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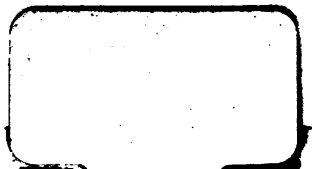
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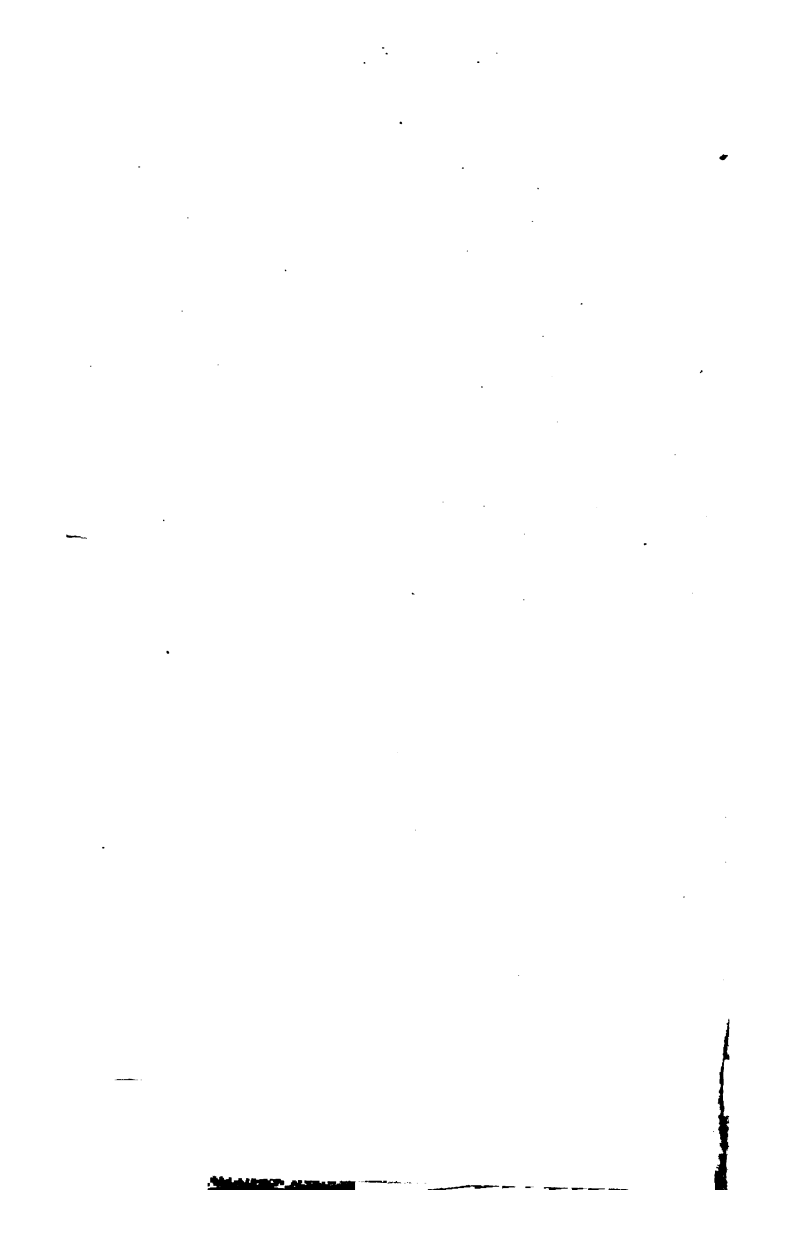
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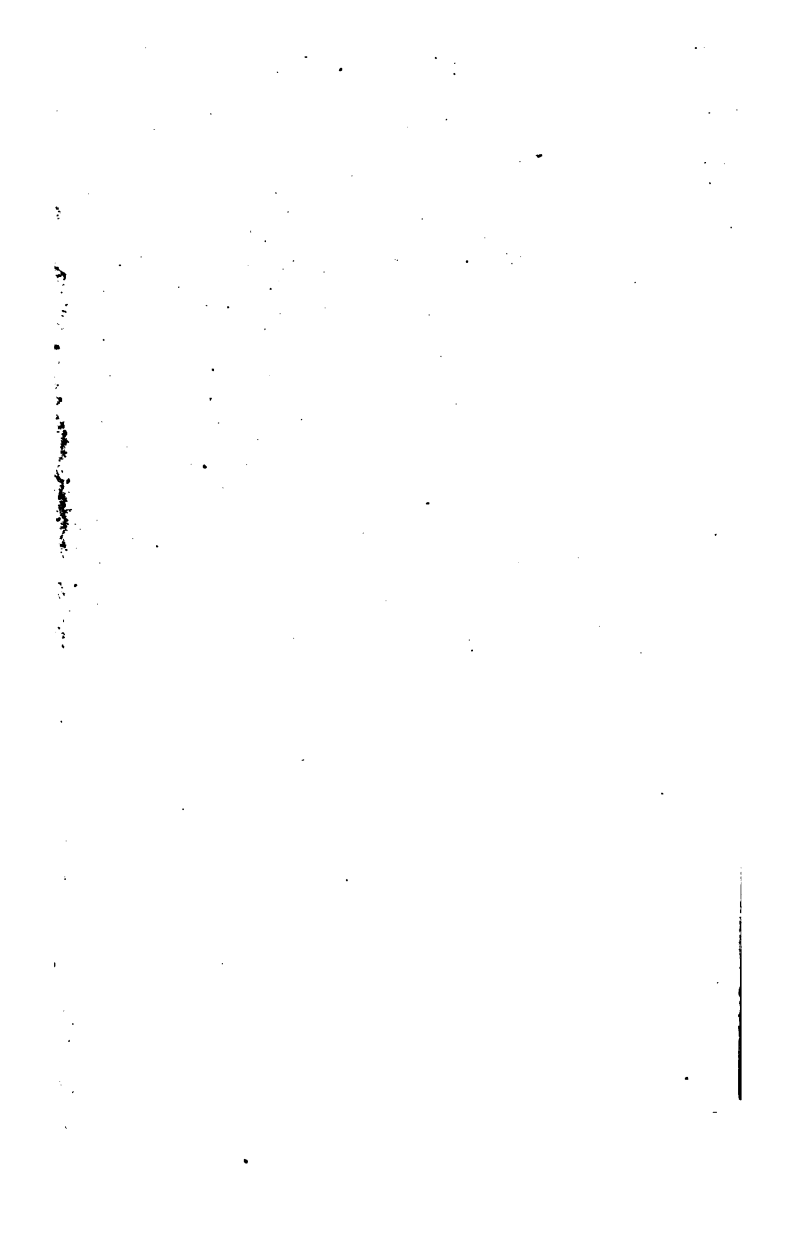


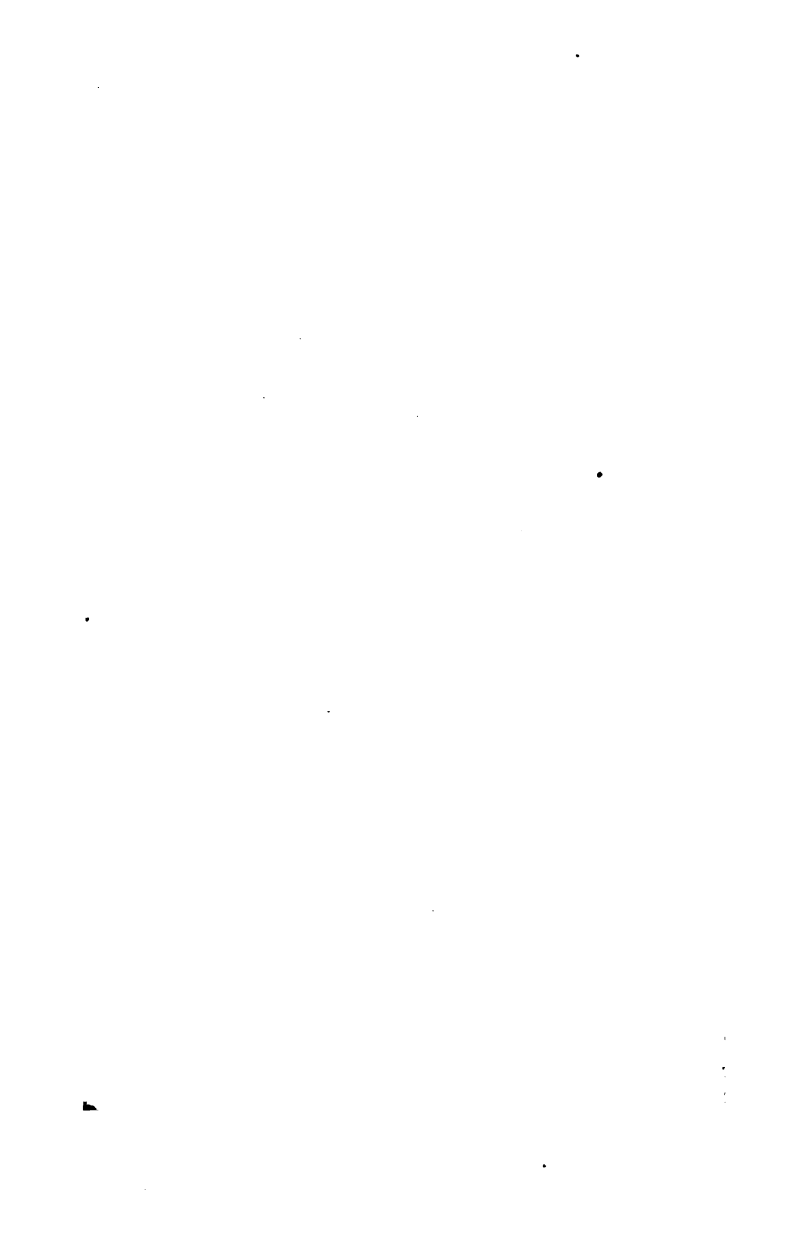
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NOY WEN  
J. B. W.  
Y. B. W.




# THE LITTLE LYCHETTS.

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## I.

### *A Sad Disappointment.*

N the 5th of March, 18—, no matter what, at eight in the morning, I stood by my bed-room fire, alternately warming my hands and looking at my face in the glass.

Now there was very little advantage or pleasure in the latter occupation, for I was not a pretty girl, nor, in general, was I overmuch given to that sort of self-examination. It wearied me, and wounded my vanity. But on this special day, even if I did devote half an hour to contemplating my own likeness, it was on many points excusable.

I was thirteen that morning. Nobody seemed to have noticed the circumstance, or wished to do it honour, which I suppose was impossible in a boarding-school, where, though I was by far the most important pupil, there were ten other scholars of a lower order, who had birth-days as well as I. Some of them, however, were accustomed to receive home letters on that day ; little Janie Allardyce had last week shown me hers. I never had any

But I usually had, what many of my school-mates would have valued still more, a handsome present, either an Indian shawl or a Trichinopoli chain, or something of the sort. Being dispatched by my father's London agent, who had no great interest in little girls' birth-days, it always arrived some days too late, when I cared nothing about it. But all the girls envied me, and thought it very fine to be Col. Lychett's daughter ; and I noticed that Mrs. Dangerfield, the school-mistress, though she talked a good deal about not valuing the vanities of the world, always treated me with especial consideration for at least a week after-

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were left in company ; for I had unfortunately the honour of spending my weary evenings in her dull drawing-room. Once she came in, and discovered my occupation. She took the newspaper away, saying it was not suitable reading for any young lady, especially a young lady of fortune. My heart rose to my mouth, but I checked myself. I could not tell *her* what I wanted "The Times" for. Scarcely ever, or to anybody, did I speak of my dear parents.

They were to me only a name,—I had never seen them, to my knowledge. They went out to India when I was a mere baby, whom they dared not take with them, lest the climate should kill me. So I was deposited with an old aunt and my nurse. The former died, the latter married ; and I, like a parcel of goods with no owner's name, was passed from hand to hand, until I subsided into Mrs. Dangerfield's fashionable boarding-school.

Transferred to so many people, and remaining permanently with none, I had naturally contracted few likings. Everybody was very

civil, and paid me a vast deal of attention ; my school-fellows looked up to me with great respect, especially when my handsome quarterly allowance came in ; yet I often thought, when I went up to my little bed at night—my usual time for thinking—that, supposing I were found dead the next morning, there was not a single creature in England who would cry, except perhaps the little half-boarder who was set to wait on me, Janie Allardyce.

No wonder, then, that I had looked forward eagerly to the coming home of my parents. It was only for two years, they said, since my father had not saved money enough to settle in England yet. But the health of both required a "furlough," and they wanted to bring little Bion for his education. It would be very hard to part with him, my mother wrote ; I wondered whether, ten years before, it had been as hard to part with me, and was half inclined to be jealous of my brother Bion.

They had told me he was a very pretty boy, and that was the reason I was looking so earnestly in the glass on my birth-day morn-

ing. As I have stated, the result was not favourable. To this day I remember, and could draw—some time, when I am a very clever artist, I will draw—the image I there viewed.

The best word to describe myself I had the previous day found in my Italian lesson, and wondered why some of the other pupils slyly laughed,—“*Una figliaccia*, a great, ugly, awkward girl.” This not very flattering description painted me exactly. I was large-boned; large-faced, large-handed. Nothing could impart to my appearance the grand quality, in Mrs. Dangerfield’s estimation, “refinement.” I was the sort of girl of whom people say, from her cradle, “What a pity she wasn’t a boy!” Nothing could alter this fact—not the handsome, over-womanly dresses I constantly wore—not the lazy motions and attitudes which I was instructed to call lady-like—not the dancing-master’s skill, and the lectures on deportment given in my daily walks with Mrs. Dangerfield round the squares, or across Kensington Gardens. All these cares left me, as they found me,—*una figliaccia*.



As to my face, it was broad and round, with a turn-up nose and a wide mouth. Sometimes I hoped my eyes were not so bad, being large and blue, and I know I had plenty of hair, from the trouble it gave me. But otherwise, in spite of hints from time-serving teachers, that Miss Lychett would grow up into "a fine woman," and some consolations from honest little Janie, that, plain as I was, I looked pleasant when I happened to smile,—my own good sense, and my study of all the engravings and pictures I could lay hold of, assured me of one melancholy fact, that Eunice Lychett never would be anything but an ugly woman.

On this thirteenth birth-day I seemed to have grown uglier than usual, taller, awkward, paler. And this just when my stately papa and my beautiful mamma,—of course they must be stately and beautiful, I thought,—were coming home to see me! How could they ever love me, they who had been used only to my pretty brother Bion! I could not help it;—it was not my fault that I was ugly! Should I grow angry, and take to hating little

Bion and them all? or should I run away, as I had often longed to do, and live by myself in a cottage on a moor?

I could not decide. The only thing I did was to throw the cruel looking-glass face foremost on the bed, and stand, half-dressed as I was, by the mantel-piece, in a very melancholy state of mind.

A knock at the door! How very odd! I hurried my frock on, wrong side before, and answered.

Mrs. Dangerfield's voice! "Are you there, my dear Eunice?"

Now, nobody ever addressed me as anything but "Miss Lychett." I started to hear the sound of my Christian name—the name my parents and my little brother would call me by.

"May I come in, my dear?"

"Certainly, ma'am." I first looked fearfully round, to see if the room were tidy, and no stray shoes and stockings lying about,—then I regarded my governess. She was all smiles, and she held out to me the forbidden "Times" newspaper.

I horrified her dignity by flying forward, and tearing it out of her hand.

It was as I thought!—"Arrived off the *Doups, the Burhampore, East Indiaman.*" I threw myself on the bed. Oh! how I did cry!

"Compose yourself, Miss Lychett. These feelings are all very graceful and natural, but do compose yourself."

I sprang up from the pillows. There was Mrs. Dangerfield standing by me, bland and demure; not a fold in her dress, or a feature in her face, altered. *She* never had any children! and she must have quite forgotten the time when she was a child herself. It was the first time I had ever cried before her; I determined it should be the last. I dried my eyes, and sat upright.

"There, that is better. And now, let me congratulate you, my dear young lady. I have as yet not had the pleasure of receiving any communication from your papa and mamma; but considering the date of their arrival, I think it is quite possible that you may see

them,—will you give me the paper again for a moment?" (oh, what an interminable moment!) —that you may see them to-day."

"To-day! this very day!" How I trembled!

"Therefore, in order that your feelings may subside, and you may be in readiness to receive Col. and Mrs. Lychett in a becoming manner, I will, my dear, excuse you from the school-room."

She shook hands with more than ordinary graciousness, and disappeared, leaving me to my "feelings." I don't know clearly what became of me after then,—I was in such a maze. I only remember Janie Allardyce bringing up my breakfast, and crying for joy on my neck; which was more familiarity than she had ever ventured on before, poor little thing! seeing she was only a Dorsetshire farmer's daughter, while my papa was Col. Lychett, of the H. E. I. C.'s service. We were very particular about rank and respectability at Mrs. Dangerfield's.

Janie went down-stairs. No one else came

near me, though I occasionally heard footsteps and whisperings at my door, and knew it was my school-mates, the happy girls who had fathers and mothers coming to see them! So should I have, soon! And a natural impulse of proud satisfaction mingled with my other and better feelings.

It passed away, and I fell into a state of great trepidation. What would my parents think of me? How should I make the best of myself, so as to appear before them? First, how should I dress? For I still sat shivering without my frock, with my poor hair all tangled. I fastened it up, and turned over all my rich silk dresses, one after the other, uncertain which to choose. When suddenly it struck me how little they would care what dress I had on. It was myself they wanted—me, their own child. What did it matter whether I appeared in fine clothes or plain, so that I were my own natural self, their good and loving daughter? I would try to be this; and as for anything else, why—I would not care.

So I took my last new frock, a simple grey merino, which Janie had said I looked best in, made my hair as neat as I could, and dressed myself with a steadfast mind.

I would not descend until after the school-hour, when I knew the house was all quiet, and nobody could intrude on me. Then I stole into the drawing-room, and sat there, waiting—waiting, hour after hour, and an hour seems so long when one is a child. Once, almost driven crazy with my restlessness, I sent for Janie, who was mending my clothes up-stairs. All she gave me was sympathy, and a wise, gentle hint, that the time would pass quicker if I employed myself.

“Employed myself!” I had never done it in my life, I had been brought up so entirely as a fine lady. Out of school-hours I had never done anything but a little practising, a little drawing, or a solemn, genteel walk round the square. When I saw Janie’s fingers flying nimbly, I felt so useless and miserable, I could have cried.

The bell rang for lunch, which was the other

girl's dinner, I knew how they would all stare at me. To bear that was impossible. Again I fled up-stairs and hid myself in my room, thinking the day never would be over.

Perhaps, my parents had not reached London yet; perhaps—dreadful thought!—they might be in no hurry to see me. They had little Bion and were satisfied. But no! that was impossible. I took out their last letters—long, kind letters, as theirs always were, and read them again and again, with many tears of joy.

“*Papa, mamma,*”—I sat saying the unfamiliar words over to myself, that I might say them quite naturally in their hearing. Of course, I should call them thus, and not “sir” or “ma’am,” even though they would seem quite strangers. To think that, going out to-day, I might meet my own father and mother in the street and not know them! They had never sent me any portrait, only a lock of either's hair, and my mother's hair was just like my own. My mother,—my very own mother! Would she feel herself as such, and kiss me and love me? If so,

I should love her, all in a minute, and for ever ! Thinking of them so much, I ceased to remember myself at all. It altogether passed from me,—the cruel thought I was so ugly !

About four o'clock, when the sunshiny day was clouding over, and I felt myself growing dull with despair, little Janie came running into my bed-room.

“ Oh, Miss Lychett, do you see the cab at the door ? And there are people in the drawing room ! And—and—I heard your name ! ”

I trembled so I could hardly stand. The next minute I had made a dart at the bedroom door.

“ Miss Lychett ! dear Miss Lychett ! stop, pray ! Mrs. Dangerfield has not sent for you yet. Don't go down. ”

“ I will ! ” I cried, desperately. “ They are come,—I know they are, and all the Mrs. Dangerfields in the world shall not keep me from my own father and mother ! ”

I ran—how I cannot tell—until I found myself at the drawing-room door. Mrs. Dangerfield was just opening it ; at the sight of me



she started back, "Is it you, child? Go upstairs—go!" But I forced my way in.

There were three strange people in that room. I can see them now!—a gentleman, like a ship's captain—an Indian ayah,—and a little yellow-faced, sickly boy.

"That is your brother, Eunice. Go and kiss him. There!" said Mrs. Dangerfield, in the kindest tone I ever heard from her.

The boy turned peevishly from me, and set up a whimper.

"But papa and mamma?" I cried, all confused and bewildered. "Where are my papa and mamma?" . . . .

—Alas! they had been left side by side, in two graves on the rock of St. Helena!

## II.

### An Unexpected Friend.

IT is a strange feeling when Death first enters the child's little world, and takes away some one whom, consciously or not, it had tacitly believed to be immortal.

Thus, of the numerous possibilities I had dreaded with regard to my parents, it had never once come into my mind that they might *die*,—die without my ever having beheld them, or called them by the sweet name of "father" and "mother." The blow was so sudden, that for the time it stunned me, and I woke out of it a changed creature. From that thirteenth birthday I was never again a "child." Even now the whole event often seems impossible and unnatural, and I think of that bare rock in the Atlantic, where the Indian ships touched at and the great Napoleon died, as some happy

island in the far-off seas, where these my unknown and never-beheld parents sit waiting for Bion and me.

It is time I spoke of Bion as he first appeared to my sisterly eyes, clinging, whimpering, to his ayah's robe. I never saw—he will not mind my saying it of him now—I never saw a more peevish-looking or sickly child.

At first sight my heart had positively turned against him ; nay—God forgive me—not quite that ; but it seemed suddenly to grow cold. And his first action—how long it rankled in my mind!—was to shrink crying from me. The next minute the dreadful tidings fell, and everything became confused.

The first thing I remember clearly after that instant was sitting in my own room by candle-light and alone ; that is, nearly alone, for there was the soft breathing of a sleeper in my bed. I sat listening, outside the curtains. For two days I had lived in the midst of a strange confusion, both around me and within me ; but at last I found myself in this my quiet bed-room, with its familiar furniture—everything just as

it was before this great whirlwind of trouble came. The storm had passed over, and left nothing in the wide world but the sickly sleeper, whom I had carried up-stairs and put into my own bed—my little eight-year-old brother, Bion.

I drew the curtain gently and peeped at him. He did not look so cross now he was asleep—children seldom do. And when his features were in repose and not pinched up by that perpetual peevish whine, I could see that they were delicate and regular. I remembered that in some old letter my mother had said that Bion was considered very like herself: eagerly I gazed, trying to guess from his face what hers must have been. And I felt my heart yearn over the child, which was all she had left me—the little peevish child, who had never yet given me one kind word.

Stooping, I kissed one of his ringlets, his long rich chestnut ringlets, the only thing about him that was natural and healthy-like—and even in his sleep he knitted his brows. I put my hand gently on his little curled-up fingers—he drew his arm away. So I could but look at

him from a distance, feeling very mournful, and wondering how we two poor orphans would get through the world, and whether I should ever love my little brother enough to teach him to care for me. For some strong conviction was in my mind, even then, that only love creates love.

I did not love him then ; it was beyond the bounds of human possibility that I could ; but I was drawn to him by some instinct of kindred, and, above all, by a sense that was always strong in me—though how it came I do not know—the sense of duty.

I turned from the bed-side, rubbed my eyes (they were very sore and hot), and began wrapping up and putting in order Bion's little clothes that were strewn about the floor. I had been obliged to undress him myself, he screaming all the while for his nurse, who had gone away. I have heard of Indian ayahs being very faithful through all misfortune to the children under their charge ; this woman was, fortunately for me, an exception to the rule. She placed Bion under Mrs. Dangerfield's

roof, managed to take my mother's clothes and jewels instead of her wages, and we never saw anything of her afterwards.

Isatsmoothing Bion's velvet frock beneath my hands, and vaguely wondering what I should do, with his nurse away, and the sole management of such a feeble and sickly child left to me, as seemed probable, for all the help any one gave me,—when one of the under-teachers appeared.

“Miss Lychett, you are wanted. Come down-stairs directly.”

I was not used to be addressed so unceremoniously, even by a teacher. I merely turned my head, and made no reply.

“Miss Lychett!” spoken louder and more rudely. It roused me.

“Miss Ward, I will thank you not to waken my little brother.” And in saying the word “brother,” and in keeping guard over him in this way, a new tenderness crept into my heart.

“One can't be troubled with you and your brother always. I am sure there has been quite fuss enough made over you both in this house ; and it is my opinion Mrs. Dangerfield

thinks so too. She desires you to come to her directly."

The tone of this speech, half careless, half rude, was something so entirely new to my ears, that at first it only astonished me. "Really, Miss Ward, it is so late, and I am very tired; and my little brother is asleep."

"Let him alone then. He will have to shift for himself often enough, I suspect, and you too. You must come down!"

