" she asked eagerly.

"She said that he was a quiet little boy, and would be glad of your company, for he's lonely-like by himself."

"He's not alone," corrected Enid; "he has got Aunt Agatha and Grandfather Prescott."

"But no young people companions of his own age, I meant," explained Phœbe.

"I have not any here, and I am not lonely. I am——" Here catching sight of Mr. Emerson in the garden, Enid jumped up from her chair, whisked her hair, that was being brushed, out of Phœbe's hands, and, flinging the window wide open, shouted, "Grandpapa, wait for me, please. I'm just coming down."

"I'll wait, my birdie," was the answer.

Quickly the window was shut to again, and, in a few minutes, sooner than Phœbe quite approved, though she had not the heart to say so or to thwart the child's wishes in any way that last morning, Enid had darted down the stairs and joined Mr. Emerson in the garden.

How swiftly those last few hours passed away! far too swiftly, was the thought in all their hearts; and it seemed to Enid as if she had not said and done one quarter of the things that she had intended when the carriage, in which was seated Aunt Agatha and Prudence, came to the door to carry her off to the station.

Until that moment the child had bravely kept her tears at bay; even though they would fill her eyes, she did not allow them to come any further: but now that the very last minute had arrived, Enid's strength forsook her, and she could do nothing but cry helplessly and hopelessly.

Aunt Agatha did not at first attempt to check the child's natural grief, for Prudence had whispered, "Let her cry, ma'am. It will do her good. She'll be better for it by-and-by."

Poor Miss Prescott, her own eyes were somewhat dim as she looked pitifully at the child beside her; and she cleared her throat once or twice in rather a tell-tale manner, then took Enid's hand in hers, patted it kindly, and quietly drew the little form closer to her, and began to wrap the warm rug more comfortably over her knees; but Enid, who was in that miserable mood that likes to be uncomfortable and cold and wretched, lifted her tear-stained face to her aunt's with the intention of refusing the proffered comfort, when something she saw there made her change the words into "Thank you."

Who can long resist kindly sympathy? Certainly Enid could not, so the tears began to flow more slowly, and she laid her head against Aunt Agatha's

shoulder and allowed her eyes to be dried without a word or murmur of protest.

As the journey would take some hours, Miss Prescott, when they reached the station, provided Enid with a book to amuse herself with in the train. Such a prettily bound one, and with so many pictures inside, that, as Enid turned over the leaves, a look of pleasure lighted up the tear-stained face; on seeing which Aunt Agatha nodded and smiled contentedly. Halfway on the journey a change had to be made at a big junction, where the little party, as they had some time to wait, partook of luncheon.

Although Enid felt quite sure that she would never be able to enjoy anything again, she managed to make a hearty meal; and, after that, to watch the new and busy scene around her with interest and amusement. Such lots of people were bustling about, such piles of luggage were being wheeled by the porters from one end of the platform to the other, that it appeared to the little quiet country maiden as if all the world were on the move. One group especially interested the child, for it reminded her of the talk she had had the night before with granny. This little group consisted of three persons only—two of whom were red-coated soldiers, the third being a woman dressed in the

deep mourning of a widow. Of the former, one was an old grey moustached veteran, the other was quite young, scarcely more than a youth, who, spite of his gay attire, looked very downcast and sad.

So interested was Enid in these people that she drew nearer and nearer to them, and was thus able to hear the elder man say to his young companion—

"Cheer up, my lad. Why, a fine soldier-lad like you should not be down-hearted at going to serve his Queen and country!"

"It's leaving the old mother alone."

"Not alone," corrected the woman. "Besides, my boy, it's your duty to go."

At this speech Enid gave such a great sigh of sympathy that the eyes of all three were turned upon her, and, meeting their gaze quite calmly, for Enid was not at all shy, she explained the sigh by saying—

"That is just what granny told me last night."

"I don't expect you've ever been much alone, missy," remarked the elder man, smiling at the little girl's grave and earnest looks.

"No; I've always had granny. But now I must go away," she added with a quivering lip; "and she says I must do my duty like a brave little soldier: for I am one, you know."

"A soldier, miss," repeated the man, looking somewhat puzzled at this assertion.

"I don't mean like my papa and you."

"Was he a soldier?"

'Yes. And I am one—a different one, though, from you."

Both men looked at the child curiously as the woman said, "I think the young lady means that she is a little soldier of Christ."

Enid nodded assent, and the woman continued, with a fond look at her son, "We are all His soldiers. Never forget that, Tom, dear lad."

"No, mother, I won't," he answered earnestly.

At that moment the train by which the two soldiers were going was signalled, and all was now bustle and confusion, so Miss Prescott, who had been watching Enid, now came forward to take her out of the crowd.

"Do stay, Aunt Agatha," pleaded the child. "I want to see them start. I'm sure one is her son, and that she is dreadfully sorry he is going away."

"We will wait a little way out of the crowd, then," answered Aunt Agatha.

As they stepped back the younger soldier turned and said, as he touched his cap respectfully to Enid—

"Good-bye, miss, and thank you for them words, reminding me of my duty." Before the child had time to answer he had gone back to his mother, and they heard him say, in a husky voice, "Time's up now, mother."

As the woman put her arms round her boy and kissed him good-bye, Enid turned away her eyes, feeling, child as she was, that this parting was too sad to be watched by any eyes.

"Oh, auntie, doesn't she look sorry? See, that's their friend, the old soldier,"—as the elder man came up and said to the woman—

"He'll soon be back, ma'am, so keep a brave heart; and I'll keep my eye upon the lad, I promise you."

In silence the woman shook his hand, and Enid thought that all the farewells had been said; but there was one still to be spoken. Turning to the child, he said—

"God bless you, missy! if you'll let an old soldier off to active service say so, to a little lady like you."

At these words Enid sprang forward, and said impulsively, as she put her hand in his—

"I like you to say it. Thank you very much."

"My dear Enid," remarked Miss Prescott, gently in a low tone, as her niece rejoined her, "there was no need to shake hands with him."

"But how else could I thank him, Aunt Agatha? And he was a soldier, too, like papa. Ah, now they have gone, do let me say how sorry I am for her"—looking wistfully as she spoke at the black-robed figure that stood near, watching the train as it sped swiftly away out of sight, bearing with it the lad who was "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

CHAPTER III.

GARRY.

AS Miss Prescott nodded a silent assent, for the poor woman's forlorn attitude and figure had touched her kind heart, Prudence hurried up to say that their train was signalled, and there was no time to spare, so that Enid could only say a few broken words of sympathy ; and while she did this, Aunt Agatha called a porter and, slipping something into his hand, bade him look after the woman, for "she seems alone, and has just parted with her son."

"I'll see to her, ma'am, never fear," was his answer ; and then both aunt and niece hastened away to take the seats Prudence had secured for them.

When Enid had settled herself into the corner of the compartment opposite Aunt Agatha, and

the rug that they were to share between them had been comfortably arranged, she asked—

"Weren't you very sorry for that poor woman, auntie? And was not the old soldier a nice man?"

"Yes, dear," answered Miss Prescott to both questions; "but you must not go in among crowds alone, Enid."

"Why not?" asked the child.

"Because it is not safe, dear."

"And it would be as well, ma'am," remarked Prudence, who sat next her mistress, "for Miss Enid not to be too ready to make friends with every stranger she comes across; it won't do in London."

"But I speak to everybody at home."

"Prudence is quite right, Enid; for London and home are not at all the same: at the latter you are well known, but it will be very different where you are going now."

"I think everything is different," said the little girl, not rudely or crossly, but with a sort of wonder at all the new and strange things she was seeing and hearing; then, leaning her elbows on the window-cushion, Enid stared out at the swiftly passing scenes for some time in silence. Suddenly the child turned round, and, stooping forward, gently touched her aunt's hand to attract her

attention, and asked—"What did he mean by active service, auntie?"

"That he was going to fight the enemies of his country."

"Going to leave England? Going to a war? Is it to where papa went?"

"No; I think it must be to South Africa. It was in India that your dear papa died."

"That he was killed, auntie," corrected Enid, gravely and gently.

"Yes, dear; where he was killed when on active service."

"I do hope the poor woman's son won't be. Perhaps he won't, as the old soldier promised that he'd keep his eye upon him." And once more Enid subsided into silence, and her busy thoughts kept her so quiet and interested that at length Miss Prescott asked what she was thinking about so deeply.

"I was wondering whether I was going on active service too," she answered readily.

"You, Enid? I hope you are not going to war with us."

"Not with you, Aunt Agatha; but I am a soldier—granny says so." When Enid used these words—"Granny says so"—her tone plainly implied that the matter was settled beyond all

contradiction or argument. "She is one too," continued the child; "and we've all got to fight against being naughty, you know: and of course," she added, with a wise air, "it's harder for little children like me. So I suppose that's why the old soldier promised that he'd keep his eye upon the young one."

"Have you forgotten, Enid, that there is One Who has you in His sight always, Who keeps His children as the apple of His eye?"

"Yes, auntie, I had. I never thought of that. I do hope that when I am as big as you and granny I shall never forget things."

At this remark Miss Prescott smiled rather sadly but said nothing, as just then the train began to slacken speed, and as they slowly steamed into a station the cry of "All tickets! all tickets!" was heard, and Enid eagerly demanded—

"Is this London?"

"No; the station before, where we have to give up our tickets."

Arrived so near their destination, all thoughts and wonderings were forgotten by the child in the excitement of gazing out through the gathering darkness for the first glimpse of her new home. And as they passed house after house, street after street, her eyes opened wider and wider with a

surprise that was not in the least diminished when, their railway journey ended, they drove through the busy crowded thoroughfares on the way to her grandfather's house.

"Oh, auntie," exclaimed the child at last, with a sort of breathless wonder, "what lots of people and shops and things—more than I have ever seen in all my life!"