"Excuse me, but I shall not do any such thing." I rose and shut the door upon her as she stood outside. I did it angrily, for Bion had already been disturbed in his sleep. I waited till he was quiet again, and then sat down, my cheeks burning with wrath, mingled with some slight fear.

Could it be possible that she spoke thus to me—Miss Ward, who flattered me most, and whom I, consequently, most steadily disliked of the whole establishment? Was the cause something which I had heard, though the confusion of my mind prevented my fully apprehending it—that, from some misfortune or

other, our parents' sudden death had left me no longer a rich young lady, petted and caressed, but the meanly-pensioned orphan of an Indian officer, who had died penniless? Bion, too, was as poor as I. Could anybody be so wicked as to change their behaviour towards us because of our poverty? I had heard of such things, but I would not believe them. Never!

Jane Allardyce knocked at the door—little Janie, whose gentle, respectful manner had never altered. She spoke entreatingly,—

“Dear Miss Lychett, Mrs. Dangerfield is growing so angry.”

“Let her. I shall not come. I shall stay and take care of my brother.” And for the moment, in the pride and isolation of this new tie, I lost sight of what was due, even to Mrs. Dangerfield. “There, Janie, don't cry. Tell her she must either come and speak to me here, or wait until morning.”

And, thoroughly worn out, I laid my throbbing head on a mattress which Janie had brought, and prepared myself to sleep on the



floor—I who had been so luxurious and particular in my sleeping ! But I did not seem to care much about anything now. Everything was so unnatural, that the strangest things came quite as a matter of course.

I had hardly shut my eyes when I had again to open them, to see my governess standing over me.

“ Miss Lychett, this conduct——”

“ I can't help it, ma'am. What did you want to say to me ? I am so tired.”

Possibly there was a broken-heartedness in my manner which touched her, and made her remember—what, not seeing me all day, she had doubtless forgotten—that I was newly orphaned. She took my hand rather kindly than otherwise.

“ I am sorry for your fatigue, my dear ; but time is precious. I cannot keep that boy in my establishment. Especially as he looks ill and feverish ; there is no saying—really, this is a very perplexing business.”

Doubtless it was ; altogether out of the common run of events in young ladies' schools,

and not to be measured by the line-and-rule standard of proprieties which guided the conduct of Mrs. Dangerfield.

"My dear Miss Lychett," said she, at last, "I shall speak to you as if you were a grown-up young la—— young person, which you must become as fast as ever you can. Those who are in reduced circumstances cannot afford to remain children. You must finish your education—less will be required now—and learn to earn your own living. I could offer you a situation as half-boarder."

I started. What! Miss Lychett—Colonel Lychett's only daughter—to become a poor "half"—that name of scorn in our school; to be looked down upon by teachers, laughed at by pupils, treated familiarly or rudely by servants; in short, made a common household drudge and byword—a second Janie Allardyce!

"A half-boarder! I thank you, Mrs. Dangerfield, but——"

"You cannot afford 'buts,' Miss Lychett. It is the only plan I see. Hitherto I have been unsuccessful in finding a single relation

you possess. There is no one to take charge of you but myself; and even in that case, what is to be done with the boy? Some orphan asylum, now——”

“An orphan asylum! Put my brother into an orphan asylum!” And I saw a visionary troop of starved, shivering, wretched little charity boys, with Bion among them—poor Bion, the only living creature I had belonging to me in the world!

“Never, Mrs. Dangerfield! never! I’d starve first!”

She looked down on my violence in her calm, ladylike way,—she had such very ladylike manners. “My dear, you should not speak lightly of such an extremely possible alternative.”

I did not quite comprehend her, being far too much excited to have a clear understanding of anything. I walked up and down the bedroom—my old quick, passionate walk—repeating, “Orphan Asylum!” “Half-boarder!” Alas! there had been such a fearful amount of pride taught me in my thirteen years, ere I

had wisdom to see more than the outside of things.

Mrs. Dangerfield sat patiently—more patiently than I then gave her credit for. Perhaps she was even sorry for the poor frantic girl, that is, so far as her cold nature allowed. We cannot make people otherwise than they are; and I have often thought since, that I did not sufficiently estimate the stern way in which she invariably fulfilled what she believed to be her duty. There are many worse people in the world than my former schoolmistress; and the older one grows the more one learns to respect any not unjust authority.

My governess let me pace the room and sob, till I was quieted—not by her, but by the face of my little brother appearing through the bed-curtains. He looked white and frightened—scarcely peevish this time.

“What is the matter? I want papa and mamma. Oh, papa and mamma, do come to little Bion!”

Alas, the pitiful, helpless cry, which there was none to answer, none but me! My pas-





"There's a gentleman wanting you, ma'am."

L. Lychetts.

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sion was calmed at once. I ran and snatched him to my arms, kissing him as I had never kissed any one in my life before.

He go to an asylum! my own brother—my darling boy? Sooner would I beg—no, not beg, but work for him—in the open street!

Mrs. Dangerfield watched us all this while, sitting stately at the foot of the bed, or occasionally walking to the fireplace, with her short, nervous cough. Perhaps even she, severe woman as she was—she, who had never had any children—felt sorry for us orphans.

When the room was quiet, and Bion had fallen into a half-doze, beginning to whimper again at intervals (and he felt himself bound by necessity to do so), little Janie Allardyce, with a flushed countenance, in which was more eagerness and less shyness than I had ever before seen there, opened the door and asked for Mrs. Dangerfield.

“There’s a gentleman wanting you, ma’am,”

My governess drew herself up. “Not at this hour. Say I shall be visible to-morrow.”

“Oh, to-night, ma’am! Please, to-night!

He has come such a long way. And he said, when he asked for me——”

“Asked for *you*, Miss Allardyce!” Janie nearly sank into the floor with the stern rebuke. “Who is the gentleman?”

“He is only a farmer,” answered Janie hastily, and trembling. “He lives near us at home, and everybody knows him. I wrote to my mother, two days ago, to ask—well, it doesn’t signify now—and he has brought me the answer to my letter.”

“But of what moment is all this? Retire and deliver my message,” said Mrs. Dangerfield, coldly.

“Oh, ma’am, do see him. He has something to say to you, and he is such a good old man. All Dorset knows Mr. Reuben Linnington.”

As she said the name, it somehow struck me that I had heard it before, probably when I was a very little child. I turned towards the door, which looked upon the staircase.

“Madam, my name is Reuben Linnington.”  
—“Sir!”

I can see him now, as my horrified governess



then saw him, standing at the bedroom door : a tall, but stooping old man, with a long thin face, remarkable for nothing save the extreme gentleness of its expression. He looked far less like a farmer than a poor country clergyman. His manner was shy and much excited.

“Ma’am, if you be the schoolmistress, tell me where I shall find Eunice Linnington’s—that is, Mrs. Colonel Lychett’s two children.”

Mrs. Dangerfield pointed to Bion and me. The old man hardly looked at me, but was attracted by Bion, then fast asleep, with his delicate girlish face and his pretty, pretty curls.

“Oh, cousin Eunice! cousin Eunice!” he muttered to himself, us forgetting everything, he walked right in—sat down at the foot of the bed—looked at Bion—sobbed—took out his handkerchief—and dried his eyes. Nobody could laugh at those tears, even though they burst out so childishly, and were wiped off by that queer red cotton pocket-handkerchief.

Again Mrs. Dangerfield sternly said, “Sir!” and he hurriedly answered, “Madam.” I

stared at both with unfeigned wonder; Janie stood half laughing, half crying, at the door; and little Bion quietly slept.

“Madam, I am cousin to Mrs. Lychett—Eunice Linnington that was, and I am come to take home with me her two children.” At which he laid hold of me with one hand, and tried to lift Bion with the other, seemingly indifferent to everything except carrying us away.

The boy woke and cried. I pushed the old man away angrily, and took my little brother in my arms. Mr. Linnington noticed me for the first time.

“Who are you, Miss? Are you——”

“I am Eunice Lychett.”

“*Eunice?*” peering at me eagerly. “You’re not like her—not at all.” And then, taking my hand with a simple straightforwardness, all the while wiping the tears away with the other, he said, “I was your mother’s cousin, Miss Eunice, and I was very fond of her, but she married and went away. I have never married, and have no children. If you like, I

will take you two for my children henceforward. I am not rich, but you shall share the little I have, while I live and when I die. Will you come, *Eunice* ? ”

I looked at him, the honest, simple old man, who had been “very fond of my mother.” Somehow, it was a good face, and I trusted it. Even Bion let him approach, and did not whimper. I put one arm round my little brother, gave the other to Mr. Linnington, and said, “We will come.”

So we went.

### III.

#### Lias Lee's Story.

**I**T is a rather keen, but sunny and pleasant morning. I sit in the railway carriage, with my face to the iron horses, and the sharp wind blows my hair and my bonnet-strings in all directions. I have a consciousness that this is not agreeable—that it makes my eyes water and my nose turn red, but there is no other vacant seat, except the one opposite, which my little brother has just crept to, and I could not be so selfish as to want it of a poor, shivering, East Indian child. So I tie my veil tighter, and endure the blast.

Little Bion lolls about pallid and restless. He will half-condescend to speak to me now, and allow me to do anything I like for him, but he

positively refuses to kiss me ; and if he ever calls me "sister," it is with the trying adjective "ugly" affixed. A hundred times a day my spirit rises, and I am on the point of hating him ; and then his poor little delicate face, that would be so pretty if he were less fretful, comes between me and my wrath. I remember he is all I have left of those whom I never saw. And I forgive him, thinking of the far-off grave in the island of St. Helena.

Our good cousin sits beside me, leaning on his large thin hand ; he does not talk much, but alternately takes out and reads two or three well-thumbed books, which I suspect to be hymn-books. When he closes them, he generally sits vaguely looking before him—probably at little Bion.

I think our cousin Reuben—as he desires us to call him—a simple, good creature ; but in the precocity of my thirteen years, I rather look down upon his old-fashioned country ways. I wonder what is our fellow-passengers' opinion of him, and am half ashamed to belong to him and to his rough farmer's coat ;

but I comfort myself with thinking how exquisitely refined the boy Bion looks, with the pretty fair curls straying over his black mourning-frock—the deep, deep mourning that we both wore, scarcely heeding by whom it was provided. And now—strange to say, and yet not strange—even I am beginning to get used to it, and to my sorrow likewise. Both grow easier in the wearing.

Ere many miles of this journey have gone by, I am laughing and trying to make Bion laugh—not the easiest task in the world; but the more he repels me the more I am determined on the undertaking; I never could endure to be beaten in anything. At last he deigns to look up and give me a half-smile.”

“How like his mother!” sighs our worthy old cousin, noticing him. “You’ll be a good boy now, little Bion?”

But as if the very idea of being a good boy were insulting to his feelings, Master Bion relapses into his old ways immediately, and does not recover himself till we reach Southampton. There, at sight of the ships’ masts

and the narrow glitter of sea that one can view from the railway, he starts up.

"I want to go home, across the beautiful blue water. I want to go back to the ship, and to papa and mamma and Lulu, and everybody."

And then again whimperings and tears, at which our cousin sighs once more from the bottom of his heart. I feel a kind of shame that we should be such a trouble to the good old man.

"Cousin Reuben, perhaps we had better not go home with you, but try and live by ourselves. I can work hard when I like, and I don't much mind being hungry, or having shabby clothes; or, at the worst" (my heart recoils at this alternative, remembering how I left the house that morning, in a miserable cab, receiving just a civil message of adieu from my governess, and not one of the girls coming to say good-bye to me, except poor Jane Allardyce), "at the worst, I can but go and be a half-boarder at Mrs. Dangerfield's."

"And what of Bion?"

"He shall go to some place where he will be happy and merry, and not be teased with seeing his ugly sister more."

At my saying this—in a voice more hurt than angry, though I wonder at myself for feeling so—I am astonished by seeing little Bion stop whimpering. His great eyes are fixed on my face—my poor ugly face—with a curious expression. It is not affection, but it is a sort of pitiful up-looking, a clinging appeal for protection, such as no child ever turns to one whom it dislikes. The look pleases me, in spite of the rude words that accompany it.

"I don't believe you. You're telling stories, my dear Eunice."

"I am not! I never tell stories;" and, deigning no answer, I turn away. "You don't

"How could I should care for you. I wish old Cousin Bion would take me away, that you might have a boy now, like Bion."

But as if she gave no answer, but still sits watching his great eyes. The carriage relapses into its former pace and slower—we are reaching does not recover its former speed. Suddenly the door opens. There,



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“ We sit upon our box of clothes, my brother and I.”

L. Lychetts.

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flies open, and a strange man catches hold of me.

“How be you, Mr. Reuben? These the poor little 'uns, eh? Beg pardon, but I'm sent for you, Miss Lychett.”

And he proceeds to help me out on the platform, but my little brother holds me back with all his force.

“Oh, no, no! I'll be good, I'll be good; only don't take away sister Eunice. I couldn't do without sister Eunice.”

And he clings and sobs, even after I have turned and comforted him with the assurance that I am not going; and when I ask him, he puts up his mouth willingly to kiss me, which favour I take with a beating heart. We sit upon our box of clothes, my little brother and I, surrounded by all the confusion of the terminus, and I quiet his fears and hold his hand; and feel that I am beginning to be content. . .

The man who opened the carriage-door at Southampton was afterwards such a favorite companion of ours, that I must say a little

more about him. He looked something between a working-man and a gentleman; I remember he had on a rather shabby frock-coat, a very bright waistcoat, and kerchief with flying ends. He was a middle-aged man, with extraordinary red cheeks, eyes that resembled a round O, with a dot in the middle, bushy eye-brows, and a great, overhanging, wise-looking forehead. Nevertheless he touched his hat to Mr. Linnington with the instinctive respect of lower rank.

“I thought you’d be arriving about this time, sir. I told the Master so. And he said if you like to make use of our steamer and come with us to Swanage, ’twill be easier than coaching it; and we’ll try to make the young folk as comfortable as we can.”

“You are very kind, very kind indeed, Lias Lee,” said Mr. Reuben, in his meek, mechanical voice, as he tried to collect our luggage with his most useless-looking hands. I saw that, child as I was, my hands, and brains too, were a great deal the more active of the two, so I jumped up and did the business, aided by Lias,

or, as I afterwards discovered the etymology of his odd name, Elias Lee.

Of the next hour or two I remember little, save that I was hungry, cold and tired ; and should have felt very cross, only that Bion, as usual, cried, and I couldn't afford to lose my temper likewise. I thought of myself—my old self—sitting genteel in silk dresses by Mrs. Dangerfield's drawing-room fire, and feeling so peevish and discontented the while ; then of my new self in a common black marino gown and cloak, that was already half-soaked with a sudden shower, standing shivering on the damp deck of a miserable little steamer, trying vainly to persuade a crying child that it was quite warm, that we were not a bit hungry and must not complain. . And yet I would not have changed places with my "genteel" old self for the world.

At last, our cousin Reuben landed, from wandering about Southampton streets, where he had foraged what he called "dinner for the children."

Dinner ! Mercy on us ! Just some sickly-

looking jam-tarts and a paper of sugar-candy ! It was so long since the good old bachelor had been a child, that he was quite puzzled how to deal with us ; and, doubtless, brought this as his own faintly remembered notion of childish eating. It was not stinginess, for he sat down contentedly and munched his own bread and cheese ; and from something I heard Lias Lee muttering, when I asked if Mr. Reuben was gone to an hotel to dinner, I guessed that he was what people called "in narrow circumstances." And yet he had taken us two children to maintain !

So when Bion, after hungrily gobbling down one tart, threw the second away, with the epithet of "nasty," and began to cry more bitterly than ever for "dinner," I puzzled my brains as to what we could have that was simplest and cheapest. At last I decided on bread-and-butter and milk, and hesitatingly asked Mr. Reuben if these might be sent for before the little steamer left the quay, for "we were so hungry !"

Our cousin looked startled, blamed himself,

hurriedly turned out the whole contents of his pocket (some shillings only) into the hands of Lias Lee.

“Quick! let them have anything they want. Hungry! The idea of my letting Eunice’s children go hungry! Bring anything you can think of, Lias, do!”

But, at a hint from me, Lias was wiser; so we got a big loaf and plenty of butter. No milk was to be had.

“Now, Bion, sit down by me,” and I spread half my frock-skirt over some sail-cloth as a cushion, and put a clean pocket-handkerchief on my lap by way of a table-cloth; and borrowed Lias Lee’s shining new clasp-knife, which greatly attracted the attention of my brother.

“That’s right, I see the sun’s coming out;” and so it was, both in the sky and in the little fellow’s face. “Here’s a lovely loaf—see how grandly I’ll cut it. Who likes kissing-crust, Bion? I do—but—there! Now for butter—well, that is a contrivance. (The indefatigable Lias Lee had taken out a mariner’s compass, with its case—lined the case with a piece

of scribbled paper, and made it into an admirable butter-dish.)

“But you’ll spoil the writing on the paper?”

“Oh, never mind that, Miss!” said he, his red-cheeks blushing redder than ever; “I can put’un down out o’ my head again. It’s only my poetry.”

Lias Lee a poet! That *was* funny. But his confusion was such that I did not like to push inquiries; especially as Mr. Linnington began shaking his head,—

“Oh, Lias—Lias! Better be writing on the master’s office-desk, and getting more money for the wife and the little ones.”

“Never you mind, sir. It be no harm to nobody,” said Lias, good-humouredly. “Miss, your wrist’s tired wi’ cutting. I ha’ gotten clean hands; shall I cut your piece? The little gentleman likes his dinner now.”

He did indeed. Never did food taste nicer than that clumsy meal, eaten cheerfully and with loving-kindness to and from everybody. I think I could see us all—Bion munching away with an eagerness very foreign to his



usual pampered appetite, and Lias Lee squatting on the wet deck, cutting slices off the loaf, with his big knife, as daintily as a cook ; and our cousin Reuben, seated on the roof which covered the companion-ladder, with his long legs dangling down, and his mild eyes fixed on us—nay, not on *us*, but on Bion—with a pathetic satisfaction. All the while the getting up of the steam kept on with its whizzing noise ; now and then the boat gave a heave, and at last, almost without our knowing, we were fairly afloat in the bay, the quay and its bustling scenes vanishing from us, with the watery space rising between.

When we had done our dinner and began to look about us, enjoying the afternoon sun and the fresh sea air, Bion and I were mightily amused at the odd figure we cut on “ the vasty deep.” Imagine a kite, with its long tail of paper cross-bars, floating over a pond ! That’s just what we must have looked like in Southampton Water. Our little steamer was dragging at her stern a string of at least eight empty boats, fastened one behind the other

with a chain. It was the funniest thing imaginable to see them all steadily following in our wake, like a kite's tail.

Bion, who, wrapped in my old woollen shawl, sat warm and comfortable now, wanted to know what they were. I turned to ask cousin Reuben, but he had got out his little hymn-books again, and was dreamily contemplating the sea. So I applied to Lias Lee.

"They're the master's clay-boats. We took them loaded to Southampton, and now we're bringing them back empty. So we shall have a shorter voyage than usual, and that was why I was told to take in Mr. Linnington and you. The Master thought it would save him trouble and expense, you see,"—in under tones, with a knowing but kindly wink.

I asked who was "the Master."

"He's a clay-merchant; bless you! his pits stretch miles across the country. He's as rich as he's good, and as good as he's rich—that he be! An I'm a clerk in his counting-house."

"Rich! and only a clay-merchant," said I, rather contemptuously. "How can anybody

get rich by selling such a useless thing as clay?" and I thought of the miserable old men whom I had sometimes seen in the environs of London, sauntering after their donkey-carts, and holloaing out, in cracked voices, "*Mould for your gar-dens!*" "Clay! what's the good of clay?"

"Miss!" said Lias, not without dignity and a certain grave meaning, "that's the mistake that people very often make, especially with regard to us poor working-folk. They think us just common earth, and so we are, a great many of us, only fit to grow corn on and make gardens of. But now and then there turns up among us a bit of valuable clay. You, miss, nor a thousand others, couldn't tell it from common marl, till comes a man like the Master, or his father, or his grandfather before him, and finds out what its really worth. And so he digs it up and uses it properly, and it goes through many hands, and at last it turns out to be——Did you ever see a china vase, miss?"

"I should rather think so."

“Did you ever hear o’ the Potterie., where they make all sorts of beautiful earthenware that is sent over the whole civilised world? Well, that ware—not the china, but the earthenware—is all made out o’ the clay from the Master’s pits.”

“Hark, Bion, listen!” said I, greatly interested, though not so much but that I stopped to see the weary, peevish look again troubling the child’s face, and was anxious by any means to send it away.

“Yes, my little gentleman,” continued Lias, aiding me goodnaturedly—“if you’d listen, I’d tell you something as good as a fairy tale. The prettiest tea-cup that ever you drank out of has probably come up to Southampton as a lump of clay in one of those very boats.”

Bion shook his head, and said he wanted to get home and go to bed; the sea air made him very sleepy.

“But he won’t get home till rather late, for it’s a good way to Swanage, and a puzzling coast for the steamer to hold her course by, with all those boats in her wake. I’ll try and

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keep the little fellow half-an-hour or so longer, till it is quite dark."

So he began, fixing his bright, round, intelligent eyes on the child, and fairly transfixing him.

"I'll tell you a story, Master Bion. There was once a bit of clay—one lump out of a whole layer, or stratum, as the Master would call it—and it lay a little outside the rest, so that in his walks about his pits the Master saw it. 'I think this is just the sort we want,' says he, and fingers it very noticingly, and hunts about to see if there's any more of it. Then he sets his men to dig, and the little lump is knocked into the side of a large square mass of clay, and carried off and put with other lumps to dry. It lies there for weeks and months, in sun, and rain, and frost, till its substance is fit for use. Then it is put into an open boat, and lastly into the hold of a small vessel, to go half way round England by sea. Then it reaches the inland country and is unloaded, and put into a canal-boat. When it comes out, it is in a great smoky, bustling place,

with men running about with faces and clothes as dirty-white as its own clay.

“The poor lump goes through a deal of hard usage. It is torn to pieces and drowned with water, and mixed with other clays and substances still more unlike itself. It is pressed into a wheel and turned till it forces itself out, only to find itself in the hands of a man who moulds it into a strange shape, just as he chooses. It is put into an enormous oven and burned. It is dipped into some curious liquid and glazed. It is painted various colours, till it quite forgets the original colour it wore in the earth. Its roughnesses are chipped off, and it is made quite smooth. Lastly, it is packed up in soft paper, put into a wooden crate, and sent miles upon miles across the land or sea, sometimes to the other end of the world. And there it is taken out, and washed, and set upon a table, and looked at and admired. And it finds itself out to be——”

“What?” cried little Bion, breathless.

“A *tea-cup!*” . . . .

“Elias,” said cousin Reuben, stealing upon

us in the dark, "don't talk any more, but take the children down below. The men say they don't like this haze."

But what befell us in the haze, now overspreading the whole gloomy sea, I must tell in another chapter.

## IV.

### A Night at Sea.

“**WHY** did you send us down below, consin Reuben?” said I, as we were all huddled down in the small cabin of the steamer, anything but the pleasantest place in the world, and redolent of the smells of some hundred past dinners and tobacco-pipes. “I have a great mind to go on deck again.”

“I can’t hinder you, Miss Eunice,” said the old man, pathetically. I am afraid he had already found out that my will was stronger than his own. “But I have been so long dwelling on shore, that it troubles me to see the wonders and perils of the deep. And if you please, I would rather keep the boy safe here with me.”



Bion had at last dropped asleep from sheer weariness. "*You can go where you like.*"

I did go, and took a wild pleasure in pacing up and down the deck, my bonnet tied firmly down, and my cloak wrapped tightly round me. It was not a stormy night, nor was it very cold, but it was as dark as pitch,—or rather, everything was hidden from the sight with a grey haze. I could not see the boats behind us; even the men at the bows of the steamer looked indistinct and far away. I could hear their voices through the mist, mixing with the dash of the waves in the paddle wheels.

Unaccustomed as I was to the sea, the thought gave me a strange feeling, not exactly of fear—I was not born for fear—but of curiosity and wonder. And far through the haze my mind seemed to stretch out, and see, with nothing between me and it but these sounding invisible waves, the object which even now in my solitary hours I constantly beheld—the island of St. Helena.

I wondered, with a vague longing that would almost gladly have seen itself fulfilled, whether

we might not lose our course and be drifted *there*?

At last, in spite of my musings, which were very pleasant to a precociously romantic child, I grew cold; and crept near the funnel to warm myself. Two of the steamer's men—there were but three, besides Lias Lee—were talking close by.

“Do 'ee think, Jim, we'll get 'un safe into Swanage Bay to-night?”

“I bean't sure.”

“This be a black night, it be; but her's a tidy little craft. Whereabouts might 'un be now?”

“I doen't know.”

The last sentence made me feel rather uncomfortable. I did not walk the deck any more, but by an irrepressible impulse went down below to see after my little brother.

He had been all the while asleep, his head on Mr. Reuben's knees. It touched my heart to see how kind our poor, simple, old cousin was to the child. But at my entrance Bion started :

"Please, Lulu,—please, mamma. What a noise the ship is making! Take care of me, mamma,—Lulu."

He had woken up fancying himself on board the Burhampore.

"Don't'ee cry, now don't'ee, my poor little fellow!" said Mr. Reuben, mournfully; "eat a bit of sugar-candy, do! There, we shall soon get to Swanage, and then you shall have some nice supper and go to bed. Here, Lias! Lias Lee!"

Elias's big frame, legs foremost, was soon seen descending the companion-ladder.

"Lias," said Mr. Linnington, in great perplexity, "you have children of your own, can't you help us to amuse this poor little boy?"

"Ay, sir, with pleasure. It's hard for a child to be awake at this hour."

"Ah, indeed," and Mr. Reuben took out his watch; "why, dear me, it's eleven and more. What time shall we get into Swanage?"

"I can't exactly tell'ee, sir." And Elias looked somewhat glum. "It's not easy sailing in this fog, especially with eight boats to tug

after'un, though Jim do know the coast well. He thinks, somehow, we're wrong in our course, and are close ashore o' the Isle o' Wight yet."

"The Isle of Wight! Why, we shall not get home to-night. And what shall I do with the children? Why did I bring them on the perilous sea?"

"If you please, Mr. Reuben," I whispered at his elbow, dreading lest his dreary looks might frighten Bion, "I'm not a bit afraid; and I like being at sea very much indeed, and ——"

Here there was an unusual motion of the vessel, as if the engines were working heavily and with difficulty. We seemed to move slowly and by jerks, then the keel below us grated against something,—there was an uneasy quiver in the boat. A pause in the sound of the paddle-wheels—one plunge—and we came to a dead stop.

"There's something wrong," cried Mr. Reuben.

"Nothing much, don't'ee be frightened," cried Lias, as he sprang up the ladder. A minute afterwards he holloed down to us

in his loud, cheerful voice, "All right, sir, I say! She's only run aground."

"*Only* run aground!" muttered Mr. Linnington to himself. "Lord, save us! Not me; I'm ready and glad to go, any day; but the children, Eunie's children." And he clutched the astonished Bion, who by this time had half comforted himself with his sugar-candy.

I had nothing to do but to catch hold of Bion on the other side, and listen to the harsh voices and hasty feet overhead. It was an exciting moment. I was not exactly afraid, but I felt my heart beat quicker. All the shipwrecks I had ever read or heard of came into my head all in a minute; and I pictured to myself the whole of what *might* happen—how we should save ourselves in boats—or make a raft—or how I would lash Bion and myself to a spar, float over the ocean, for miles and miles, and be picked up half alive. In all these possible cases I was to perform prodigies of female heroism; and—so much for the rose-tint of a child's imagination—in no case was any harm to befall us. Of drowning, and death, and

sleeping with the fishes in awful sea-depths, I never once thought. The thing seemed impossible with relation to Bion and me.

It was a very long five minutes in which we three sat together, and listened to the shouting of the men and the vain working of the engines. At last I could bear inactivity no longer.

“Cousin Reuben, I am going on deck.”

“My poor child, no! Let us meet our fate here.”

“Please God”—something impelled me to use that phrase—and I meant it too, though it was almost the first time that my foolish child’s heart had ever seriously thought of the Eternal and His will;—“Please God, no harm will come to us. I’ll certainly go, cousin Reuben.”

And I went, leaping up the companion-ladder with a bold heart that almost enjoyed the danger. There we were in our poor little steamer, lying like a log upon the water, nothing to be heard but the drowsy dash of the waves,—nothing to be seen but fog close round us and blackness beyond. No coast, no sea-view, no sky, no stars. The men were

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talking together, one near the silent paddle-wheels, one down below in the engine-room, from the opening of which came the only light that was visible. Jim stood leaning against his useless helm ; beside him was Lias Lee. I stole up to the latter.

“ Are we going to be shipwrecked ? Please tell me, because I’m not frightened,—only I want to get time to save Bion. Please tell me, Mr. Lee.”

“ There’s a bold little lady ! ” He patted me on the head. “ Beg pardon, Miss Lychett ! but I’ve a little lass at home. No, Miss ”—and he cleared his throat. “ Please God we shall not be shipwrecked. We’ve only got on a sand-bank, or something o’ the sort, Jim doesn’t know where ; and there we must stick till the tide turns, or till daylight. It’s hard for you, Miss, but can’t be helped. Won’t you go down below and quiet the old gentleman ? ”

There was an end of all my nice little tragedy ! Nothing but ingloriously sticking on a sand-bank till morning ! And nobody seemed to mind it in the least ; the men, all

but Jim, laid themselves down on the deck for a sleep, and Lias hinted that I had better go down below and take a doze likewise.

“There bean’t no food left aboard, Miss, and you’ll be terrible hungry!”

Ay, there was the trouble! My excitement over, I began to feel perfectly ravenous. So would Bion be soon,—I heard him crying even where I stood. And we had nothing in the shape of edibles but the fragments left of the bread which Lias had bought. I hunted these out of my basket, and eyed them by the light of Jim’s lantern. There was a big, substantial crust and a little bit of crumb; I could have devoured both in a minute, and longed for more.

“If I was you, I wouldn’t eat ’un yet, Miss. It’s a good while to morning.”

I frowned disdainfully on Lias Lee. As if I were going to eat a morsel! Yet now, for the first time in my life, I began to fancy what the poor street-beggars felt when they said they were “starving.” Me—Miss Lychett—to be “*starving!*” I could have laughed, only



to a healthy, active, growing girl, the pain of hunger was so cruelly real. I have been praised for many a less self-denying act than when I then pushed the crust out of my sight and fastened up my basket.

While I was doing so, Mr. Linnington and Bion had crawled on deck. I explained, with a certain pride in my own information, how we were stuck on a rock, nobody knew where, and must stay there till morning. Mr. Reuben only wrung his hands, and sighed out for the twentieth time something about "Eunie's poor children."

"Never mind us, cousin Reuben," said I, stoutly, taking Bion from him, and the little lad seemed willing to come. "We two will not go below again; we'll make a bed of these sails, and be very comfortable till morning."

So we lay down, not so miserable as might have been, for it was a calm night, and I hugged Bion close and kept him warm. Lias whispered to me not to let him go to sleep, so I talked incessantly; told him all the fairy tales I could remember, which were not many,

but I made up the rest out of my own head. And through them all broke out now and then the pitiful, whimpering cry, "I am so hungry!" And oh! wasn't *I* hungry, too! I could have eaten an ox! When, in telling Bion the story of Jack-the-Giant-Killer, I came to the account of the giant's smoking bowl of pudding, my heart almost leaped into my mouth. It may be ridiculous, but to this very day I should give my last penny to the most reprobate-looking beggar who put forth the plea of being "hungry."

"Oh, sister Eunice, have you got anything to eat?"

"Presently, Bion. When we have come to the end of this one story." And I spun it out to its utmost length; but at last we both gave in.

I sat up, got my basket, and took out the precious bits of bread by the light of Jim's lantern. And even gruff Jim grunted out something that was meant for a regret over "the poor little 'uns," that were as badly off as himself on this unlucky night.

"There, Bion, I haven't anything for you but dry bread, but it's a good big crust, and very nice. Eat away."

He did, most voraciously. He had half done, and I was lingering over the last of my three mouthfuls—I had no more—when he turned fretfully round.

"Sister Eunice, you're as greedy as Lulu was. There you've given me the hard, ugly crust, and kept for yourself all the nice crumb!"

I burst into tears. . . . .

It was very foolish,—very ; because he could not know anything, and he had been such a spoiled child. But at the moment I don't think I ever felt a keener pang.

The pain was but momentary however, for the next instant Bion had crept up to me with his little warm arms ; and though he never begged my pardon, which, indeed, was more than I could expect at any time, still in a thousand quiet ways he showed how sorry he was. Nay, he munched his last fragment of burnt crust with an air of complete satisfac-

tion, saying how nice it was, and that he would like a little bit more.

“But I haven’t any more, Bion? We must be content with this, and must not even think of being hungry again.”

I dried my eyes and tried valorously to practice what I preached, but it was very hard work. At intervals I grew faint and ill; but the night was so still and even warm, that we did not suffer anything like what we might have done. By degrees the fog lightened, and we saw a star or two peeping out over our heads,—such pretty, blessed stars they seemed! I tried to point them out to Bion, who, refreshed by his sound sleep and his crust, and amused by his novel position, was becoming quite lively, for him. But every time I stirred I felt so sick and exhausted, that at last I could only lie and listen to his childish babble—sometimes English, sometimes mixed with Hindostanee. The large bright stars came out over our heads, till the sky was all thick with them; and the morning breeze began to freshen over the sea. Lias Lee came and

wrapped us up closer than ever in our sheltered nook by the funnel, whence all our good cousin's entreaties could not draw us, such was our horror of the musty hole below.

At last the stars grew paler, and the breeze fresher, and the little steamer began to heave slightly with the rising tide. I heard the men stirring, trying to work the paddle-wheels, and get her off the sand-bank. Jim shook himself broad awake, and peered out to discover our whereabouts. I tried to raise myself on my elbow and look about too, but I only saw a streak of light where the sea and sky met, just sufficient to show the outline of the string of boats we were towing after us. We lay far in the midst of the sea—I was sure of that—only on one side were dim black things like low-lying clouds.

"Ah! we shall never get home," moaned I, giving way at last; and, sinking drearily back, I felt so weak and ill. Then the broad back of Lias Lee came between us and the dawn. He looked all round the horizon, and burst into one of his hearty, cheery laughs.

"Don't 'ee see, Jim? Law, what fools o'

fresh-water sailors we ha' been! If we bean't lying all this while on the sand-bank off Poole Harbour! There be Old Harry, and there Studland Bay, and—Work away at th' engines, my lads, and we'll be at Swanage in no time."

I gave a great sigh, kissed little Bion, and told him he should have a good breakfast soon, then dropped my head down again on the pillow of coiled ropes, and never stirred it afterwards. The paddle-wheels began their monotonous noise, the steamer rose up and down on the waves, which were growing rough now, and all about the deck became lighter and lighter, but I took very little notice of anything.

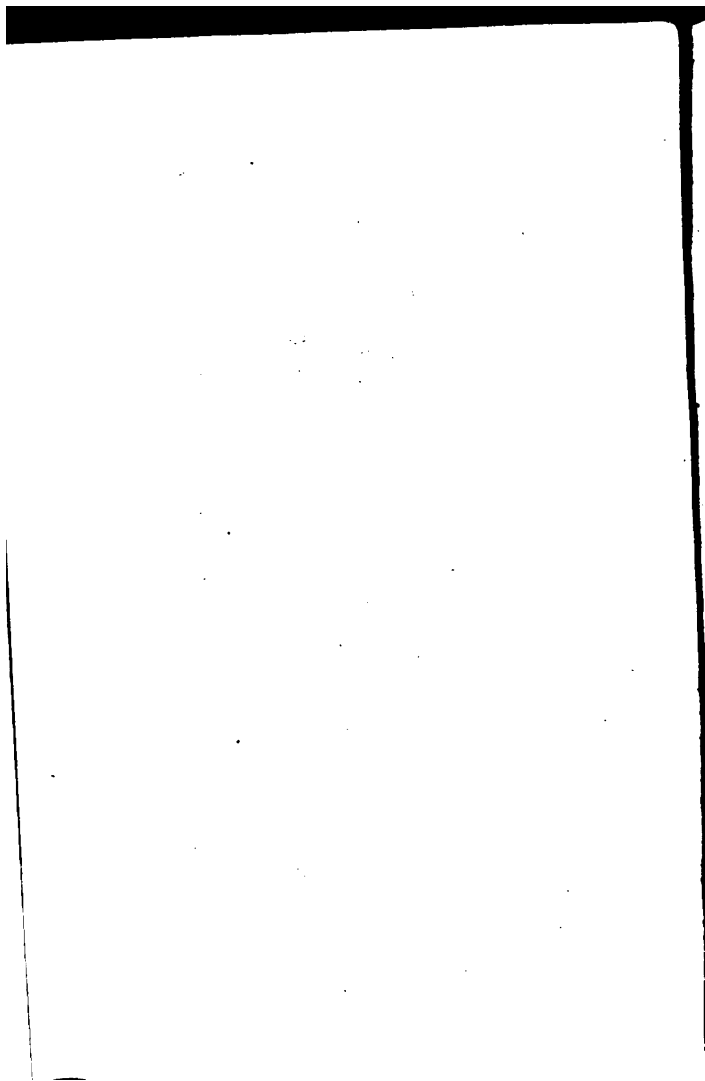
At length the paddles stopped once more. I saw Mr. Linnington, who had been sitting close beside us, take Bion up in his weak old arms and stagger with him on to the quay. I tried to follow, but could not, and was obliged to let worthy Lias Lee do the same kind office for me. They took us to the inn, and gave us some breakfast, at least Bion ate—for I could scarcely touch it—and then I laid myself down on a quiet bed, and did not lift my head up again for eight-and-forty hours.



“ Mr. Linington took Bion in his weak old arms, and Lias Lee took me.”

L. Lychetts.

p. 68.





## V.

### Fallen Castles.

**I**N the morning of the third day I woke quite recovered, and began to think of rising. Especially, as I heard little Bion, who slept in a closet off my room, muttering to himself "what a fine morning it was, and how he wished sister Eunie would not be so lazy." So I dressed myself, and then him; at the latter business being very rough and awkward still, I fear, for he constantly lamented over the lost Lulu. However, we managed somehow, and I felt rather proud when I led him down-stairs to the inn-parlour—my pretty little brother, with his fair features and his curling hair, which I had exhausted all my small patience in brushing out of its tangles. I was beginning to have a sense of property in him. The landlady half

smiled, I saw, when she met us on the stairs, and I answered her inquiries with a womanly motherliness—at least so it must have been, for I felt very motherly. Afterwards I heard her whispering with the chambermaid about “those poor little Lychetts.”

I drew myself up with dignity, and desired that Mr. Linnington might be informed “*Miss Lychett*” was down-stairs.

Pride must have a fall; I was informed that Mr. Reuben had gone over with Lias Lee to “the Master’s” pits to borrow a dog-cart to take the children home.

A *dog-cart!* We, “the children,” to be hauled off like brutes, in a dog-cart! I was shocked inexpressibly. I had some vague thoughts of taking Bion up in my arms and running away with him across the sunny curving sand and over the hills which shut in this beautiful little bay. But, somehow, breakfast looked so tempting—and, alas, we knew so well what it was to be desolate and hungry!—I put off the running away to another and more favourable opportunity.

After breakfast—at which cousin Reuben had left orders that we should have everything we liked—Bion and I sat in the window-seat, looking at the quiet bay, with its great heaps of white stone lying piled along one side, and along the other a smooth deserted shore. A few little fishing-boats, some with sails, some without, were moving slowly across the bay, or scudding off seaward round the point. Everything looked sleepy, lazy, sunny and calm.

But we, true children as we were, had no inclination for lazy enjoyment. We wanted to be moving. We began to wonder about the new home we were going to in the objectionable “dog-cart.” Bion confided to me his notions on the subject ; that it was to be a fine bungalow, with rooms twice as large as this, and a beautiful punkah in each of them, ready against the hot weather came. Also there were to be gardens, and carriages; and plenty of servants,—he even thought it was possible he might again find Lulu.

But I, ingeniously and half-jealously passing over Lulu, told him not to expect so much, for

we in England lived quite differently from what they did in India. And, partly to console him, partly out of my own sincere conviction, I explained *my* notions of what we might expect. A house in the country—and, of course, in the midst of woods and fields. It would likely not be high, like London houses, but large and commodious, with plenty of galleries and winding staircases. Probably an oaken hall, adorned with stags' horns, and drawing-room windows from which we could step out on the lawn. I did not think there would be a park or pleasure-grounds, for I knew cousin Reuben was not rich; but there was sure to be a lovely garden, and roses and woodbine climbing over the windows, and all that sort of thing. In fact, I drew such a pretty picture, that Bion at last gave up his bungalow, and condescended to "my house in the country." We built it, room by room, in our busy imaginations, and were so longing to prove it by reality, that when Mr. Linnington came in we both ran to him and besought him to take us home.

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He was quite ready—indeed, so touched by our eagerness, that, during the getting ready of the dog-cart, he drew out his pocket-handkerchief and wiped his eyes many times.

We beheld the abhorred vehicle, which was not so bad as I expected. We were not stowed away like dogs in a cart, but mounted on a lofty sort of a gig, with a seat behind; the height and insecurity of which was great fun. I was always slipping off a little, and for some time had to hold on with both hands. We drove through the steep, narrow, jolting streets of Swanage, and finally came out upon a bleak, hilly road, whence a long sweep of inland country and sea-coast was visible, extending miles and miles.

It was a sort of country very different from anything I had ever before seen, or even imagined. There were no woods, or winding lanes, or green-hedged meadows, the whole scenery was bleak and bare. The land rose in great ridges, like the backbone of a fish; between these ridges were valleys, generally long and narrow, with a farmhouse or a white

stone quarry peeping out here and there. In fact, this seemed a country of stone. The highroad was fenced with it—it lay about the fields in big white blocks,—the houses, even to the tiniest cottage or pigstye, were built of it. There were quarries scattered about in every direction; the few labourers we met had a whitened, dustied appearance, and were big powerful men, who looked as if they had been lifting great masses of stone all their lives. They were mostly handsome men too,—not at all like the clownish, heavy-looking, smock-frocked labourers whom I had seen years before when I went to my old aunt's in Surry, which labourers, even then, constantly offended my sense of the beautiful. Now these country fellows I admired very much, and asked Mr. Reuben what they were.

“Marblers, my dear. . They are all marblers here. But Lias Lee will tell you more about them than I can.”

And cousin Reuben relapsed into his grave silence, neither cross nor sullen, but still very distressing to young folk, who were interested

and excited by every new thing, and wanted a companion who had as high spirits as themselves.

I began to feel my own spirits flag, as I sat by myself in the hinder seat of the dog-cart, back to back with Mr. Linnington and little Bion, who was too busy in shivering and wrapping himself up in cousin Reuben's big coat to take much notice of anything. My interest in the journey seemed to lessen, the highroad we swept along grew tame and dull, and I wondered where among these monotonous bare sweeps would lie the beautiful little country-house I had promised to myself and Bion.

At last, turning round, and piteously twisting my neck in the act, I caught sight of something wonderful and interesting.

There was a break in the hilly ridge ("the fish's backbone," as I had called it), just as if two giant hands had cloven it down, and rolled the intervening space into a nice round dumpling of a hill—like a pork-pie before it is "*raised*"—(but I forget that my young lady readers may not have learnt, as I quickly did

at cousin Reuben's, how to "raise" a pork-pie—if not, the sooner they do learn the better.) On this hill, standing out against the sky exactly as in landscape sketches, was something I had often longed to see, but never yet beheld in nature—a castle—in ruins, probably, as far as I could distinguish from the distance, but still a real old castle!

I clapped my hands in ecstasy; for the moment the delicious thought came that Mr. Reuben was taking us there—might he not be an old retainer, in whose charge was the castle?—that we might live there in the habitable part, and run about the uninhabitable ruins—see strange sights—owls, jackdaws, perhaps even ghosts! A shiver of mingled horror and delight ran through me, and my strong desire almost grew into belief. Alas, I always was a great adept in building "castles in Spain," and jumping to conclusions from anything or nothing!

My heart beat so, I had not courage to settle all uncertainty by putting the plain question to Mr. Reuben. I sat, screwed into a



painful twist, staring at the wonderful castle with all my eyes, and tracing down the valley the road which led to it, which I could see marked out distinctly as on a map.

At length, to my dismay, we turned from the direct highroad across a common, which had hardly any road at all.

"Hold fast, children," said cousin Reuben, as he began to guide his horse more carefully, along a track which seemed chiefly composed of two enormous ruts, in the which we rose and fell, and jolted and stuck, till Bion was heard screaming, and I had all the breath shaken out of me. And there was my beautiful castle, which I had now a free view of, slowly vanishing in the opposite direction! Alas, we were not going there at all!

"Hold on, children; don't cry; my pretty boy," repeated Mr. Linnington, in the comically tender voice he always used toward Bion. "We shall soon be at home, my little darling."

"Home, cousin Reuben!" cried I. "Where are you taking us? I don't see any house."

"You will presently, not far from my quarry

there. The carts that take away the marble make these ruts. There isn't any road to my house. It is not often that a carriage comes, and when it does it has to go across the fields."

And so we went, after a fashion that *I* never heard of! driving direct from gate to gate, the wheels of the dog-cart running smoothly over the soft pasture-grass. Now and then some sheep, or horses out grazing, would lift up their heads and look at us with contemptuous indifference; they were apparently accustomed to such utter solitude that they did not even know what it was to be afraid.

All the while I saw no country-house—no lawn—no gardens. Nothing but fields, and here and there some buildings which I thought farm-stables or pigstyes, or something of the sort. Where on earth were we going to?

The dog-cart was at last stopped ingloriously by a big sow and litter of pigs, that were clustered round a farmyard gate. The little pigs would get under the horse's heels, and the burly mother set up the most despairing grunts. Mr. Reuben threatened them with his

whip—but it was only threatening—he had not the heart to strike any living creature. After various efforts, which set me and even Bion laughing heartily, the pigs got the better of it.

“I think, Miss Eunice,” said our cousin, meekly, “we might as well get out here. We have only a dozen yards to run across that field. There’s the door. Hallo!—Sally, Sally!—here we are at home.”

Home!

It was a little farmhouse, the door of which opened direct upon the field. It had no garden—not even a flower-bed. A paved walk led to a well, another to the gate of the farm-yard. The whole establishment seemed no larger or more refined than a common labourer’s cottage. This our home?—my home and little Bion’s! I could not believe my eyes.

“Sally! Sally!” called out Mr. Reuben again.

“I be coming, master,” was the answer; and an active, fresh-coloured, blithe-looking woman ran across the little field, opened the

gate, drove the pigs away, lifted down Bion, shook hands—ay, actually shook hands!—with me, and stood holding the horse. All this she did before we well knew what we were about.

The old gentleman looked benevolently on his domestic, who seemed to serve him as maid, housekeeper, groom, and all.

“Well, we are at home safe, thank God for it. Sally, these be poor Miss Eunice’s—I mean Mrs. Colonel Lychett’s—children. My dear, this be Sally, who has lived with me as a good and faithful servant for thirty years.”

“Come Michaelmas next, sir, when I shall be forty-five years old,” said Sally, with a pleased countenance. “Bless you, you be a pretty lad, my little dearie.”

This was addressed to Bion, whom she proceeded to bundle along in one hand, leading the horse with the other. I stood, for the moment, perfectly confounded. To shake hands with me was unheard-of presumption, but to carry off my little brother, and he struggling against her too!

“Let me alone—I don’t like you, ugly old woman. I won’t go into that nasty little cottage. Eunie! sister Eunie!”

I leaped forward and snatched him to myself. “He shall not be tormented! We will not go in! You have brought us into quite trouble enough already, cousin Reuben. I will not suffer my brother to enter that poor, mean, dirty little house.”

“Dirty!” screamed Sally, flaming up indignantly—too indignantly to utter more. I also was in a great passion, or should not have said what I had done. It seemed to cut the old man to the heart. He looked piteously round at his dwelling, then at us, and shook his head.

“It is poor and mean—very mean for *her* children, but I haven’t any better, Miss Eunice.”

“And it be far too good for fine misses o’ thick fashion—and, master, you be a great \_\_\_\_\_”

She was possibly going to add “fool,” but stopped. Mr. Reuben leant against the doorpost. He looked so sorrowful, that my heart

and my conscience combined vehemently to accuse me.

“Sir,” I said, humbly, too humbly to call him “cousin Reuben,” “perhaps I was very wrong. I don’t mind a bit for myself; I am strong and can live anyhow or anywhere; it’s only fun. But Bion is such a poor, sickly, delicate, little boy, and was always taken such care of. I’m very sorry, sir, I am, indeed”—(here a sob, which I choked down). “Perhaps I don’t know what is right, nobody ever taught me.” (Here a full gush of crying, utterly undignified in such a “fine miss” as Sally thought me. But it saved my character in Sally’s eyes.)

I very soon found there was no alternative—that we must take our cousin’s kindness for better, for worse—there was no home open to us but his. I peered in at the narrow door, where a back kitchen and house-place led to still narrower stairs, up which Sally said was the parlour. *The* parlour, alas!—there was but one. Disconsolately I returned without doors, where Bion still sat lamenting, and resolutely refusing to go in. His repugnance

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surprised me, for children of his age usually notice external things little enough, and are as happy in a cottage as a palace. But my Bion had from his babyhood such a keen sense of refinement and beauty ; he would not soil his lands or wear a dirty collar for the world. I feared I should never get him to cross the threshold of that dark, mean farmhouse. At last a bright thought struck me.