"I thought your first glimpse of London would surprise you, dear. It is very different from Stadwick, is it not?" This was the name of the village near The Rookery.

"It is bigger than hundreds of Stadwicks."

"And yet you have only seen a little bit of it—just a few streets."

Soon they passed out of the busy thoroughfares into the quiet squares and terraces, where the houses looked to Enid very dismal and dreary after the brilliantly lighted shops she had seen; and when the carriage stopped before a tall gloomy house, and Miss Prescott said, "Here we are, dear, at home," the child exclaimed in a tone of disappointment, "Is this really it?" adding to herself, "How dark it looks!" But as she spoke the hall door was thrown open, and in a bright flood of light Enid followed her aunt into the house.

For the first moment the change from the dark-

ness without dazzled and confused her; but as her eyes grew more accustomed to the light, they roved anxiously round the hall in search of her grandfather.

"Why was he not there to meet and welcome them? And Garry, who Aunt Agatha said would be so glad to make friends with his little cousin, where could he be?" wondered the child.

For a minute or two Enid was left alone to her own meditations, while Aunt Agatha spoke to the sedate-looking butler; and the stillness of the big hall, which, though handsomely furnished and well lighted and warmed, had an empty strange feeling, awed the little girl, and made her feel as if she ought to walk softly and speak in low tones; just as she had done at that never-to-be-forgotten time when grandpapa was very ill at The Rookery, and the doctor came every day with a grave face, and granny looked sad and anxious, and Phœbe was often cross and worried.

"Simon will show you the way to the drawing-room, Enid dear. You will find Garry there, and I will join you both in a few minutes."

Enid would have liked to remain close to Aunt Agatha, but that lady had moved away as she spoke, and, as Prudence was not to be seen, there was nothing left for her to do but follow her

guide up the broad staircase to the drawing-room, the door of which the butler threw wide open, and announced, "Miss Enid Prescott."

"Just as if I had been a visitor come to make a call," thought Enid, as, feeling very strange and lonely, she entered the room and advanced a few steps towards the fireplace, where stood, as if just risen from the big easy-chair, a slight fair-haired boy of about Enid's own age. Until the door closed and they were alone the two children stood and looked at one another in silence. Upon Enid's face was an expression of doubt and perplexity, while the boy's wore a look of eager but suppressed excitement. Then he sprang forward, and said—

"I am so glad you have come, after all. I was afraid you would not."

"Are you Garry?"—taking off her hat and tossing back the hair that would curl over her forehead, almost into her eyes—"are you Garry?"

"Yes, and I'm awfully glad you are come."

There was no mistaking the truth of these words, and, as Enid heard them, the expression of her face changed from perplexity to indignant surprise.

"Then why did not you come down and meet me? When people come to stay with *us* we always go and met them, and show that we are glad."

The cold reception that had been accorded to

her had hurt the child cruelly, for she had persuaded herself that, although she was unwilling to come, her presence was desired, and looked forward to by her grandfather, and therefore had expected to be received with open arms. But instead of this, no one had met and welcomed her. Even Aunt Agatha, who had been so kind during the journey, had forsaken her, and allowed a servant to show her the way to the drawing-room, and to announce her arrival just as if she had been a mere stranger. It was all so unlike the warm and hearty hospitality that she had been accustomed to see exercised at The Rookery, that Enid could not help feeling both puzzled and angry at the treatment, and, as was her usual habit, spoke out, at the first opportunity, her thoughts frankly and clearly.

"Ah, that's your home!" Garry said in reply to Enid's reproaches.

"But is not this your home?"

"No, that it's not," he answered quickly. "Home is with father and mother and the rest of them."

These words established a bond of sympathy between them, and Enid drew nearer as she asked—

"Were you sorry to come here, Garry?"

"Dreadfully," was his short but decided reply.

"So was I—dreadfully"—this with a confidential

nod. "But granny said I must, because it was my duty. Was it yours too, Garry?"

"I don't know. I suppose it was, for I had to come. But I hate it."

This was said with such energy that it startled Enid, yet, at the same time, excited her interest and fear; for Aunt Agatha had been so kind to her all that day that her dread of the new life had already begun to fade out of sight. But at these words it revived again, and she asked anxiously—

"Why, Garry? Are not they kind to you?"

"Aunt Agatha is, and I'm jolly glad that she's come back; but he, Cousin Edgar——"

"Do you mean Grandfather Prescott."

"Yes. I thought that perhaps he might be in the hall to meet you, that's why I did not go down."

"Oh," came slowly from Enid, "but he was not there. Where is he?"

"In his study, I suppose; he always sits there by himself when he comes home from the office."

"By himself? What a funny man!"

"Funny! Cousin Edgar, funny!" The idea seemed to strike Garry as being so ludicrous that he burst into a merry peal of boyish laughter, in which, after a moment's surprised hesitation, for she neither saw nor understood the cause of his merriment, Enid joined.

Ere their laughter had subsided Miss Prescott came in, and after she had given the boy an affectionate kiss, asked the cause of their amusement.

Garry coloured, and hesitated what to answer; but Enid replied readily—

"He was laughing because I said Grandfather Prescott was a funny man; and then I laughed because Garry did."

"I don't think that is quite the way to speak of your grandfather, Enid dear."

"I did not mean to be rude, Aunt Agatha. I only said it was funny that he liked to sit by himself; because at home grandpapa, directly he comes in, always likes to have us with him."

"People have different ways, dear. Now it is time to come to your room and get ready for tea;" adding, as they left the room, with what sounded to Enid like a sigh, "Do not make much noise on the stairs, dear. It might disturb your grandfather."

"No, I won't. Is he ill, auntie?"—half hoping that this might be the reason he had not come out of his study to see her, and beginning to step softly on tip-toe, and looking so grave and concerned that Miss Prescott could not restrain a smile, and Garry's face bore a broad grin of amusement, which Enid, fortunately, did not see.

"There is no need to walk so cautiously, dear; your grandfather is not ill. I only meant not to laugh and talk too much upon the stairs. In your our own domain you can be as merry as you like."

"See, Enid," said Garry, opening the door of a room on the landing, halfway between the bedroom and drawing-room floors, "this is our room—yours and mine."

"Where you will do lessons together, and can keep your books and playthings," added Miss Prescott, who expected to see or hear some sign or word of approval from the child. But none came; Enid merely glanced round the room in silence.

"Are you not pleased with it, dear?"

"Yes, it is very nice; but, Aunt Agatha, why does not grandfather want to see me?"

"He will see you, dear, later, after dinner; but just now he is busy."

With this explanation Enid had to be satisfied, and Miss Prescott thought that she was, for the child asked no more questions upon the subject. But none the less did Enid think of another grandpapa "who would not have been too busy to see his little girl," and puzzle over the reason why this strange relation had taken her away from her happy home, when, now that she was in his house, he did not even care to see her!

Later that evening, when tea was finished, the two children sat alone together in the schoolroom, and Enid looked round their "own domain," as Miss Prescott had called it, with much more interest than she had shown before ; while Garry explained that the governess, who was to teach them both and who came each day, always left before tea, so that they had the evenings to themselves until after the late dinner, when they were expected to make their appearance in the drawing-room—"but only for a little while," added the boy, in a tone that made Enid ask—

"Don't you like going down ?"

"Not always. This is much the jolliest room in the house, and here we can do whatever we like, talk or make a noise, or be idle, or do anything we choose. I vote we talk now ; you tell me all about your home."

This was a subject on which Enid had plenty to say, and they chatted away briskly until, at the sound of a bell, Garry sprang from his seat, and said—

"That's for us. Simon always rings to let me know when they've done. He's not half a bad old fellow is Simon."

"He looks dreadfully solemn."

"Oh, he's obliged to do that, he told me so,

and—— But I'll tell you all about him and everybody afterwards. We must not stop now." The boy spoke nervously, and Enid, noticing this, asked as they left the room together—

"Are you frightened, Garry?"

The hot colour dyed his cheeks, but, boylike, he was ashamed to acknowledge that he was afraid, while all the time he knew quite well that the feelings he entertained for his cousin Edgar were those of fear and awe. It was not that Mr. Prescott either spoke or acted harshly towards the boy; indeed, he scarcely ever spoke to him at all, and it was this chilling silence that daunted Garry's youthful spirit, and filled him with a strange unaccountable dread, and made him shy and nervous in his grave cousin's presence: and unfortunately this behaviour was both noted and resented by Mr. Prescott, who could not understand, and would not, therefore, try and overcome, the boy's shrinking fear of him.

Enid had no time to repeat her question, for Aunt Agatha came out of the drawing-room to meet them, and said—

"Your grandfather wants to see you in his study, dear. Garry will show you the way."

It was now Garry's turn to ask, "Are you afraid?" and the words were on his lips, but a

glance at Enid's face changed them into "Aren't you afraid?"

"No; why should I be? He is my papa's father, and granny says he loves me, and I have promised her to try and love him, too."

"That's the door"—with a little nod to indicate which one he meant.

Without a moment's hesitation Enid went to it, and turned the handle.

"Oh, Enid," cried Garry, aghast at such boldness, "you must knock first!"

But the advice came too late, the door was already open, and Enid remarked cheerfully, as she entered the room—

"It's all right, Garry; he is in here;" adding, for Mr. Prescott's benefit, "It is me, grandfather —Enid."

CHAPTER IV.

GRANDFATHER PRESCOTT.

AT this announcement Mr. Prescott, who was seated at his writing-table, raised his head, and looked at the small intruder, who repeated, as she advanced towards him, "It is me—Enid."