“ Bion,” said I—taking him on my lap as I sat down on a turned-up milk-pail, after having stood talking till I had exhausted all my powers of reasoning and entreaty—“ I’ll tell you a story.—There was once a swan and her cygnets, who lived very happy in a great shining, crystal pond. But the mother-swan was obliged to fly away, and the two little swans could not live any longer in the beautiful pool. They had to go wandering about the country, hungry and tired, with no one to take care of them. It much grieved the mother-swan when, in the far-off place where she was obliged to stay, she thought of them thus. At last there came a worthy old drake and said, ‘ Lit-

tle ones, I was very fond of the swan your mother ; therefore come and live with me and swim in my duck-pond.' But the young swans did not like the idea at all, and greatly despised the duck-pond. So the mother, who, wherever she was flying about on her white beautiful wings, always thought of the poor little cygnets who were wandering desolate over the country, came and said—that is, one of them dreamt she said, ' My little ones, you grieve me very much. My old friend would be fond of you for my sake, and take care of you, so that I should be quite happy on your account. But you are ungrateful to his goodness, and laugh at his poor little duck-pond, though it is the best he has to give. Nay, my children, go in and swim and be merry, and make your mother content.' So the two little cygnets obeyed, and lived a long time in the duck-pond, and grew to be beautiful swans, and were always very kind to the worthy old drake ; and ——"

"Stop, sister," said Bion, putting his finger between his lips—his usual trick when he was

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thoughtful, while his eyes deepened, and there appeared the sweet, grave look he sometimes had, the look which I felt was our mother's—  
“sister Eunie, do you think mamma would like us to go in and live there?” He pointed to the farmhouse.

“I know she would.”

He peered timidly in at the door, drew back, then shutting his eyes, gave himself up to my guidance. I led him in, up the crooked stairs, and into the parlour.

## VI.

### The Young Musician.

**I**T is a trite maxim, that one can get use to anything when one is young. In a few weeks after our coming to Stonyhide (which queer name had belonged to Mr. Reuben's farm from time immemorial; I believe because it had consisted of a "hide of land," and very "stony" land too)—the place seemed quite natural and familiar to both Bion and me. Bion, especially, grew very content. India and Lulu vanished apparently from his mind; he occupied himself entirely with the present. And for me, when I ever did think of Mrs. Dangerfield's and my school-life there, it seemed far back like a dream. All belonging to it was as closely locked up as the trunk which contained my fine coloured silk dresses

and laces and Indian shawls, of which trunk, having lost the key, I made a capital washing-stand for little Bion's sleeping-closet.

For, in Mr. Linnington's household, everything was on the most frugal and homely scale. Comforts, hitherto familiar to me as light and air, were here unheard-of luxuries. I never shall forget Sally's look on the first morning when I came down stairs, as I thought very early—at half-past eight—and gently hinted that I always liked a fire to dress by, and that Bion couldn't eat anything for breakfast but sweet-biscuits and coffee.

“Coffee! Biscuits! There bean't no such things heard of at Stonyhide. And—Miss—I make bold to say, that in *my* young days children never had nothing but milk or porridge. And they got up at six to eat it, too. Mr. Linnington be done his breakfast and off to th' quarry an hour sin'.”

I was dumb-founded! not by Sally's bluntness, for she was too good-natured to be really rude; but by the prospect before me of our coming life! And as things began so they

went on. Always plain fare, roughly cooked and served, which nothing but intense hunger could have impelled me to eat. All our dinners came from the farm : fat pork or bacon—mutton, which I knew I had seen running about the fields—large long-legged barn-door fowls, which I first missed from the yard, then saw hanging up by the neck in mortal struggles, and finally beheld dished at table. It was very dreadful !

Then all day long we had nothing to do. No books—no playthings. “The “parlour” was assigned to our use ; for though Sally was rough and familiar, she treated “poor Miss Eunie’s little ’uns” with great consideration. It—the parlour, though scrupulously neat, was the barest room imaginable ; just a table, chairs, and carpet ; not a book scattered about—not a print—not an ornament, except two china (or, as Sally called them, “chany”) shepherdesses, with big peacock’s feathers stuck under their arms in warlike fashion. The rest of the chimney-piece was filled with what we disrespectfully called “bits of stone,” but which

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were probably rough specimens of Purbeck marble. The centre-piece was of the same marble, cut and polished ; it represented a miniature coffin, with a cross lying on the top, and a Latin legend twisted round. Sally told us, with some little pride and awe, that this wonderful piece of ingenuity was the work of Lia Lee.

Day after day—long boisterous March days, when the wind howling without made Bion refuse to stir from the fire-side—did we spend our time in the little dull parlour—rising generally very late, lolling on the hearth till noon-time, when Mr. Reuben sauntered in, smiled kindly on “ the children,” ate his dinner silently, and went away. Then we used to sit telling stories ; or watching the hens and pigs from the windows ; or having sham-fights with the peacock’s feathers ; or, more frequently, poor little Bion grew cross with doing nothing and went to sleep. At dusk we had our supper of milk. Afterwards Mr. Reuben usually asked me to read a chapter or two in the Bible ; he himself read a prayer, and we went to bed.

Oh, the long, restless nights after such days spent in the weariness of doing nothing! How I used to lie awake and yearn for the old busy school-life—once so hated! The hardest lesson, the most interminable exercises—nay, even the three hours of piano-strumming, then the most abhorrent of all my tasks, would have been a blessing now.

And oh! when I heard Sally's voice as she scolded the farm-servants, and my ears were haunted by the noises attendant on killed pigs and chickens, and live pigs and chickens ran under my feet whenever I descended to the farm-yard, and almost every sight, sound, and taste which reached me was coarse and unpleasant to my young-ladyish senses, and everybody and everything I met caused a revulsion of dislike in my ultra-refined and preciously-conceited mind—oh, how gladly would I have gone back to the silk frocks, the school-books, and the dancing lessons—even the formal walks with Mrs. Dangerfield!

I had had dreams of freedom and liberty and life in the backwoods; but, after life in a

farm-house for a week, I sent freedom and liberty to Jericho, and would thankfully have returned to school.

Then came much ill-humor and disappointment, though, from long habit, I kept my feelings to myself pretty well, and was not so unjust as to vent them on other people. I got out my few school-books and read them over and over again. I even, from sheer weariness, took Sally's hint, together with one of her needles, and began to darn my own and Bion's stockings. But I would not go out anywhere—not even to church. As for walking, where was the use of it?—ankle-deep in muddy fields, or across ugly commons. I wasn't a plough-boy—I was a young lady. And a young lady I was determined to keep myself, in spite of Mr. Reuben and Sally and the abominable farm-house.

When I got into this sullen state of mind, I am ashamed to say that I rather neglected my little brother. He, child-like, began to accommodate himself to his new position; and then, having been always used to Indian laziness,

our dull life from morning till night did not weary him as much as it did me. He played with his jackstraws and peacock's feathers, or with the little old-fashioned toys that Mr. Reuben brought him home not unfrequently— or else he sat for hours looking out of the window in his sickly, dreamy way, enjoying the sun when it came out, or amused by the scudding of the sudden April showers. For now the spring was coming on fast, and the little parlour became close and hot, and we both felt languid of mornings.

But still I would not go out, even though sometimes Bion looked as if he half-wished I would. I was obstinate as a mule.

At last, one day, Bion found an amusement quite independent of me. Hunting round the room, he lighted upon a queer piece of mahogany furniture in the corner, which nobody ever touched.

“I wonder what this is, sister,” he said. “It has got a handle. I'll turn it.”

“Don't 'ee, now, my little dear,” said Sally, pouncing upon him as she was laying our bowls



of milk for supper. "It be th' organ. Master dunnot like anybody's touching th' organ."

But Bion persisted with his coaxing ways, and finally Sally relented, and showed him how to make it sound. It was a hand-organ, that could grind out twelve psalm tunes. Great was Bion's delight when it began to growl out a few dreary notes, with unearthly drones intervening, as he turned the handle slowly and unequally. Gradually his method improved, and in a few minutes his quick ear caught something like the ghost of an air.

"It's a tune, sister Eunie! A real tune! I do like it so!"

I did'nt. Love of music never was in me, or had been strummed out of me by those three hours of daily practising against my will, the result being that I have never touched a piano since. But listening or not, I saw the rapt expression of my little brother's face—his own beautiful look, only drawn out at rare moments. I smiled to see him so pleased, and said it was "very pretty!"—which of course it was, if he thought so.

He went on grinding away with an air of intense delight and attention, beating time to the tune or humming it softly to himself; though his little voice—till this minute I never knew he had one—was almost drowned in the noise of the organ. I watched him, glad that he should be amused and happy.

Sally listened too, with her eyes wide opened in admiration, and her hands fidgeting about her apron-strings. "Lor' bless us! What a clever young gentleman he be! And he do look the picture o' his mother when she was a little 'un and used to stand a-playing of the organ and learning the school children to sing. Lor'! what will master say?"

And lo! in the midst of the performance, who should walk in but Mr. Reuben himself, followed by Lias Lee!

The old man was all in a tremble—half anger, half emotion. "Who's playing my organ? Who has gone and touched my organ?"

But little Bion, quite absorbed, went on without taking the least notice.

"Let 'un alone, Mr. Reuben," whispered Lias

Lee. "He bean't doing it badly, either. Clever little lad. Singing, too—hark ye!"

"Singing? Yes, I think we ought to sing. We will sing;" said Mr. Linnington. "Eunice, my dear! Sally, sit you down. Here, Elias."

He took from the shelf a handful of his queer little hymn-books and distributed them to each of us, with a grave face, though tears were running down it. Odd as the thing was, his manner was so simple, and withal so reverent, that it was impossible to laugh. Even Elias suppressed a twitching at the corners of his comical mouth; and settled it into seriousness.

"This hymn suits the tune—ay, that's it. It was your mother's favourite, Miss Eunice, my dear. Now then——"

And with his uncertain, quivering voice he began that hymn of old Isaac Watts—always beautiful, whether we learn it by rote as children, or it flashes upon our memory during the many troubles and cares of after years.

There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign:  
Infinite day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain."

Lias chimed in with his hearty bass—even Sally, after wiping her eyes and sighing, put in a respectful feeble note here and there ; and so, with the red glow of the April sunset crawling down the wall, and lingering on Bion and his organ, we sat and sang. I could fancy I hear the old hymn now, even though Bion always said sister had no taste for music :—

There everlasting spring abides,  
And never-withering flow'rs ;  
Death, like a narrow sea, divides  
That heavenly land from ours.

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood  
Stand, deck'd in living green ;  
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,  
While Jordan roll'd between.....

“Oh, could we bid our doubts remove,  
Those gloomy doubts that rise ;  
And view the Canaan that we love  
With unbeckled eyes !

“Oh, could we stand where Moses stood,  
And view the landscape o'er,  
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,  
Should fright us from the shore !”

I know not why, but now even as a woman I never hear this hymn without recollecting a

vivid dream I had after reading "Pilgrim's Progress," of standing with Christiana and her children by the river-side, and seeing afar in the clouds the Land of Beulah.

When the hymn ceased, I started. I had been looking at Bion's face, lit by the sunset, and thinking it not unlike the angels' in that beautiful childish dream. It seemed almost a sacrilegious impertinence when Lias Lee took the delighted organ-grinder on his knee, thereby stopping the music, and turning Bion into his fretful self once more.

"Now, my pale little gentleman, you've played tunes enough, and want some supper."

The "little gentleman" muttered something impatient, then began to complain piteously. My "angel" had laid his angelhood down with his music. We had a good deal of whimpering, and at last I was obliged to coax him to bed. When I came back Mr. Reuben and Lias were sitting over the hearth, smoking. That is, the latter was, Mr. Reuben never smoked. There was no light but from the fire; they did not see me come in at all. I sat down quietly

by the door,—nay, without the door, and thought what a very horrible habit smoking was, hoping that when Bion grew a man, *he* at least would never be fond of it.

Bion! Lias was talking of him now.

“That be a fine little lad; I do think, Mr. Reuben, many folk would call ’un a genius.”

“May-be,” said cousin Reuben, pensively. He is very like his mother.”

“Too like,” muttered Lias, compassionately.

“Eh?” said Mr. Linnington.

“I have heard tell she was the only one reared out o’ six, that all went off in consumptions. Sir, if I might make so bold, being a father of a family mysel’, mind that boy.” And Lias snapped his hand on his knee, making the old man start.

I started too, a cold tremble running through me. But I listened more intently than ever.

“He bean’t managed right, sir, I think. You ought for to make him hardy, not coddle him. If you do, he’ll pine away like the fuchsia in my wife’s kitchen. Grow him out i’ the open air, sir. He could stand it well enough.

If he had an elder brother now,—a steady lad that would take him over the country, and let him knock about so as to get strong and hearty, and still keep a good look-out after him. But, poor lad, he's only got a sister—and she's a fine lady. Well, Mr. Reuben, I only hope you'll rear him, that' all."

And Lias puffed away.

I passed noiselessly down the staircase. I couldn't go to my bedroom, it was so close to Bion's. I ran out into the farmyard—to the well, where nobody could see me. Oh, what an hour I spent there!

Christiana and the Land of Beulah—"Jordan's stream and death's cold flood"—the beautiful angelic look that I watched in the face of my pretty singing boy—I thrust all out of my mind with a shudder. I walked up and down by the well-head until the stars came out thick overhead, and I grew quite cold.

But I laid my plans—then and there; and next morning I rose a different girl, with a different scheme of life arranged for both Bion and me.

## VII.

### The Good Master.

ROSE very early the next morning, and persuaded Bion to do the same—rather a hard task for my ingenuity, but accomplished at last by hints of a wonderful and mysterious plan for amusing ourselves—far finer than battles with peacocks' feathers. Bion came down stairs, to Sally's great surprise, by seven o'clock.

"Eh, my little lad, that's the way to get rosy cheeks—if ever you could get 'un. Poor sickly fellow!" she added, with a half sigh.

I could almost have killed Sally!

Fortunately, at this moment Bion, creeping timidly out of the kitchen-door to look at the soft spring morning, exclaimed, "There's Lias Lee!" He was fond of Lias Lee—so much so



that it vexed me sometimes. He would go and sit on his knee and hear about the clay-pits and the marble quarry ; and listen to the worthy man's " little bits o' poetry," written on important subjects, such as the Queen's visiting Southampton, or the Great Exhibition, of which fragments of genius Lias Lee was mighty proud. I didn't think much of them, but then I had read all through the " English Classic Poets," and was rather particular.

"Hollo, my little gentleman!" said Lias, jumping from the light spring-cart, in which he had come tearing across the meadow—" you be an early bird to-day! Would 'ee like a ride wi' I?"

Little Bion drew back shyly, but I took boldness. " Yes, that we should, both of us, very much. We want to go and see the pits, as you have often offered to take us, Mr. Lee."

" *Law!* as the Master would say — (you never hear th' Master swear, Miss Lychett, or say anything worse than 'Law!')"

There was something very funny and expressive in the way Lias Lee ejaculated this " Law !"

—with his mouth open as a round O, and his merry twinkling eyes.

“ Well, I be terrible glad you’ve taken a new turn; Miss ; and the Master has often asked after the little Lychetts—so I sha’n’t be sorry if we meet wi’ he. Had breakfast?—Then we’ll be off in ten minutes.”

This was accomplished, though I put on my bonnet with rather a pang of humiliation, earnestly hoping we might not meet “ the Master,” or any body respectable, who could note my woeful downcoming in the world. Miss Eunice Lychett—to be roaming about the country in a shabby spring-cart, and with a common working man like Lias Lee !

But when, as we dashed across the field, I saw Bion clap his little hands, saying how nice it was to be going out a-riding—and as he sat on Lias’s knee, the soft west wind brought a colour in his cheeks, till he looked almost like a country boy—then somehow, I smothered down my annoyance, and could bear it. I even laughed when Lias apologized for “ th’ pits” being rather a rough place to bring a young

lady to ; because we should have to take care of ourselves all day, when he was in the counting-house—only he would manage to get us some dinner, and drive us home after office hours.

“ And they’re a decent set o’ folk i’ the workshops. Th’ Master’s children often come there—may-be you’ll see ’un, Miss Lychett.

I hoped not—I earnestly hoped not ! But I made up my mind to anything.

It was not a very long ride, though I wished it shorter, for the wind came sharply across the moors ; it always does in this part of the country, except in the height of summer. Bion shivered. I took him from Lias Lee, and hugged him tight under my shawl : I was now glad I was such a big, strong girl, and forgot that my coarseness of appearance had ever been a trouble.

All the road we passed was moorland, except the little town wherein stood my beautiful ruined castle ; but I cannot stay to speak of that now. Now and then we saw a cottage, built of hardened white clay and thatched with

heather, or a cow or a donkey wandering by the roadside, cropping the scanty moorland grass. Once we passed the big, toppling Swanage coach, whereon the coachman and half the outside passengers nodded pleasantly to Lias Lee.

“Bless ‘ee, Miss,” said he, with a gratified smile, “in my poor way I be like the good Master—I knows everybody, and everybody knows me. But here we be coming to the pits, not *our* pits though. The Master’s father worked these out, sixty years ago. No more clay is to be got there now. Look, Master Bion.”

Bion looked and was rather frightened. On either side of the road were deep excavations, some half filled with water; and the water was anything but beautiful, being in some places coffee colour, in others almost as red as blood.

“That be a curious thing, Miss,” said Lias, with a sagacious look. “Bog-water is often a queer colour, and has a queer, bitter, iron taste, which it gets from the peat it runs through. This ugly colour is given by the clay.

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I'd explain it all, but maybe you wouldn't understand it. Wonderful study is chemistry, and geology too ; one shows you the cleverness of man, but the other leads you direct to the Origin of all things."

I was surprised to see how superior the worthy man's language and expressions grew at times. And to this day I think that if it had not been for his poetry and his laziness the poor clerk at the clay-pits might have "made a noise in the world."

"Now," exclaimed he, "here's a wonderful sight! Here we come upon our pits, or rather our land, that will be turned into pits in time. Miss Eunice, do you see those chimneys far away across the moor, and the masts of boats, and the funnel of our steamer? There she comes, right up the river, only you can't see the water, 'tis so narrow a channel and the banks high ; well, by that river we ship out to sea all our clay."

"Oh!" said I, not knowing what else to say, but rather interested nevertheless. So was little Bion.

“ You see, it’s a long way from the pits to the river, nearly three miles of moorland, and clay ’s a heavy commodity. So when the Master came to the business as a young man—though he carried an old head on young shoulders—he set himself a-thinking whether he could not make the transit of the clay-wagons easier and cheaper, for it cost a lot o’ money even to pay the turnpikes. At last he planned—what do’ee think ?—a railway !”

And Lias pointed it out with great pride—the narrow line of rails intersecting the moor, crossing the road, and sloping down an inclined plane to the river.

“ He made it. He did the planning, engineering, all himself. And making a railway in those desolate parts, where all the work-people are clay-cutters or marblers, is no easy matter. The Master had to set up a blacksmith’s shop to forge the iron rails, and a carpenter’s shop to make the wooden sleepers. He had, and still has, to do everything within himself as it were. Oh, he be wonderful clever, he be !”

Here Lias stopped the spring-cart, to let a train of clay-wagons pass across the road. They glided on first slowly, then rapidly, as they caught the impetus of descent. There was no need of a locomotive ; they ran down the whole three-mile declivity by the impetus of their own weight. It was a pretty sight.

“ How I should like to ride on the railway ! ” whispered Bion.

“ Would’ee, my little man ? Bravo ! Holloa, Jim ! ”

Here a big, white, clayey figure emerged from the line of rail, and was addressed by, and answered Lias in, speech that was such broad Dorset as to be utterly incomprehensible to us. It ended, however, in our crossing the moor, along a road (or rather, no road) which threatened every minute to upset the spring-cart, until we reached the counting-house.

“ Past nine,” said Lias, looking at his silver watch—old as the hills—with a sigh. “ Must go in, and take to pen, and ink, and ledger, and all that. Rather hard, this spring morning. Now then, Jim ! ”

And here, in the clayey figure which had followed us in long strides across the moor, I recognised one of the men who had been kind to us on board the little steamer, and I gathered from Lias's talk that he was desired to "gi un a ride i' the' rail," and "look a'ter un," which, doubtless, meant that we were to be put under his guardianship. Lias touched his hat with a "Good-day, Miss," and disappeared.

So here we were—Bion and I—sitting on a railway truck in the midst of a wild common, with nobody to take care of him but me; and as for anybody's taking care of me—bah!—that was impossible, and always would be; I knew it, and felt it, from the day we were left orphans. For a moment, sitting on the wagon, a qualm came over me at my rather singular, and, as Mrs. Dangerfield would surely say, "most unladylike position;" but I consoled myself with a doctrine of wise little Janie Allardyce—that true ladyhood consists in being and acting like a lady under all accidental circumstances. And when I remembered the horror of last night, I hugged little Bion



closer, and threw overboard altogether Mrs. Dangerfield and her gentilities.

The wagon began to move. Oh, how nice it was to feel the rushing of the fresh air as we sped like an arrow across the open moor! What fun there was, even in the rocking of our eccentric carriage, which nearly shook us to pieces! And when Bion, instead of complaining, only laughed and enjoyed it, how truly happy I was!

"Keep un wa-arm" (pronounced as a rhyme to harm). "Rain a-coming," gruffly observed Jim, as he squatted like a clay statue on the next wagon and puffed at his pipe. This was the only remark he made.

Before we came to the end of our descent, the far hills grew misty, and a heavy shower swept suddenly after us across the moor. A few drops were already falling, when Jim unlinked our empty wagon from the rest and helped us out.

"Smithy's there," said he, pointing to a cluster of workshops that were seen a little distance beyond a great heap of marl, which ex-

tended the whole way between, and was evidently to be crossed.

But the crossing, especially in that pelting shower, was no such easy matter. Firm as it looked and clean, the clay was all sodden and slippery as glass. In two minutes we got our feet caked with it, till our boots looked like the big snow shoes of the Esquimaux. We slid at every step, and the rain, beating in our faces, bewildered us as to the right way. There was not a soul about; the men had gone in out of the rain. Here we were, like Christian in the Slough of Despond, and could neither get back nor forward.

Poor Bion began to cry and cling to me. "Sister! sister! I'm so wet, and I've lost on, a e. Oh, I wish we were at home again." lar, an<sup>r</sup> mind, Bion, we'll fight through. say, "me round the neck, I'll try to carry soled mys

Janie Allara did—just a step or two—to the in being and a hillock, then my footing failed; dental circumsta till I thought we never should the horror of last a strait, which, if ludicrous,

was as pitiable an one as any I ever was in during my life. And my poor little brother, too! Oh, if somebody would but come! Anybody—Lias Lee, or even grim-looking Jim, would have appeared as an angel of consolation.

I looked up helplessly. Lo and behold, somebody was coming.

He was a gentleman, on a tall black horse. I could picture him now, as he came riding down the line of rails, full speed—his hat slouched and his head bent forward, because of the pelting rain. What a kind-looking gentleman he was!

“Hey, children!” he reined up at sight of our distress. I don’t think he ever could pass by a case of distress in his life—the good Master!—for so I felt sure he was. (And so during all this history I intend to call him, for he might not like to be known by his own honest name, and I would not put a false one.)

“Oh, sir, please help us! We have got in the mud and we can’t get out, and it rains so fast, and my little brother isn’t strong.”

Many a gentleman would have rode on and sent some of his work-people to help the poor children out of the mire, and thought that a very kind act, too. But this gentleman got off his horse—he was a very tall and strong man, of middle age—strode through all the slough, took Bion on his shoulder and me in his hand, and fairly landed us safe on level ground, in the shelter of some out buildings.

“Run in, little folk.—Here, you lads, see after them,” said he, with a benevolent smile. “Now, children, don’t ’ee get into trouble any more.”

He jumped on his horse again and rode down to the river wharf, out of our sight. I don’t know how it was; possibly my girlish feelings were over-excited by the disaster we had been in, and by his kindness, which corresponded so exactly to what I had incessantly heard of him from Mr. Reuben and Lias Lee,—but as I watched him ride away, I thought bitterly of the tie which I was never to know in this world, and fancied what a good girl, and a loving girl, and a happy girl, I should

have made, if I had had such an one as this gentleman for my father.

“Come, Bion,” said I, as I shook away a drop or two that were not rain, from my eyelashes, “we must try and get dry now.” And I felt a warm air come from within and heard the noise of a steam-engine. The men whom the Master had called to were civil enough—took my wet cloak and Bion’s, and dried them ingeniously outside the boiler. We scraped our shoes free from clay, warmed ourselves, and grew comfortable. Bion brightened up, and began peering about at the machinery. It was curious how completely he forgot his fretfulness and physical weakness when his mind was interested.

“See, sister, how it turns and turns! And the big wheel moves ever so many lesser wheels. Oh, what a pretty sight!”

“Is it, my lad? Do ’ee like it? Did ’ee never see a steam-engine before?”

I recognised at once the kind voice, though it, too, spoke a little Dorset—the gentle, good-natured manner. Yes, it was the Master come.

back again, to see after "the children." We both felt reassured, and at ease with him at once.

"You are the little Lychetts, I hear? I know Mr. Reuben very well. You can come here and amuse yourselves as often as you like."

"Thank you, sir."

"Hey, you're but a light weight, my pretty lad." He had lifted Bion on his tall shoulder to show him some of the machinery. "Not half so heavy and big as some of my boys."