A grave, silent man was Mr. Prescott, with a cold stern manner and haughty air. Rich and accustomed to command, he expected, and in general received, implicit obedience from those under him; and such was the awe and respect in which he was held by the whole household, that none of them, not even his sister, who had lived with him ever since the death of his wife, which had taken place many years before, ever dreamt of breaking any rule he had once laid down, or of intruding upon his presence without having first asked permission. But Enid knew nothing of all

this, and, unconscious of having done anything out of the way or against rules, she went up to his seat with her usual bright, fearless air, and said—

"Aunt Agatha said you wanted to see me, so I have come."

As she spoke the child lifted her face for the kiss she expected, as a matter of course; but instead of giving it, Mr. Prescott laid his hand upon the young head and turned it towards the light, so that he might have a better view of the little face.

"Do you think I am like papa or mamma?" she asked eagerly.

"You are like you father, in face."

"I want to be like mamma, too; but, grandfather, you haven't kissed me! Aren't you glad to see me?"

For answer he bent forward and kissed her forehead; but there was something in the way in which this was done that did not satisfy Enid, and she gazed wistfully up into his face for a minute, then turned away with a disappointed look; but, as she did so, her glance fell upon a picture of a young man in uniform, that hung over the mantelpiece, in full view of any one seated before the writing-table, and she exclaimed, in a tone of delight—

"Oh, that is papa! What a lovely big one of

him! Mine is quite little, but it is in a locket, and is such a darling; and I have one of mamma, too. I will show them to you, grandfather, if you like"—going as she spoke to the fireplace.

Enid gazed up at the picture that seemed to her young fancy to be smiling down a welcome upon his child.

Wonderfully alike was the face on the canvas to that of the little girl who stood and looked up at it so lovingly. The brown wavy hair, the soft dark eyes and frank open expression of the young soldier were all to be seen again in the face of his little daughter; and as the old man glanced from one to the other, a look of yearning love came into the face that was usually so hard and stern, and a sigh that was almost a groan broke from his lips, for the strong likeness the little girl bore to her father recalled to him so vividly the memory of the happy past, and of the boy whom he loved so dearly, and yet from whom, when their men's wills clashed, he had parted in bitter anger, never again to meet in this life.

"Aren't you very fond of this picture, grandfather?" asked Enid. Then, at the sound of the heavy sigh that had escaped Mr. Prescott, she turned round quickly, and for a few moments silently watched the old man as he bent over his

papers, then said softly, "Poor grandfather, how sorry you must have been when papa never came home to you, and mamma, and me."

At these words the grey head was bent more closely over the table than before; and, acting upon a sudden childlike impulse of pity—for something seemed to whisper to Enid that "grandfather was unhappy," and some feeling which she could neither understand nor explain, prompted her to try and comfort him with the offer of another love in place of that which he had lost—she went close to him, and as he did not look up, wound her arm gently round his neck, and whispered—

"I will try and love you very much, grandfather, as papa did."

When no answer came at once to this offer, Enid, in her anxiety to impress upon him the truth of her words, for in her simple childlike way she imagined the silence to mean doubt, added earnestly—

"Indeed I will; for I promised granny that I would.'

With a quick gesture—was it of pain or anger? Enid did not know which—Mr. Prescott raised his head and motioned her away.

"Leave me now, child; I am busy."

The little arm that still encircled the neck was withdrawn at once, and Enid, indignant at being thus abruptly dismissed, and greatly hurt at having, as she considered, her affections refused, walked to the door, and without one word or backward glance left the room. Indeed, she could not have spoken calmly, for this reception and dismissal had been a new and painful experience to the loved and petted little Enid. Her eyes were full of angry tears, and it was only by a great effort that she controlled herself sufficiently to close and not slam the door of her grandfather's study; but once out of sight she could give way, and so dashed through the hall, up the wide staircase, past the drawing-room, and into the schoolroom, taking refuge in her own domain, where, as Aunt Agatha and Garry had both told her, she could do as she liked.

Garry had caught sight of the child's figure as it flew past the drawing-room door, which he had left open on purpose to watch for her coming; and with a sudden exclamation which startled Aunt Agatha out of the half-dose into which she had fallen, the boy followed his little cousin to the schoolroom. Huddled up in a heap on the hearthrug, with her face hidden in her hands, lay Enid, the very picture of misery.

"Oh, Enid, what is the matter?"

At the sound of the friendly voice the child raised her head, displaying a flushed and tear-stained face to view, and answered in a voice choked with sobs—

"I can't keep my promise to granny, and oh she will be so vexed and sorry!"

"What promise? Why can't you? Won't he let you?"

"No, he sent me away; said, 'Leave me, child.'"

"Was that all?"

"All!" repeated Enid, sitting bolt upright in her astonishment.

"Yes; did not he say any more than that?"

"He said, 'I am busy.'"

"And weren't you glad to go?"

Enid gave the boy a reproachful look as she answered, "You don't understand."

Instead of being, as she expected, indignant at the treatment she had received, Garry only appeared to be surprised at her feeling the abrupt dismissal so much. No, Garry certainly did not understand, but he was anxious to do so. Seating himself upon the rug beside Enid, he begged her to tell him "all about everything."

Feeling decidedly happier now that she had some one in whom to confide her troubles, Enid

gulped down the last of her tears, dried her eyes, and began an account of her interview; but ere she had got quite to the end, Aunt Agatha came in search of the young people.

"Here you both are. I began to think that you had both gone to bed." Then noticing the tell-tale traces of tears on Enid's cheeks, added kindly—

"You must try, darling, and not fret."

"But, Aunt Agatha, I can't keep my promise to granny," she answered, in a tone that clearly implied that, in Enid's opinion, this was a reason for any amount of fretting and tears.

"What promise did you make, dear?" she asked. And, when Enid had told her, added quietly, "Why not?"

"How can she?" exclaimed Garry. And though Enid said nothing, she looked the same question.

"I wonder," said Miss Prescott, slowly, "if the young soldier we saw to-day——"

"Oh, auntie!" broke in Enid, eagerly, "I know now what you mean."

"I don't," remarked Garry, looking more puzzled than before; for what could the young soldier that they had seen at the station have to do with Enid's intention to try and win her grandfather's love, he wondered?

"Your cousin will explain to you," said Aunt Agatha.

Miss Prescott was not at all a strong person, and the long journey to and from Stadwick had tired her very much, so, as the children talked together, she lay back in her armchair with closed eyes, and was so still and quiet that Enid thought she had fallen asleep, and lowered her voice and drew nearer to Garry, who listened with a grave intent face to the explanation given him.

"So you see, Garry, that I must go on trying, because I am a soldier too."

"No," he answered with a shake of the head. "You can't be; no girls can."

Garry was a very matter-of-fact, practical little fellow, who took both people and things literally, and he now spoke very decidedly, for in this matter he was quite sure that what he said was true.

"But I am," persisted Enid.

"Ask Aunt Agatha," proposed Garry, feeling certain that the person whom she would decide to be in the wrong would not be himself.

"There's no need to," returned Enid, with rising colour. "Granny said that I was, and she and grandpapa are always right."

"Still they might be wrong just this once," suggested Garry.

But this Enid would not admit for a moment. "No, they are not; they never are."

Here Aunt Agatha, who was not asleep, as the children thought, interposed quietly with, "If you ask my opinion, I should say that you are both right and both wrong."

"But, auntie, how can that be?" said Garry, looking very puzzled at this curious decision.

"Have you never heard the story of the two knights who quarrelled about the shield?"

"No; do tell us!" cried Enid, placing herself into a comfortable listening position; "I do so love being told a story."

"This is a very short one, I fear."

"Could not you make it longer?" asked Enid. But when Aunt Agatha shook her head, she continued, cheerfully, "Well, never mind if it is short, it is better than none at all."

"Two knights," began Miss Prescott, "coming from different directions, stopped in sight of a shield. Says one of them, 'What a fine golden shield!' 'Golden?' returned the other, 'why, it is made of silver!' 'No, it is not,' said the first, 'it is gold.' 'It is silver,' repeated the second. So the quarrel went on until, from angry words, the knights came to blows. Fortunately just then a third knight came up, and inquired the cause of

their dispute; on being told, he explained to the combatants that they were both wrong and both right, for that one side of the shield was made of gold and the other of silver. You see, the two knights had each looked at the shield from their own point of view; and," added Aunt Agatha, anxious to make the story as long as possible, "I think the third knight might have advised them to look another time, before quarrelling, at both sides of the question."

"Oh, auntie," laughed Enid, "how silly they both must have felt!"

"All the same," added Garry, "they must have both been glad that they were not quite wrong."

"But about us, Aunt Agatha—how are we like the knights in the story? For I *am* a soldier, and Garry says that girls can't be."

"What kind of a soldier were you thinking of, Garry?" asked Miss Prescott.

"Of English soldiers—the Queen's, of course."

"And I think that Enid meant another army, one in which not only young men, but maidens, and even little children, boys and girls alike, can and do serve."

Enid nodded assent; while Garry said slowly, "You mean, Aunt Agatha——" then paused.

"That both you and Enid are little soldiers of Christ."

The boy made no answer, but Enid could not resist saying, in rather a triumphant tone, "So you see, Garry, I am one—of course I knew that granny could not have told me wrong."

Then Prudence came in to say that it was the young people's bedtime, so that there was no more talking and no notice was taken of Enid's last speech.

CHAPTER V.

OLD FRIENDS.

THE next day, Enid stood at the schoolroom window alone, while the breakfast-table was being cleared preparatory to the arrival of Miss Ashley, the governess, who came each morning at nine o'clock. The child was feeling very desolate and forlorn. Aunt Agatha was not well, and unable to leave her room, and Garry was busy getting his books together, so that Enid was alone, and tears of self-pity filled her eyes, and a wild longing to rush away home.

"This is just like a prison," she exclaimed passionately, for Enid was not given to keep her thoughts to herself. Looking out at the only view that could be obtained from the schoolroom window of the little back garden, in which were neither flowers nor trees, and which was bounded

by the high brick wall of the stables, was certainly not a cheerful prospect in the eyes of the country-bred child, accustomed, as she was, to the sight of green fields and wide-spreading views of wood and dale.