"He is very delicate, and I want him to run about that he may grow hardy and strong. Please, sir, would you tell me what I am to do to make my little brother strong?"

I spoke very earnestly, I know. I was not afraid to speak to him, even though he was "the Master." I felt from the first minute that I saw him that he was kind, and good, and fatherly—would listen to everybody's troubles, and aid them too.

"Is there nobody but you to take care of your brother, my little maid?" said he, after a long, silent examination of us both.

“No, sir. We are orphans.”

“Ah!” A thoughtful, slow monosyllable, of much expression.

He eyed us over again. I was glad that I had put Bion's curls in order; but, however mean his clothes, no one could doubt from his appearance that he was a little gentleman.

“My girl, you are but young to have such a charge—and he does not look strong, though I think there is nothing really the matter with him, and I'm a bit of a doctor, too. The best thing you can do is to let him have plenty of food and fresh air, and keep him merry, and make him hardy. One of my lads is delicate too, but I never do anything more than this. Except—what do you do the last thing at night, and the first thing in the morning, my child?”

His grave, searching smile, his taking of my hand, taught me what he meant.

Colouring and half-ashamed, I yet answered truly—“I—I say—my prayers.”

“Just so! just so!” the Master repeated gently, and with the same inexpressibly kind

smile, nodded to us a good-bye, and quitted the workshop. In a few minutes we watched him mount his horse and ride away across the moor.

But, after we had lingered about for two or three hours in the blacksmith's shop, and the carpenter's shop, and among the boat-builders, seeing all sorts of wonderful things, such as neither of us had ever seen before, a decent-looking woman came up to us from the farmhouse, close by, with a jug of milk and an enormous plateful of bread and cheese.

The Master had left word that we were to have as much dinner as we liked, stay as long, as we liked, and that afterwards the grim but trustworthy Jim was to see us safe into the care of Lias Lee.

"He be a good gentleman, he be," said Lias, emphatically, on being told all this. "There bean't his like in all Dorset."

And truly—then and now—I, Eurice Lychett, think the same.





“ A woman came with a jug of milk and a plateful of bread and cheese.”


L. Lychetts.

p. 116.

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## VIII.

### A Visit to the Menagerie.

FTER our first expedition to the wharf—as the place where the Master had his workshops was generally called—Bion and I used to go there at every possible opportunity. Nothing could be more delicious than skimming across the moor in the railway clay-wagons, and then spending the whole day among the workshops, where the men soon knew us, and were very civil and kind. We came and went just as we chose—watching everybody, and interrupting nobody.

But, above all things we delighted in the forge. Bion would sit for an hour at a time, perched on some unused anvil, with the glare of

the fire lighting up his quiet, intent, un-childlike face, watching the wonderful process of making nails, or horse-shoes, or iron bolts for the railroad wagons. I, too, liked the blacksmith's shop amazingly; it was so beautiful to see the red, glowing iron beat out into form as easily as clay—so grand to see the sparks flying, and hear the measured, musical fall of the hammers, which gave Handel the first idea of the tune that Bion thinks so fine, "The Harmonious Blacksmith." Also, it was so pretty to watch the hissing iron turning all colours, one after the other, as it was thrown into the water to cool. And then there was the dusk atmosphere of the smithy, with the red lights falling so mysteriously on the workmen's faces and figures as they moved about.

I keep to the belief—I always shall—that there are few things more interesting than a blacksmith's forge.

We were lingering about there one morning, when the Master came in; he generally came down to the wharf every day, and always met us with a nod and smile—rarely more, he was

too busy. But we liked to watch him going about among his workmen, and to notice how every one of them brightened up, and was more civil, sociable, and pleasant-looking wherever he came. He used sometimes to talk to them, in a frank, familiar way, about their own affairs. Everybody that was in trouble, or sickness, or that needed advice, always came to the Master. And I don't believe the good Master ever sent them away unsatisfied.

He came into the smithy, carelessly took up a hammer and beat out a nail-head,—he could turn his hand to anything of mechanical work, and amused himself thus very often, which was probably one reason why his people liked him so well,—then took Bion on his shoulder, which seemed familiar to the weight of little boys.

“Would 'ee like some fun to-day, Master Bion? Would 'ee like to go with my lads to see the show? I think you both might, my dear”—turning to me. “There's a wild-beast show in the town to-night, and I intend all my

young folk to go—this lad, too, if he would like.”

“Oh, I should! I should!” cried Bion, who had already overheard the men talking of it. (A wild-beast show being a wonderful rare sight in these parts.) “And will there be tigers, such as papa used to hunt in India; and a big elephant, which he used to ride? O sister! wouldn't it be nice to see the show?”

I thought so too, for my life was very dull just now; and, besides, having a weak propensity for growing fond of people, especially people who were kind to Bion, I had grown very fond of the good Master, and would almost have gone anywhere or done anything he desired me.

Matters were soon arranged, even to sending word to Sally at Stonyhidge, lest the good soul might think that Bion and I had both come to a fatal end. We had also seen, more than once, the Master's little children, and the Master's kind wife, so were not afraid of them as strangers. And when I found we were received cordially in a respectable house

—a gentleman's house—I began to feel less humiliated under my changed fortunes. I remembered that, though we did live in a poor farmer's cottage, we were still Eunice and Bion Lychett—children of an honest man and a gentleman ; and that all good people would regard us as such so long as we continued to deserve it.

We sat down to tea round the Master's plentiful table. It was a curious fact, but nevertheless true, that this was the first time in all my life I had sat at a family table—that cheerful circle, which few prize who have it, and those who have it not almost always desire.

The tea-table was a perfect picture. It was large, for they were a large family. The children sat round it, one height above another, from the beautiful ten-month-old baby, perched on mamma's knee, and greatly hindering her duties by insisting on poking its fingers into every scalding cup of tea, up to the eldest missy, in long curls and a womanly apron, who thought herself quite as much grown up as I

was, and treated me with dignified condescension. Between these came ever so many little boys, of whom I could not tell one from the other the whole evening, and made all sorts of mistakes in their names, greatly to the mamma's astonishment. She was a pretty-looking, merry mamma, who treated me very kindly, and as an equal, too, calling me always "Miss Lychett." But I noticed she fixed on Bion more than once that half-tender, half-thoughtful look which mothers of many children turn to orphans.

Also she gave him a large cupful of new milk, and flooded his bread with luscious honey, saying to me, half-aside, "You should give your little brother everything that will make him strong, my dear!"

Then, even she thought what every one thought—what I had overheard Liaş saying! I disbelieved them all — passionately determined it *could* not be. But I choked over my bread and honey, and remained silent for a long while.

After tea there was a great hurry of getting



ready, for all were going to the wild-beast show. Papa, mamma, and every one of their little troop, except the baby—which mamma seemed privately to think a great slight to her darling, and was quite sure “baby would like it as much as any of them.” At which the papà laughed and said, “Certainly;” and told a marvellous story (which Bion proudly corroborated as being Indian-born and knowing all about it), how elephants had a great fancy for lifting little babies up in their trunks, and how one elephant took such an affection for an infant that he kept it between his fore-feet, and would not suffer it to be removed, for a whole day! After which anecdote I observed that Miss Baby mysteriously disappeared, and we heard no more of her going to the show.

It was almost dusk when we started to walk through a street or two of the little town to an open square, where the caravans had been set up. We were quite a procession as we threaded our way through the well-filled streets—the Master going first, plainly visible above everybody, with his tall stature and brawny

shoulders, where sat throned his youngest boy—the only delicate one, and whom, I fancied, the sturdy father loved the best. Though only in his inmost heart; he was too just to show favouritism.

We all passed on to the square, which was thronged with a gaping crowd, chiefly working-people, among whom almost every second man took off his hat to the Master. He nodded or spoke to nearly all—he seemed to know everybody and everybody to know him.

Bion and I followed. I never let go the child's hand. He was rather timid, but greatly delighted; and so, in truth, was I. All the promenades which Mrs. Dangerfield's young ladies had taken in the Zoological Gardens were never half the fun of this country-show. Oh, the wonder of the people!—the open-eyed, open-mouthed curiosity with which they gazed on the outside platform of the menagerie,—here stood a dashing young fellow in a green coat, cracking a whip—whom they probably believed to be the real original Wombwell—that mysterious man, whose very name suggests

lions and elephants to the youthful mind! Then, the melancholy envy with which those outside, who couldn't afford to go in, eyed those who could—yet, nevertheless, one or two of them lifted the Master's little children up the ladder, and received smiling his kindly "Thank'ee my man, and I wish I could treat you all to the show." Truly, it was great fun.

We got to the pay-place at last, where sat a pale pretty young woman, alternately taking money and mending diligently a child's braided frock, which the women who passed by regarded with some awe, as if wondering whether its future wearer were not a little lion or tiger!

Now, a few steps in the dark—a slash of a whip heard, followed by a premonitory savage growl, unfamiliar to English farmers' ears—a whiff of that peculiar wild-beast odour, not strictly agreeable—and we were in the middle of the show. Bion clung to me, dazzled by the light, which showed dimly the perpetually-moving, low-growling forms in the cages; but I reminded him that a little East Indian boy

ought not to be afraid to look at the beasts who were his brothers and country-folk, and made him laugh until his alarm ceased.

“Now, come on, little ones. Mamma, you’ve got two to look after. Here, Will, take hold of Pa’s hand. Missy, you go with Eunice and Bion.” Thus the good father disposed of us all, losing sight of none of his flock. But he still kept the weakly younger one on his shoulder. It was touching to see the little fellow sitting half-frightened, half-delighted, with his tiny hands buried in his father’s hair ; and his great eyes—he had, like my Bion and many another sickly child, remarkably beautiful and intelligent eyes—dilated with intense wonderment at all he beheld. And the father’s occasional gaze into those childish eyes, as he shifted him from shoulder to shoulder, and asked him if he were quite comfortable and not getting tired—was the most beautiful thing in the world.

I noticed all this, partly because I was fond of the Master and liked to watch him, partly because I understood something of what he

must feel towards his sickly boy. When, after a few minutes, I took Bion up in my arms—rather a weight to carry, but he could not see the animals well without—the Master and I interchanged a smile as if we had been grown-up friends. He said nothing; but in a little while, distinguishing in the crowd a face he knew, nodded to him.

“Here, Lias, mount this little fellow like my boy Eddie, and then he’ll see quite well, and his good sister too. Come round with Eddie and me, Miss Eunice.”

I obeyed, though I kept fast hold of Bion still. Merrily we made the circuit of the cages, following the keeper, whose eccentric explanation of the beasts produced many a smile from the Master and Lias Lee. Nevertheless, I being myself a free, wild creature at heart, felt a certain pity for the poor captive animals, and would rather have seen the tigers and leopards bounding over their native jungle than pacing to and fro in those wretched cramped cages. And, when, after the horrible fashion Van Amburgh first set, the keeper, a sallow young man

with a consumptive cough, entered the dens, put his foot upon a miserable-looking blind old lioness, made the leopards leap through hoops, and the tigers perform *poses plastiques* in attitudes like feline opera-dancers, I felt downright uncomfortable in my pity for the poor beasts. Nay, when at last he performed literally the figurative feat of "putting his head into the lion's mouth," I almost wished the enslaved monarch of the desert had taken his revenge on his tyrant by biting the head right off.

"Don't 'ee think, sir," said Lias Lee, when the feats were over, and the poor consumptive keeper stepped down from the cages, coughing violently, with large drops of perspiration standing on his brow,— "Don't 'ee think, sir, that in tricks o' that sort the man looks a terrible deal more contemptible than the brute?"

"It's a bad thing! a bad thing, Lias!" said the Master, shaking his head. "But, no doubt, the young man was brought up to it, and must earn his living how he can. It's an honest living, anyhow, and he works hard enough, poor fellow!"

And when, having ended the series of feats with the elephant, whose dignity resolutely refused to perform in any way except catching gingerbread nuts with his trunk, the poor keeper came round for his dole of pence, I noticed that the Master put in the hat a bright shilling.

“But,” said he, “I’d far rather see the poor brutes let alone. They’ll be one too many for you some day, my man.”

“Can’t help it, sir. I’ve got a wife and children.”

It is a curious fact, that after this conversation I saw two more bright shillings in the keeper’s hat; though how they came there nobody ever found out. But I had my suspicions.

We still lingered about the show, which for country children was such a wonderful sight. Lias Lee after a while put Bion down, and went the round of the cages with his own children. Many of the better-class town’s folk came in to see the sight, and ladies and gentlemen were mingled with working-men and their wives. People began to form groups, and

the hum of talking and laughter disturbed the sleepy brown bears, made the wild-eyed tigers show their teeth, and roused the monkeys into a clatter that almost emulated that of their human cousins a few degrees removed—of which there were some specimens even here.

The heat, noise, and leonine and feline odour, became insupportable. I took Bion near to the entrance where a breath of fresh air crept in, and we stood watching a trough where the seals were kept. The poor animals! how deplorable they looked, lifting their heads out of the narrow vessel where they could not attempt to swim, and gazing up at us with eyes so pathetic, large, and human-like, that anybody who has noticed the eye of a seal will readily account for stories of mermaids.

I was showing this to Bion, and explaining that many tales I had told him about sea-maidens might have their origin in nothing but seals, seen at twilight among rocks and weedy banks—when my little brother's attention seemed wandering.

“Yes—I know—I understand. But, sister,



I see such a pretty young lady there—a great deal prettier than you, and not so big—and she has been watching us and looking at me and smiling, for such a long time. I wish you'd speak to her."

I turned to see the pretty young lady, who was "a great deal prettier than I." A speech I heartily forgave for the pleasure of knowing the sense of beauty so strong in the child, which sense, indeed, I had cultivated with all my power.

"Which is she, Bion?"

"There—a grown-up young lady nicely-dressed—with long beautiful curls, and such blue eyes! Oh, I wish you were as pretty as she is, and then shouldn't I love you, sister, Eunice!"

A foolish child's speech, but it stung me a little—nay, so much that for the next minute I would not—could not, turn to look at "the pretty young lady." When I did, I knew the face—much altered, but still I knew it. She came up to me at once.

“I thought you had forgotten me—of course your little brother had—but *you*, Eunice?”

It was the poor friendless girl—half teacher, half pupil, who at Mrs. Dangerfield's had been called “little Janie Allardyce.”

## IX.

### The Widow Archer.

**J**ANIE ALLARDYCE went back with us to supper at the Master's house ; they knew her well, it seemed—nay, she was even some sort of a distant cousin.

These facts, though they surprised me much at first, I soon found were quite natural, since I had already known she came from this part of Dorsetshire : in Dorsetshire everybody knew everybody, and two-thirds of the county were related to one another.

But the thing which surprised me most was the change in Janie herself. At school nobody had ever thought her pretty,—not even I, who had a talent for discovering the faintest trace of good looks in anybody I liked. Then,

though more than sixteen, she had always been treated as a mere child—"little Janie Allardyce." Little she was still—would probably never be tall—but she looked quite the woman. A thoughtful woman too—and a happy one—with her painful shyness worn off, and leaving only a graceful, retiring manner, as if she had now woken to a knowledge of her own position, and was gently conscious of it, but not proud.

What was her present position—she, formerly the despised "half" at Mrs. Dangerfield's? Determined to find out, I asked her when she was going back there?

"I left soon after you did, and am not going back at all," she answered, smiling and blushing. "My father is better off than he was, and is going to give up his English farm and take one in Australia!"

"And are you going to Australia?"

"N—no, I—I think not!" hesitated Janie—while the Master's wife looked at her and laughed, and a gentleman who had also come in with the Master to supper, and been very kind in amusing sleepy Bion, said decidedly "No."

I was but a child in years, and had a child's ignorance about many things, yet in some I was precociously acute. I could not help understanding that Janie Allardyce at seventeen—a very early, but not impossible age—was going to be married.

Now, being "married" was a subject that had never filled my foolish thoughts, as it does some girls', even at thirteen; and I always heartily despised the vain nonsense of my elder school-fellows. But I did think that being loved must be very sweet, whether it was the love of parents, brothers and sisters, or husband; and I marvelled not to see the wondrous change in Janie Allardyce.

For days,—ay, weeks, after then, the meeting with her, and the continually harping which Bion kept up on the one subject of his "pretty young lady," made me almost sad. Yet I knew not why, except for the thought—most painful at my age—that I was so plain, nobody, neither brother, friend, nor lover, would ever care for me.

It seems strange that young girls, between

childhood and womanhood, should never be talked to or written for on the subject of love, when, heaven knows! it is often the one subject which fills their heads, and on which—wrongly or rightly—they are constantly speculating. Little maidens! I blame you not; I, Eunice Lychett, did the same in my time. But I have often felt since, that it would have been well for me had I had a friend by me to whom I could have unfolded all my dreams, foolish or not, and who would have said to me, as I, now grown a woman, say to you, “My children, do not perplex yourselves. Sufficient unto the day is—not only the evil—but the good thereof. Make yourselves happy in the present, and the future will more surely bring its own happiness. My merry girls, keep children while you may!”

This sermon, of which Jane Allardyce and her affairs have been the text, is all I shall preach now.

The gentleman Miss Allardyce was going to marry was a young sailor, captain of a little vessel that traded between Swanage and the

coast of Spain. I found out these facts through her being so very fond of going to spend long summer mornings on the sands of Swanage Bay, never seeming either dull or melancholy, always good-natured and cheerful, but still constantly watching the little sails that rose over the horizon upward from the Channel. And though she was invariably kind to us—would sit for hours helping Bion to make his castles and moats in the sand, or talking with me merrily about our old school-days, still I felt that there had come a change, far greater than the few years between us, and that Jane Allardyce, gentle, thoughtful, womanly, and wise, was a creature very different from the “little Janie” of Mrs. Dangerfield’s establishment.

I know not whether I altogether liked this—I, who had been accustomed to think myself so much her superior in talent and strength of character. And I still believe I was, she being never very clever or energetic, though she was so good. It was irksome to a self-opinionated young damsel to see her quietly crossing the

Rubicon of life, and taking up her position in the ranks of womanhood, while I was still treated as a child. Then, too, she began to have great influence with Bion ; he constantly followed her about, and talked of her being "so pretty,"—while I, alas! was so cruelly plain.

The old trouble, lately half-forgotten—for Stonyhide was not a place favourable to the development of personal vanity—rose up again in my mind. Not that I was conceited, or valued good looks as a means of securing admiration—not the least! I would have been content all my life to look in the glass at that image, so unpleasant and jarring to my keen sense of beauty, could I only have been sure that people loved me in spite of my face. But, oh! when Bion pulled Janie's curls, and sat on her lap, and looked up into her sweet eyes, his own beaming with satisfied admiration—I—I felt much inclined to go and knock my head against the wall!

But I did not want to do any mischief to those two—only to myself,—my poor, ugly,



unfortunate self! It seemed so hard that for the few years of human existence,—for what are threescore years?—one should not have an exterior that was pleasant to one's self and to other people. In vain I said to myself, looking at my irregular features and coarse hands, "What does it signify? in thirty years I shall be an old woman—in thirty more, probably a skeleton—and my soul will remain just the same." But still, during the time one wore a body it would have been nice to wear a body that one liked.

I tell all this—confessing sorrows now quite conquered—for the benefit of ugly people, especially young people. It is useless to preach to the young that nonsense about "handsome is that handsome does," and "beauty signifying nothing." It signifies a great deal! It is a most precious gift, the outward type of all that charms and refines humanity. I know few harder things than for a sensitive girl, with a keen appreciation of the beautiful, in advancing to womanhood, to discover that she is extremely plain. But, my

dear ugly girl, take heart! One grows out of these troubles in time. Your face will not vex you so much when you are used to it. And kindly Nature has so caused the soul to shine out through the body, that I never yet knew a woman, however externally ugly, who had a beautiful soul, but the body acquired a certain atmosphere of beauty likewise. A thoroughly good, single-hearted, refined woman, however little gifted with personal charms, can never be repulsive. And many of these lovely-plain women have been loved with an intensity that rarely falls to the lot of mere "beauties."

So much for that matter, the world-wide question of beauty and ugliness—which I, poor silly child! lay mournfully pondering over one sunny afternoon at Swanage Bay. Bion and Janie were a little distance off, discussing an important consideration—viz. whether the sand-castle they had so carefully built with spades should have the flood-gates of its moat opened to the advancing tide. In which case, Bion urged, the trench would be

filled with "real water:" but Janie hinted, that if the water were once let in, it would soon sweep away moat, castle, and all. The approaching ruin was, at the farthest, a mere question of minutes, as half-an-hour would settle all, yet they urged it as earnestly—ay, as I had just been arguing to myself the matter of my own poor face, which matter in a few years, nay, at any moment, the will of Heaven might finally settle by converting it into a mere handful of dust and bones.

Yet, open-eyed to my neighbours' folly, though blind to my own, I called out to them, "How can you two weary yourselves about such nonsensical trifles?"

"It pleases the boy," said Bion's companion, gently; and she went on making a sea-weed portcullis to the moat.

Bion glanced rather angrily at me, and crept closer to Jane Allardyce. He always looked contented when at her side. I rose, and went and sat a little farther off, on a big stone. I felt how useless I was in adding to their happiness, and I had not yet grown

so naughty as to wish to take anything from it.

How well can I picture my old self—that restless, melancholy, discontented girl, sitting, all crouched in an ungainly heap, her hands clasped round her knees, her eyes aching with the glare of the sunny sea, her head dizzied with the monotonous bass of the tide,—thinking of all sorts of things or of nothing in particular, except that it was a very miserable world, and she didn't know what to do with herself in it.

Bion and Janie came up at last, the former rather disconsolate, because the sea had washed away his castle, moat, and all, until Janie reminded him that he could build another any day. She would come to-morrow with him, if he liked.

“Will you? oh, how nice! And sister Eunice, too?”

Sister Eunice replied rather sharply that she didn't know.

“Don't tease her!” whispered Janie, interfering to prevent Bion's fretful entreaties.

“And it is time for us to go, if we would not keep Mrs. Archer waiting tea, which always vexes her.”

Mrs. Archer was the young captain's mother, who lived near Swanage in a little cottage, all alone, except when her son came ashore for a day or two between his voyages. Sally at Stonyhide had told us a good deal about her, and for a long time we had looked forward as a great treat to this “going to tea to Mrs. Archer.”

We left the sands, and walked along the road by the shore. I asked Bion if he would take hold of my hand, or let me carry him, as I had often used to do, though he was growing much less delicate now. But he repulsed all my advances, and clung to Janie. She whispered him—for I overheard—to be a kind boy and give his hand to sister; but I was not going to be treated with kindness at her bidding. So I pretended to take no notice and walked on, pulling the roses from the hedge, for the road had turned abruptly from the shore and become a beautiful country lane.

“What are you doing there? Look at your hands, Eunice!”

I had been playing nervously with the thorny stems, pricking finger after finger, till they were marked with blood. It did not hurt me—I never felt it.

“Janie!” I said, crossly, “I do wish you’d let me alone. Go forward, you two. I’ll follow at my leisure.” They obeyed.

How well I remember the solitude of that June afternoon, warm and still—not a creature to be seen along the road—not a sound or a stirring anywhere, except the occasional glitter of a young bird in the hedge. What a hedge it was! larger and richer than any hedges seen now—byplaces all pink with the withering May, or budding crimson with newly-come brier-roses. Here and there, too, an oak-branch mingled with the thorn-hedge, startling one with its vivid exquisite green—of the tint that I never found in anything in nature save young oak-leaves the first week of June.

Watching these pretty things, I unconsciously became soothed and cheered, until I

half forgot my ill-humour and dreariness. By the time I reached Mrs. Archer's cottage I had grown fit for decent company.

It was a cottage—not remarkably fine outside—just red brick, with a green door and a tiny garden ; it is a mistake to suppose that country people delight in roses, and posies, and jessamine-porches, most of them like a town-built house much better. Doubtless Mrs. Archer did. There was nothing the least bit sentimental about her.

I found Bion with his curls already smoothed and his face washed—(how durst Janie do that? it was my business)—sitting prim and shy in the little parlour, watching Mrs. Archer make the tea. She had on a black skirt, short enough to exhibit feet and ankles as slender as her hands—a dimity bed-gown, such as poor people wear, only so exquisitely white and fine that it looked quite graceful, and a mob-cap equally snowy, with an immense border. A perfect picture was that old lady! for a lady she certainly was, though of the rustic sort. Indeed, as she told me, hearing I had come

from London,—she had never been there, or to any large town, and had rarely quitted this her native place, except for a few voyages abroad.

“Where?” asked I eagerly.

“Oh! to the West Indies, and Canton, and Honduras, and half-way towards India; but we were wrecked off St. Helena!”

My heart beat. “Tell me something about St. Helena.”

She began to describe it, in a long-winded, prosy way, but I listened eagerly to every word. At last she asked me why I did so, and why I was so interested in the island.”

“I have some belonging to me there.”

As I walked away, Jane Allardyce whispered something to Mrs. Archer, which the old lady answered with “Ah, well! Poor things!” and went out of the room to fill her tea-pot.