"We are not allowed to do anything," she continued in the same wrathful tones—"not to make a noise, because it disturbs grandfather, whom we never see; and we are not to go out, nor see Aunt Agatha; and—and—it is all quite horrid."

"You'll get accustomed to the change after a bit," said Prudence, who had come in to see how the two young people were getting on.

"Never!" was Enid's decided but dismal reply.

"Miss Ashley will be here in a few minutes, and then you will have your lessons to do; and I will ask your aunt to let me take you both out with me this afternoon."

This offer was made with the kindest intentions, but Enid did not respond to it in the same spirit.

"Are we to go out and walk there?" pointing out of the window as she spoke.

"No, no," laughed Prudence. "Not there; to see the shops."

This sounded more promising; but ere she could reply, Garry said—

"We can't; to-day is not a half holiday."

"I will ask Miss Prescott to let you have one, as it is Miss Enid's birthday."

"Oh do!" cried the boy joyfully. "You are a dear old Prue to think of it."

The idea of a holiday was not so great a treat to the girl as it was to Garry, who looked very much astonished when Enid announced—

"I like doing lessons."

Now, it must be confessed that, though this statement was as a general rule quite true, the remark had been made on this particular morning from a spirit of contradiction, for Enid was in a cross and naughty mood. The child was tired after the journey and excitement of the day before, and felt not only dull and strange, but decidedly ill-used into the bargain. Two things in especial had hurt Enid's feelings and ruffled her temper that morning: one was, that Prudence had declined the offer she had made to carry up Aunt Agatha's breakfast; the second was, that when she had gone down to the dining-room, expecting as a matter of course that she was to breakfast with her elders, as had been the custom at The Rookery, Simon said—

"You are to have your breakfast with Master Garry, in the schoolroom, Miss Enid;" and to her question of "Why?" had answered, "The master likes best to have it alone, I fancy."

So the morning had begun badly for Enid; but alas, instead of trying to overcome her anger, she had given way to it, and of course had only made herself more miserable and uncomfortable by doing so.

When Miss Ashley arrived, and Enid had taken her place at the table and opened her books, Garry said, with a mischievous glance at his cousin, "Enid likes lessons;" whereupon that young person at once put on an interested look, which, however, soon wore off, and in its stead there came a weary listless expression which told its own tale to Garry, who kept a sharp look-out upon Enid, that did not help to the better saying of his own lessons.

Miss Ashley had not the art of interesting her pupils in their work, for she herself had no pleasure in the task, and Enid soon found that this lesson was very different from those she had been accustomed to, and lost heart in her work. The girl's wandering attention and confused answers annoyed Miss Ashley at last, and she spoke so sharply that Garry said—

"I think Enid has a headache, Miss Ashley,—like Aunt Agatha—from the journey."

"Is that the case, Enid?"

"I don't know," pushing the hair back from her

forehead with a weary gesture. "I can't do things here."

"I thought that you liked lessons."

"So I do—at home; but here it's all so different." And such a sad and wistful look came into the young face, that Miss Ashley said kindly—

"Don't try and do more just now; sit still and listen while Garry reads out."

Enid obeyed as far as sitting still, but when Garry's voice ceased, and Miss Ashley asked her some question on what had been read, the child had to acknowledge that she had not heard one word.

"But I told you to listen, Enid."

"I know you did," was the despairing reply. "But I couldn't."

"Why not?"

"I began to think of home, and how nice it would be in the garden, and I forgot. *Don't* you love the country, Miss Ashley?"

This was exactly what Miss Ashley did, and she could not resist a smile at the question, which encouraged Enid to ask—

"Did *you* live there when you were a little girl?"

"Yes; but that was a long time ago." And Miss Ashley gave a little sigh as she spoke.

"Oh, do tell us about it!" exclaimed Enid,

brightening up at the prospect of a story—adding, as Miss Ashley shook her head, "It can be our geography lesson, you know—the place where you lived, I mean, and"—putting on a coaxing air—"I think that if I sat on your lap and heard about the country, it would make my head better."

Garry's eyes opened wide in astonishment at this proposal, and it really seemed as if surprise, or some other feeling—it was not anger, both children were sure,—made Miss Ashley hesitate ere she replied; but only for a minute, then came, gently, but decidedly—

"Not now, Enid; perhaps some day, after lesson hours, I will tell you about my old home."

Ere Enid could say anything more a message was brought to Miss Ashley from Miss Prescott, asking for the children to have a half-holiday that afternoon—a request which was immediately granted, to the delight, not only of Garry, but of Enid also, who acknowledged to her cousin when they were alone together, "that these were not the sort of lessons that she liked doing."

When they started for their walk the fine morning had changed into a chill and gloomy afternoon, but this the children did not mind, for they were well wrapped up against the cold, and able to walk

at a brisk pace; but Prudence looked up at the sky once or twice with an anxious air, and hoped that "it was not rash to venture so far," for the shop to which they were bound was some distance off, and since they had been out a suspicious-looking grey mist had begun to creep slowly up.

"Oh, if it does rain, we can get a cab. Aunt Agatha won't mind," said Garry.

"And you know," added Enid, "that she wants you to match that silk for her dreadfully."

"Yes, I know; and it is not the rain I'm afraid of, but a fog."

"We can walk ever so much faster—at least, I can," remarked Garry, amiably.

"And so can I," exclaimed Enid.

So on they hurried, for they had come more than half the distance, and Prudence was anxious to get her commissions executed, if possible, that day; but when they came to the regions of the shops that were already being lighted up, so dark had it grown, their progress was not nearly so rapid, for every minute one or other of the children would pause to gaze in at some especially attractive window, and to all Prudence's expostulations there generally came the entreaty, "Do let us have just one look."

At any other time Prudence might not have

objected to these frequent stoppages at all, but this afternoon she was very impatient of delay, for she saw that the ominous grey mist was not only creeping nearer but growing thicker and darker.

At last, in desperation, she took a hand of each child and, holding it firmly, said, "We really must not stop any more;" hurried them on until their destination was reached, and they entered out of the chill damp fog into what seemed to Enid's country eyes a perfect fairyland of beauty.

The shop was one of those that comprise, under the same roof, several departments, and that into which they had entered was full of toys and fancy articles of every description. At sight of this tempting display, Enid gave an exclamation of delight.

"Ah, Prudence, we must look at these. Do let us, please."

"But I don't want to buy anything in here." Then seeing the look of disappointment on the young face, added, "If you promise to be very good and careful, you may wait for me here. I am only going to the next department, and won't be very long."

They agreed at once, and most joyfully, to this arrangement, and set off together to make a tour of inspection among the treasures displayed to view.

"Garry," said Enid, as they stood before a table on which were glases and china vases of all sizes and shapes, "do you see that dear little blue thing for flowers? I would like to buy it for granny. I wonder if it is dreadfully dear!"

As she spoke a gentleman who stood near turned and looked at the little girl, then came up to her, saying—

"Is this really Enid? Why, what good or ill wind has blown her out of the old Rookery?"

"Oh, Mr. Simpson," almost shouted Enid, in her delight at seeing grandpapa's old friend and neighbour in this unexpected fashion, "it is really me! Aunt Agatha came and brought me here yesterday on a visit to Grandfather Prescott."

"Ah! so that is the way you behave, is it, directly my back is turned?" he answered, jokingly. "You come galloping up to London."

"I did not want to come."

"Well, well," he interrupted quickly, but kindly, "I am glad that I have had a little peep at you, and can tell granny that you have not lost your country roses yet." Then, after speaking a few words to Garry, he asked if the two children were alone.

Garry explained how they had come, and why Prudence was not with them just then; for Enid

was silent, the sight of the familiar face had brought back all the wild longing for home to the child's heart.

"I am afraid I must not wait any longer now, Enid; my time is but short, for I go back to-night."

"To Stadwick?"

"Yes."

"And you'll see them? Oh, I want to go home too!" she added, in a choked voice.

"Yes, dear, I shall see them to-morrow; and may I tell them, Enid, that their little girl is trying to be good and happy?"

At these words the child hung her head to hide the hot blush that dyed her cheeks at the remembrance of what had happened that morning, and whispered—

"I haven't been good to-day; but I will try, even if——"

"No 'if's,' little woman," broke in Mr. Simpson, cheerfully. "They are things that I don't like to carry about with me, for I find they are too fond of getting in the way."

"Then tell them, please, that I will try, really."

"Yes, indeed; I will do that gladly! Now you must give me a kiss to take home."

Heedless of onlookers the child flung her arms

round Mr. Simpson's neck, and gave him not only the one kiss he asked for, but a great many more.

After saying "Good-bye" to Garry, Mr. Simpson went towards the door, but ere he had gone many steps turned and beckoned the boy to his side. Slipping something into his hand, he said—

"That is to get a little keepsake for you both; and, as it is more blessed to give than to receive, you can give Enid hers and she can give you yours."

"Oh, thank you!" was all that Garry could say in his surprise; but he soon recovered the free use of his tongue, and, going back to Enid, said, "He is a jolly kind man. And may I choose first? Please let me." For the boy thought that she had seen what Mr. Simpson had given him; but in this he was mistaken, for Enid as yet knew nothing of the keepsake, and though she gave a little nod as the boy spoke, and which he took to mean consent, she really did not understand what it was he had asked to do. Her wistful gaze was fixed upon the retreating figure of her old friend, and not until this was no longer to be seen did she say, with a huge sigh—

"Oh, Garry, how I do wish that I was going home with him!"

As no answer came to this, Enid looked round

to see her cousin standing a little way off, holding in his hand the blue vase that she had so greatly admired.

"I'll buy this one," she heard him say to the shopwoman; then adding in an anxious tone, "if it does not cost more than half a crown."

This sight and these words quickly recalled Enid from all longings after the impossible.