My heart turned to Bion, as it always did when I thought of *that* island. I took him in my arms to amuse him and disperse his shyness by showing him various things about the room. Especially his attention was caught by a



coloured drawing which hung over the mantel-piece. It represented a ship in full sail, all her tackle being made out with most mathematical precision—a true, correct portrait, such as a sailor delights to have of his beloved vessel. Underneath was written, “Adventure, East Indiaman, Captain John Archer, 1801.”

“Hush!” said Janie, in a whisper, as I was going to inquire about it of Mrs. Archer, who just then re-entered, a plate of seed-cake in one hand and the tea-pot in the other, the very picture of contented benevolence—“hush! it was her husband’s ship. She sailed the year after for Bombay—and was never more heard of.”

I felt all cold. “*Sailed, and was never more heard of*”—that most mournful ending of a ship’s history! And it happened more than forty years ago. Could anybody endure such a horror as that, and yet live after it for forty years? Yet such things did happen in the world—this strange world, upon whose real vicissitudes I was just entering. Thinking so much of its least troubles too—making

myself downright miserable because I lived in a dull farm-house, or because I was rather ugly to look at, or because little Bion was getting fonder of Jane Allardyce than he was of me! What contemptible nothings to fret about when life had such sorrows as these!

I resolved to shake myself free of mine, and try to make myself generally agreeable. We had a merry tea, and plenty of talk afterwards, for Mrs. Archer had a great gift that way, and Janie had an equal talent for listening. It was chiefly the small chit-chat of the neighbourhood—how Mrs. Smith and her husband had quarrelled; how Mrs. Jones's eldest boy had turned out ill, and gone off to sea; how the Williams's donkey had got into Mrs. Archer's little back garden and spoiled the cabbages; and how, when she was laid up with rheumatism last week, that wicked Sally had managed to break the best tea-pot; and all that sort of talk, which astonished me very much in a woman who had sailed half over the world. But Canton, and Honduras, and the West Indies, had with her all dwindled down.

into the tiny world in and about Swanage Bay.

“Those poor cabbages!” continued the old lady, still moaning over the devastations of the donkey, “that reminds me what beautiful cabbages I had, and how useful they were, the summer my son George came home from Buenos Ayres. I’ll tell you how it was, Miss Lychett, if you like to hear.” Of course I assented.

“Well, my George, that was captain of the ‘Alice’ schooner—(he’s gone now, poor fellow! he was the third I lost at sea, his ship struck one night and went down just off the Scilly Isles)—well, George had been away six years altogether; I hadn’t heard from him for a long time, when one day (I was at my breakfast) the boy that brings letters from Swanage holloed out at the window, ‘Here’s some’at for’ee, Mrs. Archer.’ And sure enough, it was a bit of a crumpled paper in my boy’s own hand-writing, just three lines:—‘Dear mother, —We’ve put in here at Swanage Bay; come on board, and bring lots of green vegetables

and meat." Up I started—I was a sailor's wife and understood all these things. First, I went and cut all my cabbages—then I begged and purchased till I had stripped the neighbours' gardens, too—then I went to Swanage and bought up nearly all the meat in the place. Lastly, I put on my best bonnet and shawl, locked the house-door, and went down to see my boy. I hadn't had time to cry before,—but when I saw the 'Alice' lying in the bay, you might have knocked me down with a feather."

I drew a long breath—the poor old soul was growing interesting now. We listened eagerly, Bion and I.

"George was a little fair lad when he went away ; and when I got on board, and a stout, brown-whiskered young man helped me over the side, I didn't know him. I said, all in a tremble, 'Sir, I wanted to see Captain Archer.' 'Hey, mother! don't you know me?' and he burst out into a hearty laugh, and wasn't ashamed to hug and kiss me before all the crew. He was a good lad, my George!"

Here Mrs. Archer stopped to wipe her eyes ; mine were running over too, for I imagined my Bion going to sea and coming home in his ship in this way.

“I stayed on board all day, Miss Lychett, and we had such a dinner! all West-India preserves and the like. But George declared nothing tasted half so nice as his mother’s cabbages!—Well, my dear, the ‘Alice’ was bound to London, so I was rowed on shore before dark. I walked down the very next morning, but, as I expected, the ‘Alice’ had sailed.”

“But you saw your son after that?”

“Oh, yes! he came and stayed with me a week ; and another week three years afterwards, just before the ‘Alice’ sailed on her last voyage. Poor dear George! he never could help talking of those cabbages. He brought me many curious things from abroad.”

Janie looked up and begged that we might see them—she had often told Bion and me of the pretty things Mrs Archer had.

So we went and looked them all over, the old lady exhibiting them with considerable

pride, and adding to each a little explanation, often funny enough, and yet pathetic. There were two lovely nautilus-shells which Captain John Archer, her husband, had presented. "That was when he came a-courting, my dear; he brought me useful things afterwards." In the window hung a queer fungous plant. "An air-plant, Master Lychett, which grows upon nothing! My son George brought it from South America, and hung it up himself." Janie unrolled a piece of rich Turkey carpet that lay neglected in a corner. "Oh! that was the folly of Jack and Jim on their first voyage; but I never had the heart to lay it down on my brick floor. Poor lads; they never brought home anything else. In landing at Calcutta they were both swept off a caçamaran and drowned!"

It astonished me to hear her thus calmly allude to these tragical episodes, which, I suppose, must be so common among people connected with sea-life as to lose something of their horror. I learnt that of Mrs. Archer's seven sons five had gone to sea, and four had

perished there in some way or other. The only one now left was the youngest, Harry Archer, who was engaged to marry Janie.

“Poor Janie! I saw that every mournful allusion made her turn paler and paler; and when Mrs. Archer happened to ask what day was fixed for the Allardyce family’s departure for Australia, the tears bubbled and suffused her pretty face. I forgave her that prettiness—I forgave even that winning manner which I dreaded might steal my little brother’s love from me. Poor Janie Allardyce! she had her troubles, and bore them so patiently and uncomplaining! I would try not to feel angry with her any more.

When we walked home, and I bade her good-bye at the gate of the fields leading to Stony hide, I put my arms around her neck and kissed her—rather a new thing for me to do. And, though I did not say anything—indeed, it would have been useless, seeing she did not know I had wronged her,—still in my heart I fervently begged her pardon.

## X.

### The Birth-Day Gifts.

ONE after another the days went by—faster than I can count, and it was already near the end of June.

Now my Bion was a June bird; he had come into the world in the beautiful midsummer time—in fact, his birth-day was St. John's Eve. Mine was in the blustering March season—sunshiny at times, but bleak. I often thought the difference between us was just like that of our birthdays: I was March and he was June. His life was a June life, too. Now that returning health banished the peevishness from his face, everybody found him pleasant and lovely. From Sally at Stonyhide up to the Master himself, everybody petted



Bion. He was, as it were, cradled in roses. But—and on this *but* rested much of my comfort—they could not often get time and opportunity to spoil him, Mr. Reuben being busy with his farm and his marble-quarry, Sally with her house affairs, while Lias Lee lived four miles off, and Janie Allardyce three! I myself had, after all, the chief hand in spoiling Bion, and I did it with great content.

The latter weeks of that June was the sweetest weather I ever remember,—or it seems so, looking back upon it. My little brother had grown strong enough for long walks, and we used to spend whole summer days out on the moors, which were all yellow with furze-blossom, while the heather was just beginning to make patches of purple tint, when seen faintly through half-shut eyes on a sunshiny noon. There, sitting on some dry hillock, or on one of the queer stones—Lias Lee said they were Druid stones—that were scattered about the moors, I used to tell Bion fairy-tales, or, harder task! try and teach him to read in a little old-fashioned primer, which solemnly in-

forms us how "*John was a good boy,*" &c., &c. Bion hated it—and, privately, so did I.

"Oh, I can't learn to read, sister! it's very unkind of you to teach me! I wish I was a big man, and then nobody would tease me, and I might do whatever I liked all day!"

"What would that be?" asked I, half-cross, half-amused, for we had been sitting a full hour conning the history of "*John,*" the prosiest of all "*good boys;*" and it was a lovely afternoon, and the bees were humming in the moor-land thyme-beds. Also, it had been no little difficulty for me to keep my attention steadily fixed on "*John,*" since to-morrow was Bion's birthday—and—and——. But all that in good time.

Bion sat cogitating:—"If I were a man? let me see! Ah, I know what I would do! I'd buy a great, big organ, with all sorts of tunes, and I'd turn it and turn it, and make music all day long. I'd never read in ugly spelling-books again."

"But," cried I, breathless with anxiety, for a reason of my own—"if it were a pretty story-

book, with pictures in it—such books as we saw at the Master's the other day?"

"Ah, those"—he had liked them very much, I knew. "When may I have them to read, sister? Those books were nice."

"Not particularly so, I returned, with a cunning pretence of indifference, and led his thoughts to something else. But inwardly I was very proud and pleased.

I made myself so funny, and coaxed Bion into so long a walk, that what with scampering and laughing, he came home quite tired, and was thankful to go to bed directly after tea—the very thing I had been aiming at all day. For at seven o'clock Lias Lee was coming, and he and I had a little private business to transact.

It was this. For weeks I had been thinking of St. John's Eve, and what I should give Bion on this the first birth-day of any one belonging to me to whom I could give a present. At last I decided on the usual school-gift—a cake, if I only knew how to make one; Sally could, but I was too proud to ask Sally. Besides,

the present must be mine—the work of my own hands. While in this quandary, I was one day at the Master's and saw a book that the Master's wife was reading to her little ones. It was "Grimm's Tales."

Anybody who has ever seen that delicious collection of queer German baby-tales, alike mirth-creating to old and young, will imagine how it fascinated me. Bion, too; he sat with his great eyes dilated with wonder or brimming with laughter. "Ah, Eunice!" said the Master's wife, "this is the book that would make lazy Bion learn to read."

My determination was taken. But the price of the book was six shillings! and I had just—sixpence! Oh, for one-tenth of my wasted pocket-money of old: the ribbons, the confections, the gloves, all eaten or worn out, and their value not to be recovered. Still, there was the locked box of which I had lost the key. One day I got Sally to break it open with the poker, and out of the chaos of finery I secretly took an Indian shawl.

Next morning, my cheeks burning and my

heart beating, I went and asked the Master's wife if she wanted such a thing.

"Bless you! no, child! Is it yours? You were not going to give it me?"

"No," I said bluntly; my pride was writhing, and I longed to get the struggle over—"No, but to sell it. I want some money."

She looked so kind, that in another minute I had told her the reason why.

"Nonsense!"—and she laughed, but still so kindly! "I'll give you half-a-dozen Grimm's Tales!"

I explained that I must *earn* a gift, or it would not be a gift at all. We talked the matter over; but, although much moved by her goodness, I was very firm. It ended in—in—how Mrs. Dangerfield's young ladies would have jeered!—in Miss Eunice Lychett's turning sempstress and sewing for money!

The Master's wife had six little child's shirts to make. I made them for her, and she gave me a shilling a-piece. It was not easy work, for I hated sewing—we all did at Mrs. Dangerfield's. But during the long June evenings they got

finished at last ; and I had given my important order to Mrs. Jones—the only bookseller at —. A “Grimm’s Tales” was coming from London, and was to be brought to Stonyhide this very evening in the safe pocket of Lias Leè.— This was the whole story.

Seven o’clock struck—half-past—then eight. I became very fidgety indeed, the more so as I had nothing to do. The little shirts had, however unwelcomely, given me the habit of employing my fingers ; and now the time hung heavily, as heavily as my lazy hands. Cousin Reuben was absent from home,—Sally busy in the kitchen : I paced the solitary parlour till I was like to cry.

And cry I did—though it was with pleasure—when Lias’s heavy foot sounded on the staircase, and I had a brown-paper parcel—that lovely sort of parcel in which booksellers envelope their treasures—fairly in my hands. It was a real “Grimm’s Tales”—a beautiful, new, uncut copy ! I opened some leaves, and admired one or two of the quaint pretty pictures ; but I would not look at more, lest it

should take the zest away when I showed them all to Bion. I got a pen, a capital new one of Lias Lee's mending, and wrote—(the inscription is yet extant, the tremulous, ill-formed *B* remaining to the eternal disgrace of my calligraphy!)—my brother's name in full, "*Bion William Lychett.*"

There I paused, inventing and discarding a score of pretty inscriptions. Finally, "*from his sister,*" was the only one I chose.

This done—and many a conqueror has signed his coronation oath, and many a happy maiden her marriage settlement, with less of emotion,—I wrapped the book again in its brown-paper covering, tied it up, directed it, and, stealthily creeping into Bion's little closet, laid it on his pillow. He was sound asleep, looking so pretty, that the tears almost came into my eyes.

"Ah!" I thought; "how happy he will be when he wakes in the morning!" But he could not be happier than I was that night.

After a while I re-opened my bed-room door, and went out to see Lias Lee. He was coming

up the stairs laden with a considerable burthen, Sally helping him.

“It be only an old piano, Miss. The Allardyce folk sailed yesterday for Australia, and Janie is gone to live with the young Captain’s mother till he comes home from sea ; and she said, Would you take in her old piano ? Master Bion, she thinks, might like the music. Now, I say that’s be very kind o’ Miss Janie.”

“Very !” answered I, in an indifferent manner, being absorbed in my “Grimm’s Tales.” I just asked after Janie, whom we had not seen for some time ; and felt a twinge of remorse when Liás told me that she was not well, and very unhappy at parting from her own people—her father, mother, and brothers, who were gone to Australia.

“Tell her,” said I—it was a tolerable sacrifice, but I made it to ease my conscience—“tell her to come to Stonyhide to-morrow. It will amuse her.”

As for the piano, I hardly noticed it ; I was not fond of music—and the very sight of its white keys turned me sick at the recollection



of those three-hours' daily practising of scales. But, thank goodness, though we had a hateful piano in the house, this was not Mrs. Dangerfield's. I shut down the instrument, forgot it altogether, and went contentedly to my bed.

Next morning, I rose, dressed, and sat waiting. I thought the child should wake of his own accord to-day. I listened for his softened breathing, and the two or three sleepy sighs with which he was accustomed to rouse himself. Then the half-drowsy, half-cross call for "sister"—finally, a pause—a rattling of brown paper. The next minute, all in his little white night-gown, and trembling with pleasure, he had bounded into my room and into my arms.

"It's your birth-day, Master nine-year-old! many happy returns, sir!" said I, with assumed laughter to hide something not unlike tears.

"And this is for me—really for me! Oh, what a kind sister! Won't I learn to read fast now?"

"Very fast! And it's high time too, little dunce" said I, smothering him with kisses,

which he gave me freely back. I was so happy ! I felt sure I had made him love me at last.

We went down-stairs in great triumph and showed Bion's book to all the house. Sally laughed heartily over the funny pictures. Mr. Reuben was half afraid they were more funny than improving, and mildly hinted what a good book "Dr. Watts' Hymns" was. But I scouted the Doctor, and held fast to my "Grimm." And when he saw little Bion's delight, Mr. Linnington smiled too in his gentle, meek way. He was a worthy man—poor old Cousin Reuben !

All this time nobody noticed the new piece of furniture, which Sally had covered with a cloth and made a side-board of. At length, in the pauses between my reading aloud—for Bion had insisted on hearing tale after tale from his new book—his eye noticed the innovation in the parlour.—"What's that, sister?"

"Only a piano,—Janie Allardyce's. She will be here to-day ; let us make haste and finish the reading before she comes." For, somehow, I thought it would not be half so nice with three as with two.

But Bion jumped off my knee. "A piano! mamma had a piano, and she used to play to me, and it was, oh, so beautiful! Please, Eunice, I want to see the piano."

His little hands were trembling with excitement. I put down the book, and opened the instrument for him. "There, look at it.—And now I'm quite ready to go on, Bion."

But Bion seemed to have forgotten the reading. He stood at the key-board, striking one note after another—sometimes pulling a wry face—for it was an old piano shockingly out of tune—then again turning, his countenance all beaming as he hit upon a pleasant chord. At last, note by note, he picked out a whole tune—one of the hymn-tunes he was accustomed to grind out upon the organ. Oh, the delight which illumined his little face as he played it, over and over again!

It was very wicked of me, but—but—my sore heart began to rebel. I spoke rather crossly,—

"Bion, I'm waiting to finish the story. Come away—that noise is very disagreeable!"

"Oh, no! I think it very pretty. It's a tune, do you hear? And here's a bit of another, which mamma used to play. Oh, I wish anybody could play to me now!"

"I like reading far better."

"But I don't. Can you play on the piano, sister Eunice?"

"Yes—but I hate it," I answered roughly, shutting "Grimm" with a loud clap. Bion never minded, he was wholly absorbed in his new pleasure. For nearly an hour he sat there, strumming out tune after tune: taking no notice of me, nor I of him, except once; when seeing he looked pale with standing, I pushed a chair towards him, which he acknowledged with a smiling "Thank you, sister." He was perfectly happy.

I sat, suffering keen pain. I had some idea of going out and throwing "Grimm" to the bottom of the well, and possibly, jumping in after, when the parlour-door opened, and Janie Allardyce's small figure and pretty little face appeared. She kissed us both.

"I thought my poor old piano would turn out useful here. Was Eunice playing?"

"No—it was me; Eunice wouldn't. But you can—oh, I know you can. Please, do!"

He dragged her to the piano and stood entranced while she played tune after tune. Slowly his countenance saddened.

"I wish I could play like you, Miss Janie. It would be a great deal nicer than learning to read."

I stayed to hear no more, but went out of the room, fortunately leaving "Grimm" behind me, or it would now be mouldering away at the bottom of the well. I wandered through the farm-yard and into the field, and did not come back again for a very long time.

When I did, I had by main force smothered down my evil temper, though I was still bitter at heart. It was a very hard struggle, indeed. It took me three frantic walks round the meadow before I could get rid of that choking passion which made me feel as if I hated Bion, Janie, everybody. Three more in conquering a frantic desire to run away to the farthest

end of the world, that they two might be happy together, and I—might die! Three final and quieter strolls were occupied in trying to see the justice of the case; my conscientiousness, never wholly deadened even by my wildest passions, whispering how wrong it was to wish to debar my little brother from a gratification because it happened to be none to me. Also, how wrong to hate Jane Allardyce because she could give Bion one pleasure which I could not! Above all, how utterly mean and disgraceful it was of me to be exacting equal gratitude for the benefits I bestowed—loving my little helpless brother in a sort of bartering way: “I give you so much, and you must give me so much back again, or, if you don’t, I’ll hate you!” This was the turning point, I think—which from very shame drove the badness out of me.

I tell all this, that my readers may know I do not set myself up as a pattern of perfection—the “good child” of young folk’s story-books, which “good child” I don’t believe in—not a bit of it! We all, from babyhood to old

age, have strong temptations to be naughty, which we must fight against from day to day. I, Eunice Lychett, a grown-up woman, have often as hard a battle to fight with myself as little Eunice had that morning in the field. But when, with the blessing of Heaven, one has conquered, and feels one's self good again, how sweet it is! Children, you don't know how sweet until you try.

I went in-doors. Janie and Bion were still sitting together at the piano, she guiding his little fingers over the keys. There was a scrap of ruled paper before them, on which she had written the gamut. Hateful gamut! I sickened at the sight of its remembered horror. And Janie was teaching it, patiently and kindly, and, still more wonderful, the child liked to learn! His tastes must be very different from mine.

As I peeped through the half-open door, and saw Bion's radiant face, involuntarily I thought of the story of the young Mozart, the baby-musician. Could my brother have something in him which not even I could under-

stand? Would my little Bion turn out a great musical genius? At this proud and happy thought, the last fragment of my wrath crumbled down; I entered the room "as good as gold."


Bion sprang towards me. "Sister, sister, come and hear! I have learnt three tunes, and Janie says she will teach me music; and I shall some day play as well as ever mamma did—and oh!"—a slight shadow rose in his beaming eyes—"wouldn't mamma have liked to hear me?"

As I kissed him, I also looked grave and dropped one soft, repentant tear over my boy—his mother's boy.



## XI.

### The Drowned Lad.

FTER that day I never heard the last of Janie's piano. It was kept going from morning till night. As soon as Bion rose in the morning—and he *would* condescend to get up now—down he sat, or oftener stood, by the key-board, and began poking out his little tunes. Had I been gifted with an ear for music, doubtless it would have tortured me very much—as it was, I was bored to death with the perpetual noise. Breakfast over, the same thing began again. Spelling-book, slate, were all thrown aside, and even the pleasant walks were put an end to. For weeks there was nothing but strumming all day long.

As for poor old "Grimm," he went back into his brown paper, then retired to the top-

most shelf of the cupboard, and nobody heard of him for months,—nay, years. Nobody ever remembered him, except me. I will not tell of the sore place that was left in my heart, it is quite healed now.

Strum—strum—strum! all day over and every day! Such was the pleasant life I led. From morning till night it was always, “Bion, come to breakfast,” or dinner; “Bion, leave that piano alone for just five minutes;” “Bion, do go out with sister this lovely day.” And Bion usually responded cheerfully at the time; for I noticed that while he was at his playing he never looked cross—indeed, he had been quite a different creature since he took to his music. But at the first opportunity he would rush away from meals, or walks, or lessons, and back again to his old place, to begin those dreary little tunes.

One day, when my patience was tried to the uttermost, I threatened to lock up the instrument and take the key. He laughed—he was so amused to see me really cross that he apparently could not believe it.

"It's for your own good, Bion ;" and I tried inwardly to persuade myself that it really was so. "If I let you go on in this way you will grow up an ignorant dunce. I am your elder sister and I have authority over you ; take care, for I will use it."

"Will you ?"

Though in a great passion myself at the time, I was startled by the defiance in the little fellow's face. He had often been peevish, sullen, cross—but he had never openly set himself against me before. I had touched some chord which awoke a new spirit in the child. Instead of bursting into fretful tears he grew quite pale and quiet.

"Please, sister, would you say that over again ?"

"I say," repeated I, in a dignified manner, "if you are not a good boy and will not learn your lessons, and do what I tell you, I shall think it right to lock up the piano and take the key, and only let you play now and then. Do you hear, Bion ?"

He made no immediate answer, his childish

spirit seeming for the minute cowed before my resoluteness : I certainly always was the stronger of the two. Poor little Bion, his eyes rested lovingly on the key-board, and began to brim over !

“ I am so fond of it,” he whispered to himself piteously. “ I love Janie’s piano better than anything in the world.”

“ Except Janie herself !” said a merry voice at the door, and Miss Allardyce came in, sweet, kind, and unconscious.

He sprang towards her with a cry half delight, half tears, “ Janie, Janie, help me ! Sister says ——”

I could not stand that. Human nature would not bear it. I ran to the piano to fulfil my threat of locking it up, but Bion was there before me. With a passion that I never saw in the child before, and have rarely seen since, he snatched the key from me and threw it out of the open window as far as ever he could reach. It struck against the windlass of the draw-well, and bounded down—down—till we heard, or fancied we heard, its dropping into

the water beneath. Then Bion, bursting into a flood of tears, hid his face in Janie's arms.

God forgive me! but I have been a very wicked girl in my time. If anybody thinks me at all good now, it is a living warning of how much one can conquer if one tries, with the mercy and blessing of Heaven.

As I passed and saw these two—for Janie, quite innocent and understanding nothing, was of course soothing Bion in her own kind way—I put out my clenched hand. And, somehow—it seemed not myself that did it, but some evil power within me—I struck at them. And—my heart bleeds as I write it—I hurt my little brother—my own little brother—my darling—my pride—whom I would have died for, any day. And yet—I hurt him!

It was not much, for he scarcely cried out. The minute I had done it I was on my knees kissing the place, the cruel red mark on his dear shoulder. But I *had* done it, and the consequence came: I saw it in Bion's eyes. My little brother's heart turned from me and turned towards Jane Allardyce.

I was never overmuch troubled with false pride, and as soon as I really felt I had done wrong was always ready enough to atone. I begged my child's pardon a hundred times, made him kiss me and be friends. Then he crept back again to Jane to be comforted for his troubles, and rested his head on her shoulder. As for me, I ran out of the room.

We had a very unhappy morning; and I have often thought since what a kind, patient, sensible girl Jane Allardyce was, in trying to smooth over matters, so as to make us forget the quarrel, and enjoy ourselves as she had at first intended. For she had come, according to a long-arranged plan, to take us to see a very ancient village church near the sea, and afterwards we were going to meet Lias Lee at some old stone quarry on the coast, whither either his own business or the Master's took him. It was a day's "out" which we had looked forward to for I know not how long. Alas, that it should have been so troubled at the beginning!

We started, Janie, Bion, and I. We had a good way to walk ; but country people who keep no carriage are usually tolerable pedestrians. And the bleak sea wind sweeping across the bare downs strengthened us amazingly. The remembrance of that walk has left on my mind a sense of vague dreariness. It was a cloudy day, and cold, though in August: the sky was grey, the downs were grey, and so were the stone "dykes" or low boundary walls, the only objects which relieved the sameness of the view. Beyond the cliffs, even the horizon-circle of sea was grey likewise. And as I walked along, sometimes behind, sometimes ahead of Bion and Janie—for the child, when tired, ran back to *her* hand, not mine—all my spirit within me felt dull and grey too.

Janie often turned and talked to me, and about all sorts of cheerful things, never once touching on the painful subject. But cheerfulness was not in me—and conscience was gnawing hard, even above the angry sorrow of being wronged. I thought if I had

treated my boy better, he would never have gone from me to Jane Allardyce. I thought also that there must be something inherently wicked in me, or I could never feel such a bitter revulsion against her, every time I looked at that good, bright, happy, loving face, which made every one call her "pretty Jane Allardyce."

I thought—and this was the vilest thought of all (oh, dearest Janie, tender-hearted, long-suffering Janie, smile now at it and forgive it!)—what a comfort it would be if I could but make her a little naughty like myself, or a little miserable! Only a little, God knows! only a very little. And had I known what a burthen of trouble she was already bearing, spite of all her blithe manner to us children, I would not have added thereto a feather's weight of pain.

Janie never said a word, or betrayed by a look, that she was unhappy in her mind; but when she reached the village (to which, for reasons of my own, I shall give no name) she went gaily in and out among the cottagers,



where she seemed to be quite familiar. The place was entirely inhabited by stone-quarriers ("marblers," as Lias Lee called them) and a few fishermen; though on this rocky and thinly-inhabited coast there was not much opportunity for the latter trade, still, now and then, Janie told me, a stray fishing-sail was seen creeping about the little bay, in which terminated a gloomy narrow ravine that sloped seaward, and was called by the elegant name of Hell-bottom.

And floating about the village, Janie also said—and her voice altered much in the saying—was many a story of wrecks which had taken place there, on the sharp rocks which formed the bay. "And many a time," added an old woman to whom she was talking,— "many a time bodies of drowned folk had been washed ashore, and carried up Hell-bottom, and buried in the very churchyard where we were now standing."

"Indeed!" said I, being in that fierce mood which makes one take pleasure in horrible stories. "I should like to hear about this."

“Don’t!” whispered Janie, tremulously; “such things are not good for the boy to hear. Come away, Bion, love.”

“He shall not! He’ll stay if I choose!” cried I, rather savagely; and I made the tired child sit down on a flat tomb-stone. Janie remained beside him—she did not attempt to thwart me in my wilfulness. I could fancy I see her now, standing silent—her arm on Bion’s shoulder and her quiet, sad blue eyes looking seaward. Nay, I could call up the whole picture; the queer, witchlike old woman—the pebble in that benighted village really thought her a witch, and I am sure she looked as old as Methuselah; the tiny ancient church, under the ledge of whose roof, surmounting a common wooden spout, was a row of the oddest stone faces—half-human, half-grotesque, from whose noses and chins the rain was dropping, for there had just been a heavy shower. The sky was lowering and leaden still, and the long churchyard grass all sodden with wet. A more desolate and gloomy spot could hardly be imagined.

“Miss,” said the old woman, but in a rich Dorset that it is quite impossible I can imitate, and must put into common Queen’s English, “I could tell’ee some’at, I could! But it be a-comin’ on rain. Do’ee get in th’ church.”

I would rather have stood to be soaked, but was ashamed, and we went in.

It was a small, plain, barn-like place, where probably for centuries there had come no worshippers but the handful of villagers and the clergyman. In the pavement were one or two old brasses, almost trodden out, and a monument equally ancient and obliterated, showing the church must have been important in its day. But the poor folk of the neighbourhood knew nothing of archæology—they had whitewashed over the oak-carvings, the stone-mouldings, and the monuments—nay, some atrocious churchwarden had cut a piece clean out of the ornamental arch of the chancel in order to stick the pulpit there. I remember, young as I was, being greatly shocked at this last barbarism; so much so, that my interest

for the beautiful in art and architecture almost restored my temper to its equilibrium.

But only for a moment. Soon I saw Janie seat herself on the chancel step, and the tired Bion creep up and "cuddle" to her in childish fashion, listening drowsily to the pouring rain.

I turned fiercely away. Now then for the horrible stories Janie disliked. Anything to punish them!

The woman began a long-winded talk, of which I could make out very little. Half of it was directed to Miss Allardyce, whom she knew well. It seemed about her own troubles in having been a fisherman's wife, and about the dangers of the seas. Janie's cheek paled once or twice. But I was hardened, and would hear all. Tired out, at length, I rose and lounged away, read a tablet on the wall, newly erected—a plain white marble slab, with an inscription.

I will not write out this inscription. I feel almost guilty in telling out in this glaring printed book the fact, so mournful and sacred is it in its literal truth, and so deeply did it touch me.

It was to the memory of a young man only twenty years old, for I calculated his age by the dates of birth and death. The name was not belonging to these parts—he was of a well-known noble family, I think in either Ireland or Scotland. This fact was just mentioned in the tablet, and no more. The wording was simply, “*In memory of —.*” Here came the young man’s name and when he died. The simplicity of the record, the strangeness of finding it in that solitary, out-of-the-way country church, touched my curiosity. I stood looking at it a long while.

“Oh, that be the poor young lad as was washed up last summer. A gentleman from Lon’on has just been a-putten on’un up. I’d tell’ee about ’un, miss, but it’ll hurt *she*.”

“Never mind *she*,” cried I, just glancing at Jane, who looked mournful, restless, as if she could hardly bear herself.

“Well—well, only them’s tender-hearted as has got folk at sea, and the young captain and my son Jack be a month or more due.”

“Never mind,” repeated I—I am ashamed to

think how crossly, but every contradiction jarred so against my humour. I was determined to have my will.

I got the story at last. One summer night too boys, fishing in the little bay at the end of Hell-bottom, had seen something coming up with the tide. It was a drowned body, so long dead as to be quite unrecognizable. The dead man was apparently not a common sailor—he had on fragments of fine linen, gentleman's clothes. These out-of-the-world, village folk did not know what to do, and the clergyman happened to be absent. So they fetched the nearest Coast-guard officer, and he examined the body. It was merely *a body*—the cruel work of the waves had obliterated all traces of its identity. No one could tell whether he was young or old—handsome or ugly—one only clue the Coast-guard seized upon, before finally laying in earth this poor relic of humanity.

On the middle finger—kept firm there by the tight clench of the hand over a piece of rope—was a ring, with a name engraved inside.

The Coast-guard remembered having seen lately in the papers an account of four young gentlemen having been lost on a yachting expedition, and he thought this was one of the names given. The circumstance had happened at a distant part of the coast, two months ago. The body must have drifted several hundred miles.

He wrote to the family concerned, and found this circumstance was true. But the youth's parents, broken-hearted, had gone abroad to recover from their grief. There was no one left even to bury the dead. The family lawyer came down from London, and he and the Coast-guard man laid the poor drowned lad in that lonely little churchyard.

Nothing more was heard for several months, after which the lawyer appeared again, put up the tablet, and went away. The old woman overheard him say "that the young gentleman's mother and sister would be coming down some time." Ah, that poor mother and sister!

"And only to think, miss," said the tale-teller, as she ended, "that they would never

ha' found 'un at all but for the ring. For his own mother wouldn't ha' known he when him was washed up ; and our folk didna like to touch 'un, but got 'un ashore with boat-hooks, and——”

Here Janie, standing behind us, uttered a loud wild sob,—“Hush! I can't bear it! Oh, Harry, Harry!—what has become of my Harry?”

And she burst into such heart-breaking tears that we did not know how to quiet her.

“I told'ee so,” said the old woman, looking reproachfully at me, and crying bitterly herself, “O Miss Allardyce, dont'ee take on. No harm will happen to the young captain and my boy Jack.”


But it was a long time before Janie was comforted, and even when she ceased sobbing her poor face looked pale and sad enough. I had managed to make her miserable at last ; but in doing it had made myself ten times more so.

I went out of the church with a conscience as heavy as lead.



## XII.

### The Cornu Ammonis.

UTSIDE the church we met Lias Lee, sitting in his spring-cart, merrily whistling. Good soul, he had an easy mind! I, tossed with all sorts of erring passions—hard to be governed by one so young—envied him from the bottom of my heart.

It is a curious fact how few of us, when we grow older, recollect how real were our emotions and endurances as children; how precocious were our feelings, how intense our sufferings. Now, we look round on our little friends, and speak to them in baby-talk, and suppose they are only thinking baby-thoughts—but if we only remember our own childhood we shall find we are mistaken.

I am sure there were seething and boiling in me that day, the last of what I call my childish days, the elements of an entire tragedy.

We mounted the spring-cart and drove off, Janie and Bion sitting with Lias Lee in front, and I squatting down behind.—I tried to quiet myself with gazing seaward, across the solitary sunshiny downs, for the afternoon had brightened up—but it would not do. I felt very miserable. I did not know how I should ever make myself happy again. Here was I trying daily as hard as any poor girl could try to be good, and yet somehow being always naughty; not knowing clearly what to do in anything, and having no one to teach me; obliged to fight out the battles and settle the troubles of my own little spirit, to say nothing of Bion's.

Also, with the knowledge always present to me, that I loved Bion better than anything else in the world; and that Bion loved Janie Allardyce—perhaps two or three more people besides—a great deal better than me. This was—not pleasant!

Doubtless, many of my feelings were exaggerated and foolish—but they were most painfully real at the time. Wise people may think it ridiculous of me to be so engrossed by, and so miserable on account of, a little innocent fellow like Bion—but then he was the only creature belonging to me, and the first I had ever been fond of. My nature had lain as black and dry as a winter-garden, until this strong affection came down upon it like the rain and dew of April, making everything that was hidden in the soil sprout up in equal luxuriance—weeds and flowers together—only, of the two, I fear my weeds grew rather faster than my flowers.

After driving a short distance along the barren, dyke-bordered road, and seeing nothing pretty except the distant glimpses of sunny sea, which made me feel a little more good and comfortable, we discarded the spring-cart, and took to walking along the green sloping cliffs. Lias mounted Bion on his back, and with his bag for geological specimens in one hand and his small pickaxe and hammer in the other, leisurely took his way.

It was not easy walking, except for the sheep, which we saw feeding composedly everywhere, even on the edge of the cliff. The ground rose and fell in steep undulations, where the short fine grass made slippery footing. Sometimes a few yards of turfy slope, as smooth as glass to the feet, were all that lay between us and the cliffs, beneath which we faintly heard the waves breaking, a long way down—oh, such a dizzy sound! The height of these perpendicular cliffs prevented our seeing anything below—their edges seemed to cut right against the mid-sea, as if one step from them would take us far into the channel, where a score of ships, tiny as sea-birds, lay stationary, as it appeared, each miles and miles apart.

“This be some’at like, bean’t it, Miss Jane?” said Lias Lee, stopping and gazing round him from under his bushy brows, with an air of intense enjoyment in the scene. Bion, too, grasping the worthy man’s coat-collar to steady himself, seemed trembling between fear and delight. Janie had hold of one of his hands—but, for once, Jeanie was not thinking of the boy.

Child as I was, I guessed what and whom she was thinking of: I knew that Bion and I and everybody else in the world were as nothing to her compared with the little sloop that was so long in coming home from the coast of Spain. And yet she had the cruelty to lure my little brother to forget me for her, and make me feel continually, as I did now, quite alone and apart, wretched in my mind and wretched in my temper—enjoying nothing in the beautiful world, and ready to hate everybody it contained.

O dear Janie, ten times more good than I, always! once more forgive me for such injustice and unkind wrong!

By a precipitous steep path—in descending which I was twice nigh pitching forward and ending all my woes among the rocks below, had not Janie caught hold of me—we came at last to the quarry whither we were bound. It was a most curious place, composed of various caverns, hollowed out of the rock—so long deserted, that though I believe they were made by quarry-men's hands, they now seemed the work of Nature alone. The stone Lias show-

ed us—(to this day I marvel how that poor working-man got his immense stock of general information, but I suppose the Master helped him)—was a remarkable “formation,” peculiar to this part of the coast. It was entirely composed of fossil-shells, mostly in small fragments, all *frozen up together*—so to speak, for I don’t know the proper geological term—in limestone. Of this “formation” the cliffs were composed ; and huge masses of it, many tons in weight, lay about in all directions below, the tide as it came in foaming and boiling about them in perfect whirlpools.

It was a very dangerous place. Lias said the quarry had been given up on that account, in spite of the value of the stone, because landing in such a spot was so difficult—nay, impossible. Hundreds of quarryers had been drowned, and scores of boats had gone to pieces, in trying to ship the stone from among these rocks.

“Take care, miss, take care!” shouted he to me at almost every step, as, leaving Bion and Janie to eat some cake she had brought him

I dashed off scrambling among the caverns and leaping from rock to rock. In my excited state danger was delicious to me. I crawled between the masses of rock, on the narrowest paths, when a false step would have pitched me among the waves, whose spray almost touched my feet. It was such a satisfaction to think that, if I chose, in one minute there would be an end of me!

There was one particular spot where I sat, I think, for almost half-an-hour. In my dreams, to this day, I sometimes fancy myself sitting there again.

It was a place where the rock had been worn into ledges, rising one after the other, curiously smooth and regular, like a flight of stairs. Above the topmost ledge the rock became again broken up—two or three masses being thrown together, and their jagged edges fitted against one another, so as to be mutually sustained. But between the interstices there was left what children call a *peep-hole*, through which rose every minute or so a little jet of spray. Kneeling down I peered through, and

there saw the waves beneath tossing and tumbling and howling, beating about in their fury poor little helpless sea-weed—beautiful red sea-weed! which I should dearly have liked to seize upon for Bion. He was so fond of sea-weed and shells.

I half knelt, half lay, my face pressed to the peep-hole, glorying to see the passion the waves were in, and scarcely starting even when they dashed the spray in my eyes. Considering also, in practical fashion, whether it would be possible by means of Lias's stick or Janic's umbrella, to catch and fish out of the whirlpool those delicious bits of sea-weed. True, I should have to lean over a good way, and it might be rather dangerous—but then how pleased my boy would be!

Just at this minute, when I had almost made up my mind, and was listening for the sound of Lias's hammer and pickaxe among the caverns, that I might go and consult with him as to the most possible plan, I heard voices close above me,—Bion's too!

I started, alarmed. Now, whatever danger-



ous scrambling I might choose for myself, of course I was not likely to have been so foolish as to let the boy do the like, or even to lose sight of him while I went on my solitary adventures. In fact, I had never taken my eyes from him until I saw him safely lodged in that nook of the rock to eat his cake, and have a little rest on Janie's lap. I thought, so happy as he seemed, he would safely stay there—yet here he was, clambering right above my head.

“Bion!—Bion! you naughty child! hold still till I get to you. Where's Janie?”

“Janie's here, but she wants to go back. She's frightened.”

“Let her go back then!” laughed I, rather unkindly. “Come down to me, Bion.—No, stay!—I'll come to you. Hold fast round my neck. There!”

He held me, and looked about him, timid, yet pleased—the boy was always so pleased with any beautiful sight. I lifted him up in my arms, which I could easily do, being a big strong girl of my age, and we stood watching the gathering and recoiling of the waves.

“What a noise they come in with, sister, and how they burst with a crash! So regular, too—almost like the bars of a tune. I think I could make a tune out of it. I’ll try when I go back to the piano.”

“Oh, do let the horrible piano alone for once!” said I, half to myself. Perhaps the boy heard me, perhaps not. However, he drew his arms from my neck, and begged to be set down.

“That you may go to Janie! Go then—I’ll not keep you. It doesn’t matter to me!”

He was going, until, child-like, his attention was caught by a new object of interest.

“Eunice! Eunice! I see something so funny!”

He pointed to a ledge of rock, broad and level as a dining-table, which the receding tide had left bare since we came. On it were two or three holes, exactly like footmarks in snow, left full of water, and beside these holes, imbedded in the rock, was a very curious thing.

“I think it’s a big sea-snail shell,” observed Bion, sagely.

"No—it's more like a petrified serpent, curled round with its tail in its mouth. I wonder how it got in the rock! It must have been there since the days of Adam."

"Or an age or two before then, most like," said Lias Lee, who had come behind us, quitting even his hammering in his anxiety for the safety of "the young'uns." "Bless us, I've been here dozens o' times and never seen that big ammonite afore." "That what?"

"Ammonite, miss—*cornu ammonis*, th' Master 'ud say; but I bean't very good at Latin. Well, you be the finest fellow 'o' your sort o' fossil that ever I see," added he, leaping down on the ledge, and examining it. Bion also was so interested that I had great difficulty to hold him up.

"*Ammonite*," he repeated, thoughtfully. "I wonder if it belonged to the children of Ammon that sister was reading about last Sunday!"

Lias laughed heartily. "Well, it might ha' done, though it didn't. 'Twould ha' made a nice thumb-ring though, or a bracelet, for

those giants that belonged to the early ages of the world. Or a pretty plaything for their babies, perhaps.'

"Oh!" cried Bion, clapping his hands, "I should so like it for a plaything! It would roll round and round so pretty. Do, Lias, dig it out and give it me!"

Lias laughed more merrily than ever. "Well, if that bean't a funny idea! My little gentleman, there's many a learned man would be mighty glad of that *cornu ammonis* for his museum. Think of turning a curious pre-Adamite fossil into a child's plaything! If that doesn't beat everything!"

He laughed so loud and long that Bion began to look disappointed; finally, a tear or two marked the intensity of his childish longing, and his grief at its being thwarted. I grew vexed.

"Lias Lee, you shall not tease my little brother. Please will you get him the thing he wants—that is, if it is possible?"

"Possible? Yes, miss," said he, carelessly lungeing at the rock with his pickaxe. "But

'twould be a tough job—limestone's hard, rather. Come, don't cry, Master Bion, and I'll try and get it for you some other day. Lor' bless us," cried he, bursting out laughing afresh, "to make a child's plaything of a *cornu ammonis*!"

He climbed up again to the higher ledge—it was about four or five feet—and, taking the child in his arms, tried to comfort him. But Bion was for a long time inconsolable. He had set his heart upon the ammonite.

It was certainly a most fascinating "specimen." I don't know why, but in my memory there lingers a charm about it to this day. I see it still as I then saw it with wishful, childish eyes, the oddest and most mysterious relic of the ancient world; and I wonder if it yet keeps its place on that lonely, rugged Dorset coast, with the tide washing over it twice a day, month by month, and year by year, in summer and winter, calm and storm. I have a queer hankering after it, as we often have for the impossible, or all-but-impossible things of life. And I confess to this day, Eunice

Lychett would give a considerable amount of gratitude to any one who would bring her that identical *cornu ammonis*.

When Bion found his friend Janie, he unfolded his woes, and she comforted him; reasoning with him, too, gently, on the folly of wanting so unattainable a thing. As if no child or man ever desired, or ought to desire, what was not quite within his reach!

Very fine doctrine, Miss Janie! thought I; and very nice and easy to be acted up to by such a meek little thing as you—but I'm different. *You* dared not even go to look at the ammonite, though Bion begged you so hard.

Which he did—perhaps with a vague hope of her influence over Lias Lee, who, quite obdurate, was beginning to collect his various matters, and talk about returning home.

“Or, perhaps, Janie,” whispered Bion, with a child's full faith in the unlimited powers of one he loves very much—“perhaps, if Lias is so unkind as to refuse me, you might even take his pickaxe and dig it out for me yourself. Please do.”

Janie lifted her eyebrows in mild astonishment, and declared gently the impossibility of her doing such a thing. At which I laughed and fully agreed. *She* to handle a pickaxe—such a small, weak, delicate creature! So timid, too. Little enough would *she* dare, though for the sake of giving Bion pleasure. Now, I —

I thought of my strong stout arms, my lithe limbs and steady feet—above all, my entire fearlessness of personal danger. A notion came into my head—I sat down, apparently picking fossil-shells out of the limestone, but, in reality, planning a daring feat. . . .

We had got clear out of the quarry. I carried Bion beyond the dangerous path, and then gave him into Janie's care. It was still early in the evening. They had not far to walk along the cliffs, and at the nearest point the spring-cart was waiting to take them home.

"Where be my pick gone to, I wonder?" said Lias Lee, as he emerged, all ready to start. Telling us to go forward, he went back to the quarry to look for it. He searched a good while, and searched in vain. Of course!

“Go on, both of you, as quick as you can—never mind me, I shall walk home,” said I to the others. “Bion is so tired!” and I stooped and kissed him. How my heart beat! A few hours afterwards I was so glad I had kissed the child.

They hastened on, and I—stayed behind.

As soon as they were gone a little distance, I crept into one of the caves. It was light enough, being the size and proportions of a large room. But in one corner was a hole, just big enough for me to creep through, leading to a place all dark. Here, resting on the lost pickaxe, and laughing to myself at the thought of what a clever girl I was, I took up my position. I knew that Lias Lee had not been in this particular cavern, which contained nothing interesting, so of course he was not likely to look for his pickaxe here. Nevertheless, when I saw him come to the entrance and peep in, I quaked slightly.

“Ugh!” said he to himself, with a troubled expression. “Well, can’t be helped! Must go! Won’t do to keep those young folks out



later in the night!" And he started off, up the sheep path.

Here my conscience experienced a twinge—my pleasure in the successful trick was damped. I felt very much like a deceiver. How uncomfortable poor honest Lias seemed at the loss of his pickaxe! And it was all my doing! Also the sentence, "I shall walk home," though not literally a lie, was meant to answer the intent of one. I began to doubt if, after all, I was acting quite right. Not that my purpose was wrong in itself, but it entailed some consequences that were certainly wrong. I questioned both it and its motives faintly then—I question them more now. But if I did ill, I paid for it to the full cost.

I suppose my readers will scarcely need to be told what this plan of mine was. It was to do—what Janie Allardyce durst not have done—myself, with my own hands and Lias Lee's pickaxe, to get the ammonite for little Bion?

For some time I lay concealed there, lest, in spite of my declaration about walking home—which was not a very great distance, and I

knew the road—Lias should come back to look for me. Not that this was likely, as both he and Janie were well used to my headstrong and independent ways, and rarely thwarted me or interfered.

When a faint purple gloom was creeping over the far sea, I came out of my hiding-place, and stood among the rocks. Everything was very lonely. The tumbling of the sea below almost frightened me—that is, so far as anything could frighten me, which was not saying much. In those days I never knew what it was to feel afraid—at least for myself.

As I sat, just above the rocky ledge, leaning on the pickaxe and trying to find out how best to handle it, I felt very pleased and proud in my achievement. Carefully I scanned the treasure—the much-desired *cornu ammonis*—it did not seem very hard to get at, in spite of what Lias Lee had said. Then my arms were strong—and my heart was, oh, so strong likewise! It was the boldest young heart in its infinite daring! There was scarcely any feat in the whole world that it would not have attempted for the sake of those it loved.

Of course I smile now at the ludicrous impossibility of a girl like me "picking" an ammonite out of a limestone rock ; but no such word as "impossible" was to be found in my youthful dictionary. I utterly scouted the idea !

So, eyeing my treasure very closely at all points—noticing that the tide had gone a long way, and that the ledge was quite high and dry, I prepared to descend, after Lias's fashion. To be sure, it was some height to let one's self down—and he was tall, over six feet, while I was only five feet five—still the thing was quite practicable. Before attempting it, I had prudence enough to look about and consider how I should scramble up again, which also seemed not difficult, there being one or two foot-holes worn in the rock. Still, some vague feeling made me hesitate at the final descent, as if it were a plunge for life and death. I glanced round, lest there might be anybody lurking among the rocks, but no ! the place was quite solitary. The sun had just set, and the purple mist over the sea was growing—growing. It would soon be twilight—then night.

There was no time to be lost. Without a moment's consideration, I lowered myself down.

Down—down—it seemed as if I never should get to the bottom! I clung hard with my hands, but my toes slid along the perpendicular rocky wall. I had somehow mistaken my footing. A half-minute of terror, which seemed an age,—and my hands let go their hold.

I fell—it was but a little way to fall—just a few feet—yet the shock was very great! I lay, breathless and sick, on the ledge—all in a heap, with my limbs doubled up under me. At last I began to recover myself and feel whereabouts my pain was, for I knew I had hurt myself somewhere.

I tried to rise to my feet, but one foot gave way, and down I sank again in intolerable suffering.

I began to tremble—I, who five minutes before had been so bold. I had heard of such things as broken limbs, but it had never come to me as a possibility that I should break



**“Down—down—it seemed as if I never should get to the bottom.”**

**L. Lychetts.**

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mine. Also, if so I should of course have fainted. It could not be very much after all.

Yet there the pain was, and I growing every minute more sick and exhausted. Something must be done; the unutterable terror and desolation of my position, in case I had really broken my leg, gave me a sort of desperate strength. I dragged myself along past the ammonite—the unlucky ammonite!—to the little pools that looked like footprints, dashed sea-water on my feet and hands—then, somewhat refreshed, with a daring indifference to pain, I felt all down the bone of my right leg. It was sound and whole.

“Thank God!” I said aloud, and for the first time burst out sobbing, thinking of the horror that might have been. But it was not over yet. My ankle was swelling fast and aching terribly. It was either sprained or dislocated, I felt sure. As for moving, that soon became impossible. A pretty plight I was in! All alone here, quite helpless—night coming on, with its darkness and cold. My child’s heart failed—I wept most piteously.