"Oh, Garry, you can't!" she exclaimed, in a warning tone. "You've got no money; you told me so."

"But I have now—see!" And he held out his open hand, upon which lay two half-crowns, and, with a laugh at Enid's look of surprise, explained how they had come into his possession, and, in doing so, he used almost the same words that Mr. Simpson had spoken when giving them to him.

"You promised that I might choose first, and I've bought this"—holding up the vase with a little air of triumph.

"But I wanted that. Oh, I forgot; I'm to buy something for you"—and there was a touch of disappointment in her voice, at which Garry laughed mischievously as he whispered—

"It is for you, Enid, to give to granny."

"Oh, Garry, you are a dear!" was her delighted answer.

"Will you take it with you, or shall I send it?" asked the woman, who was serving them, after she had assured the young purchasers that the cost of the vase was much below half a crown.

"Granny lives in the country."

"We could send it by post; it would not cost very much."

"Will you choose to do that, Garry? And wouldn't it be nice to send grandpapa something too?"

"It wouldn't be fair else," he answered. "But there won't be much left for you then."

This, Enid eagerly assured him, "she did not mind one bit;" and when the other present had been chosen, and it was found that after both these and the postage had been paid for only twopence remained to her share out of the half-crown, her face itself beamed with happiness, as she exclaimed—

"I do love your choice so much, Garry! Won't they be pleased when they open the box to-morrow."

As the address was being written, Prudence joined them, and had to listen to a lively account, given in chorus, of all that had taken place during her absence.

"Yes, it was very kind of him, but you must spend the rest of the money another day, for we

must go now, else we won't find our way home, for the fog is so thick."

"Perhaps it will rise after a bit," suggested the shopwoman, hopefully.

But Prudence was determined not to delay their return a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. She had a great dread of being out in a fog at all times, but now that she had the two young people in charge this was added to tenfold.

While they had been in the shop the fog had rapidly increased, and now enveloped everything in a thick black cloud, through which the gas-lamps showed but dimly.

"I say, won't it be fun finding one's way home in this!" said Garry, gleefully, with all a boy's love for anything out of the common.

But neither of his companions seemed to see much fun in the prospect before them, and Enid clasped more firmly Prudence's hand as they set out on their homeward way.

After going a few yards Prudence stopped to consider what had best be done, for she knew that if walking here—where the shops were ablaze with gas—was difficult, it would be well-nigh impossible when they had to turn into the dimly lighted streets and squares through which they had to pass on their road home.

"It would be wiser to wait and see if it clears after a bit, I really believe."

"But where shall we wait? Go back to the shop?"

Prudence explained that in a street quite near at hand she had a brother living, who kept a dairy, and that it was there she proposed to wait in hopes that the fog would soon clear enough for them to continue their way in safety.

"Your aunt Agatha won't object to my taking you there, I'm sure, for both Scobel and his wife are most respectable people, and well known as such to Miss Prescott."

So on they went, groping their way down the quiet street where Mr. Scobel lived, until, with an exclamation of relief, Prudence announced, "Here we are;" and, pushing open the door, led the way through the now empty little shop into the back parlour behind, where, seated round a bright fire, were three persons, who, at the entrance of the little party, looked round in surprise.

"You, Prudence!"

"Yes, James, it's me and the children. We're well-nigh choked and blinded by the fog."

"Come right away in at once," cried Mrs. Scobel, hospitably, "and the young lady and gentleman too. Poor lambs, to think of them being out in such weather!"

Blinking and half-dazed by the sudden change, Enid and Garry came forward, and as the former looked round the small but cosy room, and caught sight of the face of the person who on their arrival had been seated with Mr. and Mrs. Scobel, but who now stood tall and erect in the background, she exclaimed, in a tone of pleased surprise, "Oh, Garry, it's the soldier that I told you about, that I saw at the station;" adding in a whisper—"the old one, I mean."

CHAPTER VI.

A SOLDIER'S DUTY.

"WELL, to think that you and the little miss here have met before!" said Mrs. Scobel, as she helped Enid take off her damp cloak. "However did that happen, John Carpenter, I'd like to know?"

John explained, and then Enid heard that the poor widow whose sorrowful parting from her son had filled her young heart with pity was a cousin of Mrs. Scobel's, and that John himself was an old friend, and came from the same village.

"He has just looked in to say that the lad is all right, and to wish us good-bye before he is off to foreign parts."

"And I'll wish it to you now, Mrs. Scobel," said John.

"But not before you've had a cup of tea. The table's laid and the kettle will boil in a minute, so

I'll set to and toast the muffins right away," said the kindly and hospitable woman.

John hesitated and glanced in the direction of the two children.

Mrs. Scobel noticed the look, understood its meaning, and said, although Prudence made her a sign to be silent, "Perhaps if the young lady were to ask you——"

Upon which Enid, who had been listening to all that was said, exclaimed at once, "Do stay. You don't know how horrid it is out-of-doors; and it is so lovely and cosy in here."

Both John and his hostess looked excessively gratified at these words, and, while the former resumed his seat with, "Well, then, as you're so kind," the latter looked round the homely little room, and said with a contented nod, "It's small, but it is comfortable, I do think."

"It's just lovely!" said Enid, in a tone of decision.

All this time Garry had sat silent, his eyes fixed intently upon the soldier, but now he leant forward and asked—

"Are you really going to a war? Have you ever been in a battle?"

"Weren't you dreadfully afraid?" added Enid, drawing up her chair closer, and speaking before

the man had time to answer either of the boy's questions.

"Of course not," Garry promptly replied for him. "Our soldiers are never afraid."

"I should be, I'm sure. I would run away."

"No, miss, that you would not—not if it was your duty to stay, as it would be, and fight it out."

"But I might be wounded, or even killed."

"Better that than turn your back to the enemy, miss."

"Well, I suppose it would be dreadfully cowardly to run away from anything; but all the same I think I should."

"Why do you think that?"

"Because I should be so frightened if I saw any one coming to hurt me."

"Why, it was only yesterday, Mrs. Scobel, that I heard a little lady say, and the words made me think a deal, I can tell you, that she meant to do her duty like a brave little soldier as she is."

"That was me," answered Enid. "But that sort of duty is different; we don't get hurt, so needn't run away."

"Some folks run away from their duty at times, missy," said Mrs. Scobel. Then she turned to Garry, who, when Enid had spoken of running away from anything as being "dreadfully co-

wardly," had removed his gaze from the soldier to the fire, and looked into it with a grave and somewhat troubled face over which the hot colour crept. "The heat has caught your cheeks, Master Garry. I'll give you something to hold before your face."

"No, thanks, I don't want anything; I don't mind it. It isn't that," he answered confusedly.

Prudence had gone with her brother into the shop to speak with him alone, and as they returned together, the latter said—

"When you've done your tea, John—not that I want to hurry you—I'll see you a bit on your road. I've promised Prudence here to send a telegram to Miss Prescott, to say the young folk are safe; and I've got a bit of business on my own account to do as well."

Enid looked from the speaker to his sister, and when Mr. Scobel and John had left, remarked indignantly to Prudence—

"I do think you are unkind to make him go out in the fog. Perhaps he will get lost; then what will you do?"

"No fear of that, Miss Enid. And as to making him go——"

"But you did, and John too. Didn't she, Garry? And I'm sure he wanted to stay longer."

"I never did come across a little girl with such a tongue as yours, Miss Enid." This was reprovingly and somewhat sharply said.

"Nor such sharp eyes," added Mrs. Scobel; but there was no reproof in her tone.

"I wish you had not," continued Enid, reproachfully; "for we wanted him to tell us all about the battles he had been in."

"That's all very well, Miss Enid, for you; but what would your grandfather have said to *me?*"

"Nothing, of course."

"But he would."

"Indeed, Prudence," interrupted Mrs. Scobel, in rather an annoyed tone, "John Carpenter is a most respectable man."

"I'm not denying that, Liza."

"And he's a soldier, like my papa was. I'll tell grandfather all about him myself."

"Will you really?" asked Garry, later, in a low voice. The two children were seated together on a high-backed wooden settle that Mrs. Scobel had brought with her from the country, and which she set great store by, for it had belonged to her father, who had been a farmer in the west country. Enid sat at one corner of it, with the big yellow puss upon her lap, blinking his eyes lazily and enjoying the warmth with purring content, and

Garry sat at the other corner; while, on the opposite side of the fireplace, Prudence and her sister were seated, talking together of family matters in which the young people took not the slightest interest.

"Will you really?" repeated Garry, edging himself, as he spoke, along the settle nearer to his cousin.

"Will I what?" asked Enid.

"Tell Cousin Edgar all about John."

"Yes," came the answer, in a doubtful voice. "I said I would, so I must,"—as the remembrance of the interview with her grandfather the evening before came back to Enid, it made her wish that she had not been quite so ready with her offer to tell all about their little adventure in the fog; but this Enid was not going to acknowledge to Garry, for had not she told him that "*she* was not a bit afraid of grandfather"? and though the words had been true when spoken, they would not have been quite so now, and, therefore, she decided that it would be best to turn the subject from herself as speedily as possible.

"You're sleepy, Garry, or tired, or cross, or something."

"I'm not anything," he answered, rather taken aback by this sudden attack.

"Then why have you been so quiet?"

"I've been thinking."

"What about?"

"Oh, lots of things; and I don't believe it's always cowardly to run away from things."

"Did you ever run away?" asked Enid, with a laugh, and giving the boy a mischievous teasing glance, to which he returned a little nod by way of an answer. "Really? oh, do tell me about it!"

"Not really; but I thought about it. For it was so dreadful here—not this room, I don't mean, of course, but at Cousin Edgar's. I hated it, and I'd have gone, too, though father would have been jolly angry with me."

"Wouldn't your mother?"

"She'd have been sorry."

"But why didn't you go, Garry?"

"Because of mother being sorry; and then, Cousin Agatha was so kind."

"Yes, she is; and she'd have been sorry too."

"Now you've come, it is not so bad."

Enid looked at her cousin with, it must be confessed, a gleam of mingled surprise and admiration in the dark eyes, at the boldness of the idea; for in her heart Enid had thought Garry both stupid and silly for being afraid of Mr. Prescott, and somewhat

inclined to pride herself upon her own superior courage.

"Would not you have been afraid, Garry, going all by yourself?"

"No; I would not have minded that," he answered, not in a boastful manner, but quite simply and naturally; for the boy, though nervous, was not cowardly. His dread of his cousin had arisen from other causes than those of mere ordinary fear. Ever since Garry could remember, his elder brothers and sisters used to hold over him in fun the threat of sending him to live with their grave cousin, whose namesake he was, in his big dreary house. Not that any of these young people knew anything about the house personally; they were merely drawing upon their imagination, because they saw that their descriptions had impressed their nervous little brother. In doing this none of them had meant any real harm; and when the thing that they had often predicted in joke really came to pass, they tried their best to do away with the effects of their former foolish jests, but were not altogether successful in the attempt, for the mischief had been done too effectually to be got rid of at once.

"Though, I suppose, it would have been cowardly," continued Garry; "for mother said that it was my duty to come here."

"Why? He is not your grandfather."

"It's an opening, father said; for when I'm big I'm to go into Cousin Edgar's bank. He wanted your papa to go in, but he would not; and Cousin Edgar was dreadfully sorry about it—very disappointed, mother said."

"Poor grandfather!" said Enid, softly; then, after a short pause, added decidedly, "No, Garry, we must not run away; it is our duty, so we must stop; but," she went on, not quite so confidently, "if, when I'm gone away again——"

"Oh, you're not going away again now."

"I am. I've only come here for a little while. The Rookery is my home."

Ere Garry had time either to agree with or contradict this remark, the bell that always rang when the shop door opened was heard.

Mrs. Scobel rose at once, saying, "I expect that it is James come back." The children stopped their conversation and leant forward to see, not James, but Simon enter the shop, and to hear him announce that the carriage had come to take the young people home.

"The fog's not so bad as it was, and we must start at once, for Miss Prescott is anxious about them; that's why I have come myself."

After this, there was no delay. Mrs. Scobel

wrapped the children up, and they thanked her warmly for her kindness, and, even while they assured her they'd be sure and come and see her again, Prudence hurried them into the carriage, and they began their slow drive home, and at length, much to Prudence's relief, arrived in safety.

As the children entered the hall, both laughing and talking away together merrily, for to them all the difficulties had been but fun, the study door opened, and Mr. Prescott came out to meet them. At this sight, for neither child expected to see him, the hour being earlier than that at which he usually returned home, the merry chatter ceased; then Enid, remembering that she had been warned by her aunt not to make a noise and disturb her grandfather, began in rather a confused way—

"We did not know you were in, or we would not have laughed."

"I have no objection to you laughing, Enid." Though the words were kind, the manner in which they were spoken was cold; for, unfortunately, Mr. Prescott had noticed the effect of his sudden appearance, and detected the change in the child's voice as she made her apology for being merry.

"It did not disturb you?" she asked.

"No. I was not busy. Now you had better go

and tell your aunt that you have come in; she has been anxious about you both."

Halfway up the stairs Enid suddenly turned and darted back to the hall. "Grandfather," she exclaimed, breathlessly, to Mr. Prescott, who had been listening to Prudence's explanation of how they had been caught in the fog, "I want to tell you all about John—he's a soldier. Prudence thought you would not like us to talk to him, and so I said I'd tell you about him myself; for he's really a very nice man, and Mrs. Scobel says he is quite respectable."

"I'm glad you told me yourself, Enid; I don't want you to be afraid of me, child." To which she answered gravely—

"I don't think I'm really afraid of you, but we thought you did not like us to laugh and talk before you, but we will now that you give us leave."

"I don't mind, when I'm not busy."

"Then when you're not busy we will."

With this promise she gave him a bright little nod, and ran off to join Garry, who was waiting her return on the stairs.

"He says we may laugh as much as we like when he's not busy; and he doesn't mind about John, and we're not to be afraid of him any more."

"Did he say all that, really?"

"Not exactly all that—but he meant it, I'm sure; and, Garry, I do believe he's going to try and like me a little bit."

CHAPTER VII.

WOUNDED.

FOR the next day or two the weather was so bad—the fog having been followed by rain—that the children were not able to get out, and, as Miss Ashley was prevented from coming to give them lessons, they found the time hang heavily on hand; though Aunt Agatha was better, and able to go down to the drawing-room, she was not able to stand much noise or chatter; for Miss Prescott was old, and had long been unaccustomed to the society of children, which, as all the world knows, is very pleasant though a little apt sometimes to be noisy. However, Aunt Agatha was very kind, and gave them full permission to roam all over the house, and to play when they liked during the day, on condition that they did not enter Mr. Prescott's study, or make much noise when he was

at home—and this, even after Enid had assured her that "grandfather did not mind when he was not busy,"—for Miss Prescott was always nervously afraid of the children doing anything to annoy or disturb her brother.

On the afternoon of the third day of their enforced idleness and imprisonment to the house, when the outside world was wrapped in a thick drizzling mist, Garry flung himself down upon the hearthrug in the schoolroom, and announced, in a dismal voice, that "he was quite tired of doing nothing."

"Let us think of something new," proposed Enid; and, after a pause, added eagerly, "I know —let us dress up. What will you be?"

"A soldier," replied Garry, promptly.

"I wanted to be that."

"You be one, too, and we'll have a fight: that will be a splendid game."

At this delightful idea the boy sprang to his feet, and with his cousin hurried down to the drawing-room, to ask Aunt Agatha if she would lend them what Enid described as "some dressing-up things."

"Yes, you can have some, I dare say, if you ask Prudence. There's my scarlet shawl might do."

"The very thing!" cried Garry, with a caper of delight. "Come along, Enid!"

And away they sped to their aunt's bedroom, and were soon rummaging in a cupboard where Prudence told them the scarlet shawl would be found.

"What a pity auntie wears such dull things" said Enid; "they are all blacks and browns!"

"Must you both be soldiers?" asked Prudence.

"Yes, of course," replied Enid, decidedly; then, clapping her hands, "I know—I have thought of something. You can have the shawl, Garry, and dress up down here; I'll go and dress up in my room."

About twenty minutes later the two combatants met in the drawing-room to show themselves, ere the battle began, to Aunt Agatha, who, with Prudence, laughed heartily at the sight of the children dressed in martial array.

Garry had the scarlet shawl draped gracefully over his body and fastened round the waist with a black silk scarf; upon his head, tied on by braid, was Aunt Agatha's big black muff, which, in Garry's opinion, added not only to his height, but to his military appearance as well.

In place of the scarlet shawl Enid wore a red-flannel petticoat, wrapped round her in such a

manner as to leave her arms free; this was fastened round the waist by the leather strap used for the railway-rug when travelling: on her head was a cap made of a red-silk handkerchief, under which she had hidden away her long curly locks; and round her neck, pinned tight and high, was a piece of orange-coloured ribbon which had been lent her for the occasion by the housemaid. Of this latter adornment Enid was especially proud. "For, really, you know," she told Aunt Agatha, "it looks almost like gold." Both children carried—but this not so much for adornment as for use—walking-sticks, which, in the coming battle, were to do duty as swords.

The amusement their appearance caused Aunt Agatha and Prudence was received in very good part by the little soldiers, who were too well pleased with themselves to be easily offended.

"I think we shall do splendidly," remarked Enid, with a look of satisfaction. "Come along, Garry; let us begin."

"Do be careful, dears, that you don't hurt one another with those sticks," said Miss Prescott, as they were leaving the room; "and don't forget," she added, "that your grandfather will be in soon."

More time had been spent in preparation than the children had intended; so that, to be sure and

not disturb Mr. Prescott, they decided to play upon the upstairs landing. And for some time they kept to this resolution, but as the fun and excitement of the game thickened they forgot all about it; and gradually the youthful army—for was not each soldier a host in himself?—found their way down the stairs and into the hall.

What a clamour the two little people did make to be sure, flourishing their sticks and stamping and shouting in glee, forgetful of everything but their play!

"You're in retreat, Enid," cried Garry, in triumph. "The day is mine! Hurrah!"

"I'll never turn my back upon the enemy," came from Enid, valiant but breathless, as she slowly gave way. Slowly, with face to the foe, she retreated across the hall, and past Mr. Prescott's study door.

"What is the meaning of all this noise——"

Both children came to a sudden pause. With sticks uplifted they stood for a moment in silence, then, as Mr. Prescott added, "And tomfoolery," Garry turned and said—

"We were only playing."

"There's no need, though, I suppose, to make such a noise."

Aunt Agatha had been quite right when she

said her brother didn't like being disturbed when he was busy. It always annoyed him and made him speak sharply.

"We didn't mean——" began Garry. Then, in his eagerness to get out of the way, he stumbled over an end of the shawl that had come undone and trailed upon the ground.

"Take care, boy; you'll have that stick in my eye," exclaimed Mr. Prescott, putting up his hand to ward off the blow he expected.

But Garry, in his confusion, mistook the movement for one of menace, and, recovering himself from the stumble, stepped quickly backwards, and in doing so knocked Enid against a door that stood near.

This door opened upon a flight of stone steps that led to a small underground room, in which Mr. Prescott kept a number of boxes and cases of papers and deeds. The door was generally kept locked, but that afternoon Mr. Prescott had wanted a particular box, which had been brought up to his study, and so the door, instead of being fastened securely, had been merely latched for the time being.

As Enid, who had been unable to speak with suppressed laughter at sight of Garry's comical look of terror, was knocked against this door it

flew open, and the child fell, with a scream and a wild clutch for safety, headlong down the stone stairs.

One scream, and then all was still.

"Bring a light at once," said Mr. Prescott, hoarsely, to the servant, whom the child's cry had quickly brought to the spot. And when the light came he went down the stairs, at the foot of which lay, huddled up and motionless, the little figure in its fantastic costume.

Raising the child tenderly in his arms, he pushed back the dark hair that had escaped from its silken covering, and saw a small crimson streak slowly trickling down the side of the white face.

"Send for a doctor at once," said Mr. Prescott, as he carried the child's still unconscious form to his study. "And call Miss Prescott."

"I am here, Edgar. Oh, my poor little Enid!" Then the study door was closed, and young Garry heard and saw no more.

The poor boy cowered down on the ground, his eyes fixed upon the door of the room into which Enid had been carried, and there waited in silent misery until the doctor's arrival.

"Hulloa, what have we here!" he exclaimed, catching sight of the queer little figure; for Garry was still dressed up in the red shawl and fur muff

cap of which he had been so proud but a short while before. In truth, the boy had forgotten, in his anxiety, that he had even got them on.

Lifting his white awestruck face to the doctor's, he said, in a dull hopeless voice, "Enid's been killed."

"Not so bad as that, I hope, little man," he answered kindly. Then, whispering some words to the servant, he, too, disappeared into the study.

"Come away now, Master Garry. You can do no good sitting there."

But the boy resolutely refused to move, and though Simon was at first half inclined to be somewhat peremptory about the matter, at the sorrowful "Only till the doctor comes out, Simon," the man relented.

"Then let me take off all this silly stuff you've got on."

Garry readily allowed this to be done; then once more resumed his anxious watch, which, however, did not last long, for ere many minutes had passed the door opened again, and Prudence came out.

Leaning forward eagerly, Garry caught her by the dress.

"I can't stop now." Then, seeing the boy's miserable face, she added, "Don't take on so,

Master Garry; the doctor speaks very hopeful about her. The fall has stunned her, he says."

Stunned, not killed, as the boy had thought at sight of the motionless figure, and he repeated the words over to himself again and again to take in their full meaning. Then he rose and walked slowly upstairs to the schoolroom, threw himself upon the hearthrug, and said, with the tears of thankfulness running down his cheeks—

"I'm so glad, so glad! I thought I had killed her, and all because I was afraid of Cousin Edgar!"

"How did it happen?" asked Doctor Hayes, as he followed Mr. Prescott into the schoolroom some time later.

At these words Garry sprang to his feet, and turned his tear-stained face towards the new-comers with a look of eager inquiry, which the doctor at once answered with—

"She'll do now, my boy; but we must keep her very quiet for a few days, and then," he added with a smile, "I should not be surprised if she wanted another romp; for I suppose that it was in that way the accident happened."

"Can *you* tell us, Garry?" There was a sternness, or the boy fancied there was, in Mr. Prescott's voice, that made Garry quake and his eyes fall as he whispered—

"I pushed her down."

"Not purposely, I am sure," Dr. Hayes said kindly; for he saw how nervous and upset the little fellow was, and that it had been with an effort that he made his confession.

"No, not on purpose," he answered eagerly. But here he stopped, and glanced timidly at Mr. Prescott, who said—

"Don't hesitate to speak the truth; I mean to know exactly how the thing occurred."

"Give him time, Prescott, give him time. We must not forget what a fright the child has had."

Garry gave the doctor a grateful look as he explained—

"I went back quickly, because I was afraid."

"Afraid! of what?"

Not to Mr. Prescott, but to the friendly doctor, the boy made answer—

"I was afraid of Cousin Edgar. He put up his hand, and I thought that he was angry; but indeed I did not know Enid was so near."

For a minute there was silence, during which Garry looked anxiously from one to the other. He had spoken the truth as he had been told to do, hard though it had been to speak, and now it seemed to the boy as if those who had heard him were still annoyed and dissatisfied. It would only

be, he thought, because he had shown fear, so he burst out impetuously—

"Yes, I know that it was cowardly to be afraid, and to run away; but indeed, indeed I do want to be a good brave soldier."

"A soldier!" repeated Dr. Hayes, with a puzzled look; then a sudden light as to the boy's meaning came to him, and he added, "Ah, yes. I remember now that when I first saw you, you had on a red coat."

"Oh, that was only Aunt Agatha's shawl—that was play. I mean a real one—not like John Carpenter and Enid's papa—but one like what the Bible says."

"'Therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,'" quoted Dr. Hayes, softly.

"Yes," cried Garry, "that's what I mean. Enid and I are both soldiers like that!"

"And God grant that you may both win the victory in that fight, my boy," was the doctor's earnest reply; then, turning to Mr. Prescott, he continued, "I think we know pretty well now how the accident happened, and so I must be off."

"You'll look in again this evening?"

"Yes, you'll be sure to see me. Now, my little comrade"—this to Garry—"we'll shake hands and say good-bye for the present."

As Dr. Hayes left the room, Garry lifted an entreating look to Mr. Prescott, and said—

"Indeed, I did not mean to hurt her."

"You are not to blame. It was I who caused the accident."

"You, Cousin Edgar?"

To this wondering remark there came no answer, and Mr. Prescott went out of the room, leaving Garry lost in astonishment.

"If he always spoke to me in a nice kind voice like that, I don't think that I should be one bit afraid of him."

After coming to this conclusion, Garry crept softly to the door of Enid's room, opened it, and peeped cautiously in, to see, lying on the pillow, a white face, that was so unlike the merry rosy one he was accustomed to, and which, from Dr. Hayes's words, he expected that he was to see now, that an exclamation of disappointment broke from his lips, which at once betrayed his presence.

In a moment Prudence, one hand raised warningly, was beside him, and in another moment he was safely out of the room.

"Oh, isn't she any better?"

"She will be soon, I hope; but you must be very quiet, or else she won't."

"I will," he promised, and at once went and sat

down on the top step of the staircase to keep ward and watch against any and every one who should venture to disturb the quiet that was deemed so necessary to the well-being of his poor suffering little cousin.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

FOR several days Enid lay with aching head in her darkened room, now still and quiet in a sort of half-stupor, now tossing and murmuring of many things, unconsciously betraying to the anxious watchers beside her the thoughts and hopes that had filled her young heart since leaving The Rookery; sorrowful longings for granny and grandpapa and home; fears that her promise to the former could not be fulfilled, for "Grandfather Prescott does not want me to love him. I said I would try, but he said, 'Leave me, child.' It's not my fault, granny. I do want to keep my promise." At another time it would be, "We must not run away, Garry. It would be cowardly; for we are soldiers, Christ's soldiers, so we must be good and brave." Over and over again would the childish

voice prattle of these things, heedless of the presence of either Aunt Agatha or her grandfather, both of whom would listen to these unconscious revelations in pained silence. Occasionally the child would recognize her aunt or Prudence enough to thank them with a gentle smile for their kind services, but most of the time she was unconscious whose hands they were that ministered to her wants; but there came at last a day when the heavy stupor changed into a quiet sleep, from which Enid awoke refreshed and conscious, but sadly weak and feeble.

As her glance wandered round the room, she gradually remembered something of what had happened, and asked—

"Auntie, have I been ill?"

"Yes, darling; you had a bad fall, and hurt your head."

"It does feel queer"—putting up her hand. Enid gave a little exclamation of surprise, for all over her head were short clustering curls; and auntie explained that the doctor had made them cut off the long dark locks.

"So now I'm just like a boy," said Enid, with a feeble little laugh, which Aunt Agatha, afraid of any excitement, checked at once with, "We must not talk any more, dear, now."

The child obeyed—too tired to do anything but

lie still and sleep. Later she began again, but without opening her eyes properly—

"Auntie?"

It was not Miss Prescott's voice that answered, however, but one that made the tired eyes open wide in surprise—

"Grandfather—you?"

"Yes, dear." And then—Enid never quite knew how it happened—the little cropped head was resting upon his shoulder and his arms were round her; and Enid knew, though no words had told her that she was right, that Grandfather Prescott's love was hers.

Her promise to granny had been fulfilled in a manner that she little expected; for Enid had meant to win his affections for herself, and lo! it had been given to her as a free gift.

This knowledge the child was eager to share with granny, so the first time she and Garry were allowed to be alone together, Aunt Agatha being afraid that too much talking would tire the little invalid, Enid said—

"Will you do something for me, Garry?"

"Of course I will," he answered readily.

"It is something that I want very, very much."

"What is it, Enid?"

"I want you to write a letter for me to granny,

and tell her I think—no, I mean that I am quite sure now, that Grandpapa Prescott is fond of me. She said," came slowly in explanation; for Enid was still very weak and easily tired—"she said it was her wish that he would love me; that it would make her happy; and, Garry, I do like so much to make her happy."

Garry could not carry out his promise just then, for Miss Prescott came in and said that Enid had done enough talking for one time; but when he came to see his cousin the next day, he said, with a look of great satisfaction—

"I have done it, Enid. Here it is," placing, as he spoke, an envelope in her hand, which she opened at once, but not with the look of pleasure that Garry had expected to see; and as she took out the letter it contained, he watched her anxiously.

"Aren't you pleased with it, Enid? I've tried to write it very nicely."

At this question, and the look of disappointment on the boy's face, Enid exclaimed—

"Oh yes, Garry, I am. I was only just a little bit sorry because"—this slowly—"I thought we would write it together."

"Oh, I did not know. I thought——"

"I'm not sorry now, Garry, really."

Garry had begun his letter with "My dear

Granny;" then he had evidently remembered that it was Enid's relation, not his, to whom he was writing, and had carefully scratched out the word "Granny" and put "Mrs. Emerson" in its place. "Enid wants you to know something very much indeed, and can't write because she's in bed; so I'm writing to tell you that Cousin Edgar loves Enid now, and so does Cousin Agatha, and so do I; and I am awfully glad she has come to live here. Enid says this will make you happy, because you wished it. That's all she wanted me to say.

"GARRY."

"It's a very nice letter indeed," remarked Enid, as she refolded it very carefully and put it back into the envelope. "But, Garry, why did not you leave 'Granny'?"

"It does make it look rather untidy, I know," admitted the writer; "but she is not my gran, you know."

"That doesn't matter. She's mine, and perhaps some day you'll see her."

"Do you think she'll answer my letter?"

"Sure to. At least, I think she is sure to. If you like, we'll ask her to. I'll put a postscript to it, shall I?"

"You'll have to write in pencil."

To this Enid had not the slightest objection; indeed, rather liked the idea than otherwise. So the letter was once more taken out of its envelope, and, Garry bringing a pencil, Enid wrote, in very shaky letters—

"P.S.—Dear Granny, do answer this. Garry would like it so much, and so would I. And be sure you say that you and grandpapa are happy because you've got your wish."

"Now it is 'both our letter,' and you will be sure to get an answer."

And in this Enid was quite right, for there came by return of post a nice long letter, written so clearly that the children could easily read it. The envelope was addressed to Garry, but the letter began, "My dear Garry and Enid," and the writer said how pleased she had been to get their letter, and that their news had made both herself and grandpapa as happy as Enid and Garry had hoped it would make them.

Little by little the strength came back to Enid, and she was soon able to sit up in bed, and receive visits from Garry and Miss Ashley. And then came the day when bed was discarded for the sofa; and that same afternoon the two children, for the first time since Enid's fall, were allowed to have tea together. Garry did the honours; look-

ing so bright and happy, and so very mysterious withal, breaking out every now and again into little chuckles of delight, which, when Enid asked their meaning, he described as, "Oh, nothing, nothing."

When their meal was ended, and Enid lay back upon her cushions, Garry took up his favourite position upon the hearthrug, and was just commencing a conversation when the door opened and Mr. Prescott came in.

Garry rose at once; for though during Enid's illness their common anxiety had drawn the two together, much of the awe he felt for Cousin Edgar still continued, and his manner was apt to grow constrained and shy in his presence.

"Don't move, Garry. I've not come to disturb you, but I promised Enid that she should choose her Christmas treat to-day."

"You aren't disturbing us; is he, Garry?"

But Garry was too busy, wheeling up an arm-chair beside the sofa for Mr. Prescott, to answer.

"Am I to choose what I should like best in all the world?"

"I think I can guess what that is."

"Can you?"

"Yes; and I fancy that your wish includes two people."

The child nodded; then, sitting up, exclaimed, "I thought I heard——"

But she could say no more, for there, just inside the open door, stood granny, looking, not a bit like a visitor in bonnet and cloak, but quite at home, and wearing one of the dainty white caps that suited her grey hairs so well.

With one bound Enid, spite of her weakness, was off the sofa, and folded in granny's arms. Then grandpapa came in with Aunt Agatha, and was rapturously greeted by the happy girl, who, as she once more took her place upon the sofa, said, with a great sigh of content—

"This is a lovely treat. I don't think I have anything more to wish for in all the world."

"My poor wounded little soldier!" said granny, passing her hand lovingly over the curly head that nestled up so closely.

Mrs. Emerson was alone with the two children; the others having left them together, as quiet was still essential for Enid's full recovery.

"I haven't been quite good and brave," confessed the child. "I did so want to be at home with you, and I was cross because I thought grandfather did not want me to love him."

"Yet all the time he was loving you very dearly."

"I might have known, because you said he did."

"And now you have found out for yourself that love wins love."

"Yes, for I do love him now that I know he loves me."

"So you see that love is the best weapon for Christ's soldiers to use, if they really want to be victorious."

"Granny," said Garry, after a pause,—"I mean," correcting himself quickly, "Mrs. Emerson."

"Don't alter the word, dear. I like your first name for me best."

The boy looked his thanks as he continued, "Do tell me what to try and win, like you told Enid."

"Try and win the same, Garry."

"What? Cousin Edgar's love! Oh no!" shaking his head. "I couldn't do that, I am afraid."

"That's not a soldier's word, dear."

"I know it isn't, but——"

"Then try and throw away all fear."

"Yes, I will try," he said slowly.

"Do, Garry; and remember what I told Enid, that love wins love."

Garry thought over the matter well, and decided to act upon the advice. So the very next day, for he had a way of taking everything exactly as it was told him, he said to Enid—

"What are you going to do with your half-crown?"

"Buy something for you, of course. Isn't it a pity I can't go out and spend it now?"

"Would you mind spending it as I did mine?"

"What, buy another present for granny and grandpapa!" Enid asked quickly; for she did not quite approve of the proposed plan.

The girl would not have liked it to be thought or said that she was jealous of Garry wishing to do the same as she had done, though there was a feeling in her heart wonderfully like jealousy that prompted the speech. But scarcely were the words spoken than Enid felt ashamed of them, especially as Garry answered—

"Oh no, of course I wouldn't do that. I meant, buy a present for Aunt Agatha and Cousin Edgar."

"Oh, Garry, what a lovely thought! How pleased they will be!"

"Auntie will; but perhaps he won't like it."

"Oh yes, he will," was her confident answer. "Do go out soon and choose the things."

"But Mr. Simpson said you were to do that."

"But I can't; and it really doesn't matter one bit—I'm sure it doesn't."

But Garry was not so positive about this. Per-

haps it was that though he had made the proposal, he was not quite so eager to carry it out now the time had come; for no one can get rid of old habits all at once, and Garry had begun to think, between his shyness and fear, that perhaps his offering would be coldly accepted, or, even worse than that, it might be refused altogether. But when he hinted at these fears to Enid she scorned the idea as absurd.

"Of course he will be glad. Ask granny if he won't."

Mrs. Emerson, as the girl hoped and expected, agreed with Enid that the thought was an excellent one, and proposed that she should go and choose Garry's present in Enid's place, assuring the boy that she was certain Mr. Simpson would approve of the plan when he heard all particulars.

While they were out Enid was to keep quiet and have a sleep, but, instead of carrying out this latter arrangement, she lay wide awake, making all sorts of plans as to how and when it would be best for Garry to offer his gifts, for Enid was almost as eager and anxious about their reception as was Garry himself.

So when Mr. Prescott, as was now his custom on returning home each evening, came in to inquire for the little invalid, she said—

"Grandfather, if you have a surprise to-night will you promise to be pleased?"

"What sort of a surprise do you mean, Enid?"

"A nice one, of course."

"Then I think I can safely promise to be pleased with it," he answered, smiling a little at the child's earnestness.

Enid's confiding affectionate little ways were very pleasant to the grave reserved man, who had, in his sore disappointment and grief, been closing his heart during so many years against all love and friendship; and the coldness that had hurt poor little Enid's feelings so much was but in seeming only, and proved a feeble barrier before the sight of the child's danger and suffering.

"But, grandfather," she went on in the same earnest manner, "will you please try and look glad as well?"

"But, Enid, if you know I am glad——"

"It isn't me. I know, but somebody else doesn't."

"Very well, I will try, and both look and be pleased. Will that satisfy you?"

"Yes, quite."

Directly Garry made his appearance, Enid demanded, "Have you got it?"

"Yes."

And then, in obedience to her eager signs, the boy went up, and with a shy faltering voice presented his little offering to Mr. Prescott, who was so utterly taken aback by the proceeding, that for the moment he forgot his promise, for he had never suspected that the "nice surprise" was to come from any one but Enid; but a squeeze of the hand that was nearest the sofa reminded him of what he had to do.

"Is this for me, Garry, really?"

"Yes, if you like."

"Kiss him," came in a low whisper from the sofa.

"Thank you very much." And he stooped and kissed the boy on the forehead. It was the first caress that had passed between Garry and his cousin; and when the latter saw the quick flush of surprise and pleasure on the boy's face, his heart smote him, and he repeated, "Thank you very much. It was really very kind of you to give me this pleasure."

"Oh, is it a pleasure, really? I'm so glad. I was afraid that you——"

"And I told him," broke in Enid, "that I knew you would be pleased. And now, Garry," she added, as Mr. Prescott at sound of the dressing-bell left them together—"now you see that I was right, and so you won't be afraid of him any more."

This was Garry's first step on the road to victory over his fear of Cousin Edgar; and though his fight to win what Enid had gained so speedily was longer and harder than hers had been, Garry did win too, and in doing so learned, as all who try it do, that love is the best and surest weapon wherewith a soldier of Christ can and does achieve victory.

Although the children often found Cousin Edgar's big house dull, and Miss Ashley's lessons dreary and uninteresting, they never again either thought or spoke of running way, but strove, like brave little soldiers of the Cross, though with many failures and frequent shortcomings, to do their duty well and lovingly.

After some time, when the days were longer and the sun had begun to whisper of a coming spring, the children heard news of their soldier-friend, John Carpenter—news that brought tears into both young eyes, when Mrs. Scobel, who had called to see Prudence, read out to them a letter from her young cousin James, written at the seat of war a few days after a battle had been fought, in which both he and John had taken part, and in which the latter had been wounded unto death.

"Please tell the young lady and gentleman with

whom Prudence is in service that John sent them his duty as he lay a-dying, and that he had not forgotten, if he might make bold to say so, that they were comrades in the same army."

"Oh, poor John!" said Enid, softly.

"Not 'poor John,' dear," said Aunt Agatha, who had been one of the listeners to the letter read by Mrs. Scobel. "He has fought the good fight, and now has gotten the victory through Him that loved us, and Who will enable," she added lovingly, "even the youngest and weakest soldiers in His army to be victors in the fight they wage in His name and for His sake."

THE END.

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