But, after very early childhood, a temperament like mine usually rises with the occasion, and gathers strength to meet almost any trouble. I dried my tears and began to think what I had better do.

Everything around was utterly desolate—the quarry caves, the rocks, the green cliffs sloping away overhead—I heard no sound but the never-ceasing bellow of the waves. Far away seaward, the mist grew and grew every minute greyer and more indistinct. Near me it was tolerably light still; I could see the ammonite—in fact, I was lying close beside it,—harmless cause of all my woes! Lias's pick-axe, which I had left behind on the upper ledge, to be lifted down afterwards, was also discernible. Once I thought of trying to reach it, and desperately setting about my plan, in defiance of all pain, that nothing should thwart my boy's longing. But I might as well have tried to climb to the moon: I was quite incapable of moving.

There was nothing for me but to lie there, as patiently as I could, until some of them



came to look for me. I felt sure they would, before night came on ; if not—but the love of life and youth was too strong in me to dare to contemplate *that* alternative.

Like a wise girl, I did all I could to make my misfortune tolerable and avoid ill results—bathed my ankle in sea-water, wrapped my shawl warmly round me, and lay down in as easy a position as might be. Possibly I should have to lie there many hours. Well, it was still summer, and a moonlight night too. But the tide—oh, the sickening horror with which I thought of the tide! At last, forcing myself to consider the matter clearly, I reflected that the ledge had been only just covered at high water, which was at six o'clock this evening. It would not be high water again till daylight to-morrow. There was no immediate fear of drowning before me—only solitude, cold and pain. These were bad enough—but they might be worse. I would try and bear them.

So I lay quiet, dropping at times a few tears which my pain wrung from me, and at intervals, when it would let me, falling into

deep thought. Strange, precocious, womanly thought, as if I had grown old and wise all of a sudden.

Clearly, as clearly as in a glass, I saw myself for weeks and months—all my passions, errors, injustices and follies—down to the last folly of all. For what had been the real motive of this freak of mine, which looked so fine and generous? Alas! it sprang less from the desire that Bion should have his wish, than that *I* should be the one to give it to him—thereby showing him how much better I was to him than was Janie, and overwhelming him with a sense of gratitude for my devotion! Ah, Eunice, Eunice, you were a selfish little fool! that is not the right kind of love, and, however much it may exact, it never succeeds in winning a return from anybody.

Truly, when I remember my own stormy feelings, I see it was necessary I should have been stopped in some way, ere I rushed headlong into all sorts of wrong. I saw this fact dimly, even that night, when such strange fancies came over me with every moan of the

tide. I knew, or felt—for I always *felt* things far more than I *knew*—that with the Unseen, whose presence in that solitude seemed nearer and more real than ever before—with Him, our merciful Father, nothing is accident or chance,—that if I were now about to have a long illness, there must be some reason which made it necessary to my good.

I grew awe-struck and calm. Even my pain became less. When the stars came out one by one over the sea, I looked up and said my prayers. It seemed as if I were almost going to die, I felt so quiet and so weak. Every sweep of the tide swept lullingly over my brain. I thought, as I always do in every solemn crisis, of the grave in St. Helena, wondering whether my never-seen father and mother watched me lying here, and what they felt towards me. Nay, looking into the grey shadowy nothingness, which I knew was sea, I almost fancied I saw two figures gliding across it towards me. I even heard them whispering through the dark, "*Eunice—Eunice!*"

It must be my parents! They were come

to fetch me to them. Then good-bye to all I knew! Good-bye, gentle, ill-used Janie—and honest Lias Lee! Good-bye to the kind Master, whom, perhaps, I was fonder of than all my friends. Above all, good-bye to my own Bion, my darling, darling boy, who was lying quietly asleep in his little bed, and did not know his sister was dying.

No, not yet. She was not fated to die yet—heaven had more work for her to do! It was not spirits she heard calling her, it was kindly human beings.

“Holloa, there!—Miss Eunice!—Miss Eunice! Here be my pick, sir—but she bean’t anywhere near.”

“Eunice! Eunice!—answer, child!”

I did answer, with all my poor strength, to that cheering, yet gentle, voice—gentle with deep compassion.

“Hurrah, I hear her. Where are you, child?”

He leaped down on the ledge, and in another minute I felt myself safe in the tender, fatherly arms of the good Master.

I don’t remember anything more.

## XIII.

### *A Long Illness.*

**H**AD, as I foreboded, a long illness.

First, was a chaotic time, in which I took no count of days or nights,—they were all the same. A time of burning fever and dreadful pain, in which nobody came near me but the doctor and Sally—Sally, who was never cross now. A time when everything seemed unreal—a sort of horrible nightmare, as, indeed, it appears even now, looking back upon it.

At last I began to know myself and the things about me ; and the agony in my wounded ankle abated—it had been dislocated and some of the little bones broken : to this day it makes me rather lame at times. Also those hours of exposure to cold and wet, to say

nothing of bodily and mental suffering, gave me what doctors call "a brain-fever." I pray Heaven that neither I nor any one I love may ever know the like again.

Well, I shall pass over this hard time, because, though one *must* meet sickness face to face during one's life—perhaps often enough—it is never good to dwell upon it when it is over. I shall go on to the day when I first woke up as out of a long sleep, weak as a little baby, and remembered what had befallen me. I tried to move my limbs, but might as easily have stirred leaden weights; they felt as if they did not belong to me. I made an effort to speak, but before I had said, "Where's Bion?" Sally altogether quenched me into silence. There was nothing for it but to lie mute and helpless, and watch Sally, or contemplate the furniture of the room.

How drearily familiar it grew to me, that little bedroom at Stonyhide, during many days and nights following! How I knew by heart every turn in the stencilled pattern which stood in the place of papering on the wall!

How I tried to form faces and hands, and whole pictures out of the damp stains on the ceiling. Then the chimney-piece at the foot of the bed, with its two china dogs, one barking, the other lying asleep—its two wooden card-rack<sup>s</sup>, one cut into a shepherd and his cur, the other a shepherdess and her lamb; though it took a whole day to decide which was the cur and which the lamb, they were so much alike.

But my grand object of view was a coloured print over the mantelpiece—Jacob and Rachel kissing one another—he in red and she in green, very staring and unnatural. In my worst illness it positively haunted me. They seemed to be kissing one another day after day and all day long. Sometimes I even saw them through the dark, when they grew large and shapeless with disjointed limbs, such as they in truth had in that execrable print,—perfect monsters of humanity! Once I begged Sally, whose bedchamber this had been before we young folk came, to “take away that ugly picture,” but she flushed up and went out of the room. Afterwards she told me it had been

given her when a girl by some cousin who was now dead. So I complained no more, but let poor Sally's Jacob and Rachel kiss one another to the end of time.

After another day or two came the blissful moment when I was allowed to sit up in bed and feed myself. And who was it that brought in this first delicious cup of tea but my little Bion!

He opened the door—all smiles—but as soon as he saw me he let the teacup fall with a crash, and burst out crying!

There was a great confusion. Sally rushed upstairs to the rescue, began, "O you naughty boy!" and stopped. She couldn't scold. She picked up the broken cup and saucer in the meekest manner possible, just looked at where my little brother was sobbing round my neck, and went away again.

After a minute or two she reappeared with another cup of tea, which I still think was a wiser course of proceeding than any wrathful lecturings.

"Come, Master Bion, you must let your sis-



ter have her tea—she's too weak to bear crying and that sort o' thing. No, Miss Eunice, don't'ee be frightened, I shan't take him away!"

For I had clutched Bion with all my little strength—no power on earth should have made me let him go.

In a minute or two he was perched beside me, holding the cup while I drank out of the saucer—eyeing me wistfully, even with a slight fear, while every now and then a tear came bubbling up.

"What have they been doing to you, sister? Won't you speak? one word?" For I had not, as yet; I could not.

"Presently, Bion, dear. It hurts me."

"Have you been *very* ill, sister?"—I nodded.—"And why did they cut off all your hair and make you look so—so ——"

"Ugly?" Yes; I suppose it must have been so. I must have appeared a spectre of horror to the child's eyes. Perhaps I showed this consciousness, faint as I was, for he clung to me once more.

“ Oh, no—no—I don’t mean that! Sister, they wouldn’t let me come and see you ; and they told me you were going to papa and mamma—and I couldn’t spare you—and I’ve been so miserable !”

I thought, and think still, that every jot of my illness was cheaply purchased by such a minute as this. It was a minute that sent its blessing and comfort far forward, like an arrow of light, into my whole future life. I felt quite sure now that my little brother loved me.

Too weak to speak or shed happy tears, or to do anything but faintly smile, I lay back on my pillow, entirely content. Bion sat beside me on the bed, not allowed to talk, but holding my hand tight. The room was perfectly still. I remember the evening sun came in through the edges of the close-drawn blind, danced in a thin stream of light over Jacob and Rachel, then down to the floor, and disappeared. We lay, Bion and I—for at last he put his arm round my neck and shared the corner of my pillow—until it was quite dusk.

After awhile the child's breathing grew louder, and I found he was fast asleep.

I did not disturb him—it was very pleasant to me to lie and think. The chief of my thoughts being how glad I was I had not died, else I never should have known that Bion loved me.

When Sally came in with the candle, I, too, was peacefully asleep.

Next day there were more candidates for admission to my poor little sick-room—but Sally was inexorable. The utmost she would allow was cousin Reuben's putting his head in for a minute with a low "How d'ye do, Eunice?" Dear, kind old soul! the tears were running down his cheeks, and I saw between the half-open door a vision of a red pocket-handkerchief.

Bion and I had a great battle with Sally likewise—but at last she found the struggle did me more harm than the child's company—so she let him stay. He moved about the room as quiet as a mouse, watching me, or playing with his few toys, or sometimes even

gravely conning over his spelling-book. I heard him reading to himself, "*John is a good boy,*" quite fluently now.

Once I asked, whom he had been saying his lessons to while I was ill? and he answered, "Janie." But I had no pang at that name now.

Ere long another visitor was admitted. First there appeared through the door an immense bunch of garden-roses and tall white lilies—then a basket of strawberries—then, almost hidden by her burdens, Jane Allardyce.

She, too, when she came and looked at me, dropped a tear or two. It seemed very odd that my recovery should make people so glad that they even cried.

• "Well, Eunie dear!"

• "Well, Janie!"

• "This illness has been very hard for you!"

"Yes—but I don't mind."

She looked at me earnestly, from which mute inquiry I slightly shrunk, afraid lest she might ask questions. Nobody had hitherto spoken to me about my disaster of that day—they

seemed to take it for granted that I had been seized with some wilful desire of rambling, and had accidentally lost my footing among the rocks. I let them think so. I never breathed a word about the *cornu ammonis*.

But still I dreaded Janie's penetration, and was not sorry when, after a minute or two, she turned away her eyes, and my secret was left safe in my own breast.

"There's a nosegay, Eunice! The roses came from Mrs. ——" (the Master's wife), "with her kind love; the lilies I brought from Mrs. Archer's garden."

"Thank you. Is Mrs. Archer well?" I asked mechanically.

"Not very."

"Janie!"—and I was struck by the peculiar tone of her answer, together with a certain pale, worn, unnatural look she had. I remembered my cruel carelessness of her feelings in the matter of that history we heard in the churchyard the last day we were together—  
"Janie, has Captain Archer come home?"

"No."

She sat down behind the curtain, but I heard one little gasp. O, poor Janie! How my conscience smote me for every hard word—hard thought toward her!

I supposed they could not have given up all hope, for she was not in mourning—but I dared not ask. What a horrible time of suspense for Janie! Yet had she come to see me, and brought me roses and lilies, and kind messages; nay, after a minute or two she emerged from behind the curtain, called Bion to her lap—I did not grudge him that place now—and they two began feeding me with strawberries.

I couldn't eat—I choked! “Come and kiss me—and, oh, forgive me, Janie!”

She said, smiling, “What for?” and then would not let me reply. If she ever guessed the real answer, she certainly never betrayed it.

After then she came almost every day to see me, and brought great comfort and cheerfulness to the sick-room. She did not speak again of Captain Harry Archer, and of course it was not for me to allude to her troubles. But I learnt privately from Sally that they

were very sore, since the little vessel that traded with Spain had been due many weeks, and no tidings of her had reached England. It was supposed she had either gone down suddenly, or been taken by an Algerine privateer. And, remembering the story of Captain John Archer,—the father,—people began to have a melancholy foreboding that poor young Harry would never come home any more. Meantime there was nothing to be done but patient waiting and trust in God.

It is good for young people to learn early how to bear sorrow. I think it will be a lesson to me all my life to have seen the way in which Jane Allardyce bore hers.

Steadily she fulfilled all her duties abroad and at home; the latter must have been hard indeed, for she was living with poor Mrs. Archer. Except from her paleness, nobody would have guessed there was anything wrong. She always entered my room with a smile; invented all sorts of practicable amusements for me—alas, I led a dreary life in bed!—lectured me when I was fretful, though in the gayest,

gentlest manner ; took Byon walks and heard him his lessons. When I begged her not to tire herself, all the answer she ever made was a dim smile, which had a certain pitiful meaning.

“ Yes, Eunie—but you know I *must* be busy.”

I now think it is that same “being busy” that has saved many poor afflicted creatures from going clean out of their minds.

But nobody so good as Janie is ever afflicted more than they can bear. Her trouble was not fated to last long, only long enough to make me love her and reverence her from the bottom of my soul, and for all the days of my life.

I kept on slowly improving. One day I made my first excursion from bed to the floor—a very great event. From the mattress laid there I could look up at a bit of blue overhead—my first peep at the sky for such a long, dreary time! It moved me even to tears. I never knew before how beautiful the sky was. All that day I did nothing but watch that yard or two of blue—first with clouds passing and



repassing over it, afterwards all sprinkled with stars. I wanted no other amusement.

But the next day, growing stronger, I wearied terribly for something to do. Bion brought his playthings—down to the old peacock's feathers we used to battle with—but I had grown so much older during my illness, too old for feather-fights. I smiled at Bion, but I seemed to have forgotten all childish things.

In fact, this sickness made such a gulf of time out of a few weeks, that all which had happened before was apparently erased from my memory. Else how am I to account for not noticing a fact which then never once crossed my thoughts, that by no chance did I hear the sound of the piano? Whether Bion was in my room or down below, made no difference; the house was always silent.

This silence was often rather soothing to me than otherwise—had it not been for the pitiable want of something to do. Read I could not—my head was too weak; and, beside, there were no books at Stonyhide. Sally, the

indefatigable Sally, hinted at "a little bit o' needle-work" being very amusing—I thought otherwise. At last my sole entertainment rested with Bion. We spent hour after hour together on my mattress on the floor—sometimes talking, sometimes turning over my old school-books, or anything we could lay our hands upon.

One day the child got hold of my drawing-book. "Give it me, Bion!" I exclaimed, with a vague thrill of recollection, rather pleasant than otherwise. For if there had been any lesson I really liked at Mrs. Dangerfield's it was my drawing-lessons. True, the teaching was of a mediocre, young-ladyish order, as I even then discerned. Miss Chrome gave us as copies miserable bits of landscape, houses that were like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, trees that might have been of any sort of woodland vegetation, or no sort at all. Also, a few heads, with marvellously big eyes, marvellously tiny mouths, and features generally awry. As for the human figure, that pure and beautiful form which God made Adam and Eve in Para-

dise, Miss Chrome would not have allowed us to draw it upon any account whatever! Mrs. Dangerfield thought it "not proper for young ladies!" These recollections I laughed over to myself as I turned over the leaves of the old drawing-book. Contemptible the sketches were—poor copies of poor originals. Yet, somehow, they had interested me, and did so now. I sat up explaining them to Bion, lingering on the few that I had really liked: the portrait of Chaucer, with lifted hand holding a stylus or pen—an etching from some picture, I know not what; the tall closely-draped Roman matron, whom I had christened Agrippina; lastly, the half-length—copied from Morland, somebody said—a village girl in close cap and bed-gown, shyly withdrawing from the clasp of some male arm and hand, which was ingeniously cut off at the wrist by Miss Chrome, so that our sole notion of a lover consisted in four fingers and a thumb! Yet even that was so interesting to us school-girls as to make this particular copy more popular than all the rest.

All these with a dozen wretched landscapes,

I and Bion laughed over together. Then I got my case of pencils—alas, one only remained!—and began scribbling the backs of the leaves; drawing bits of faces, and here and there a nose and mouth—I always delighted in a pretty mouth.

“Bion, let me look at yours?” I turned it up and kissed it—then examined it gravely. “Bion, an idea strikes me. Sit still and I’ll draw you. It will be so amusing.”

A questionable fact that—at least to the sitter; but he was very patient—for five minutes. And I knew his face so well that it was not difficult for me to copy. A sweet childish profile it was, with the curls pushed back behind the little ears—oh, how they “bothered” me, those curls! I had scarcely begun them when Bion grew restive and wanted to run and play.

“Oh, one minute—only one minute, dear boy! It is so nice—so very like!” And, strange to say, whether or not the inspiration of love guided my ignorant pencil, but there is some vague likeness in that unworthy sketch even now.

He jumped up—full of childish vanity, to look at it—and all the pretty attitude was lost!

“Yes, sister, it’s very like. I think so—only I want a hat and feather, such as my papa used to wear. Give me the pencil—I’ll draw it.”

But I snatched the unlucky sketch away, thereby saving it from such a fearful catastrophe. At this fortunate crisis in came Janie Allardyce.

She was laden, as usual, with bounties from herself and other people. She had a basket on her arm, and her hands were full of flowers, contrasting pitifully with her white, worn look. Janie had lost the roses from her poor cheeks now.

Yet she sat down, and gave me in a cheerful manner many messages from the good Master and his wife, who promised to come and see me as soon as ever I was down-stairs.

“They are very kind—though nobody is so kind as you. Take off your bonnet. I have been looking for you all the morning, Janie. And besides—but I’ll tell you presently.”

“What?—tell me what!” A bitter story was betrayed, in her poor eager face at even this accidental phrase of mine.

“Oh, nothing! Only I have been drawing Bion’s face, and I want to draw yours—may I, Janie?”

“Anything you like, dear. She sat down in a passive, listless way—her shawl falling down, and her hands wrapped together on her knee.

There could not have been a better attitude, only it was so mournful.

Though most people called her pretty, until I was ill I had never found out how very pretty Janie Allardyce was. But when I came to watch her about the room, her slight figure moving so softly and gracefully—or looked at her profile and drooping curls as she sat reading—there gradually dawned upon me the sense of her extreme beauty. I saw it with my heart now—not only with my eyes.

As I drew her, my pencil worked with a pleasant will. I became absorbed in the delight of “form,” that exquisite harmony of lines which gives me a sense like what Bion

used to say of his musical harmonics—it is so “comfortable.”

“Janie, do you know you are very pretty?”

“Am I?”

“In fact, downright beautiful. Did nobody ever tell you so before?”

“Yes.”

“And are you not very proud and pleased?”

“I used to be, because it pleased other people. I don’t much care now.”

There was a little quiver in the lip—so that I could not draw it for a minute or two—that was all. Janie sat absorbed in thought. A statue could not have been an easier model.

We sat in this way almost an hour. I was too much engrossed to notice time—so was she. At last Bion, who had found it dull and escaped, came running in.

“Janie! Janie! somebody wants you. There’s a man talking to Sally, and asking if you are here.”

“A man! What sort of a man?” I cried; for Janie sat motionless—paralysed.

“He is not a big man—looks very shabby,

and walks lame. He has on a sailor's hat, and under it such black curls!"

"Ah!" But before I could draw that breath—almost a gasp, from excitement—Janie had darted from the room.

There was a confusion below—the suspense was agonising, for Janie's sake.

"Oh! And I can't move! Bion, run and see. No, better stay with me. Set the door open—let me hear——"

I did hear. Sally, half-laughing, half-crying—a hearty, manly sailor's voice saying something about "My own little Janie!" But from Janie herself not one word.

"He's come safe, Bion. Captain Harry's come home!"

And I burst out crying—for very joy.





“Capt. Harry’s come home.”


L. Lychetts.

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## XIV.

### *Hind Friends.*

APTAIN Harry Archer had, indeed, come home. He had lost his ship and everything he was worth in the world ; but that signified little—he had come safe home. I believe he had to work his passage back as a common sailor—nay, had to begin his career again in a scarcely higher capacity. But they were content—he and Janie. Theirs was no juvenile romance, but a quiet, steadfast affection, ready and able to bear all the troubles of life together.

When Janie bade me good-bye that evening, I said to her, half-laughing, yet in earnest, “Now, I won’t allow you to come and see me again for a whole week.”

She did come, for all that : as kindly and

thoughtful over others in her happiness as she had been in her trouble. And one day she brought with her—be that day ever memorable, for it sealed my after fate—she brought, out of the Master's library, chosen by his wife's own hand, a present for me.

It consisted of three books—three wonderful books,—my pet books to this day.

First, a large thick volume, closely printed, containing voluminous depths of reading, which promised as much treasure for future fishing-up, as the mysterious bottom of the sea. It was entitled, "The Plays of William Shakspeare."

Second, a tiny duodecimo, bound in sweet-smelling Russia leather, which gave a sense of pleasure to the very opening of the book, "The Iliad of Homer."

Lastly, a long, thin book, which opened wide its leaves, like two wings, across my lap—oh, what a paradise was revealed to me there. It was "Flaxman's Illustrations of the Iliad of Homer."

"There!" said Janie, half-laughing to see my

perfectly mute ecstasy of satisfaction. "Now I'll leave you to enjoy your feast. Come, Bion, and take a walk with Harry and me."

I was left alone for two hours—a blissful two hours, which coloured all the rest of my life. From that day I was—from the depth of my heart, however feebly and unworthily my hand worked out its conceptions—wholly an artist.

All the time I lay on that mattress on the floor—some weeks altogether, for there was no sofa in our one parlour, and, besides, it was not quiet enough for an invalid—I did nothing but read Shakspeare and Homer, and study Flaxman. For a change, I would get out my wretched old drawing-book and pencil, trying to copy for myself the seizure of Briseis, or Thetis pleading before Jupiter, or the sea-nymphs consoling Achilles for the death of Patroclus. But all these copies were miserable failures. I could not bear the sight of them.

Then I thought I would try to draw "out of my own head." Not Homer—I was scarcely bold enough for that, after Flaxman—but I tried my hand at an independent flight of

genius. O divine Shakspeare! how thy wandering ghost would have shuddered could it have beheld *my* pencilled portraits of Ophelia, Desdemona, Miranda, Ariel! But

“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread;”

and, goodness knows, I was a most arrant little fool! Yet I was happy, absorbingly happy—so much so, that still, by a strange and woefully selfish unconsciousness, I never once noticed the silent house, the untouched piano. I wondered sometimes why Bion roamed about the house, restless and dull; and then I would call him to my side and pet him, and try to interest him in the things that interested me. Yet there was a something wanting—something which made him unlike himself; though he never complained. Bion was growing a very good boy now. And I doubt—that is, I fear—no, I will candidly and gratefully acknowledge—that the change in his character was mainly attributable to the good influences of Jane Allardyce.

One day—it was a lovely August day, har-

vest time, for Bion had brought me a bunch of wheat-ears from the only corn-field on the farm of Stonyhide—the Master's good wife came to see me. It was quite an event, for she was greatly kept at home, owing to a large houseful of children, and one a very tiny baby, which she brought with her to Stonyhide, and which I drew as it lay asleep on her knee.

The Master's wife always imparted freshness, and cheerfulness, and energy, wherever she went. Before she had been in our house an hour its aspect seemed quite changed. She waged a terrible war against the close bedroom and the floor-mattress, insisting on my being quite strong enough to be reintroduced to society at large. She even set Sally at defiance—Sally, dear faithful nurse, who would not have let me run any risk for the world. But even Sally respected the authority of the Master's wife.

“Want of sofas? Nonsense!—as if one couldn't find one immediately! Here, Sally, get one of the farm-lads to go to the wharf with that note. Tell my husband I shall

expect him here to tea. Now, Eunice, Janie, Bion, let us make ourselves comfortable.

She sat down rocking her little baby, and chattered merrily for a long time—chiefly to Miss Allardyce. Their conversation passed idly through my brain at the time, but I remembered it afterwards.

The Master's wife was saying how busy she was, and that she did not know how she could find time to teach her younger boys. They were not advanced enough for a regular governess, and, besides, she did not want any one who would interfere with the mother's instruction, which she had always given them. She wished she could find some one—some young girl—just to teach Eddie his letters, hear Will's lessons, and look over Tom's writing—all easy duties, and she would give the young lady twenty pounds a year, at least, and always send her too and fro in the dog-cart with Lias Lee.

I think—though she said nothing—the kind lady had some secret intention with regard to Jane Allardyce. But it was fruitless. Jane



said, in her gentle, straightforward, simple way, that she would have liked very much to undertake the office herself, but that Mrs. Archer would not spare her, she required such constant attendance.

“ Besides,” she added with a faint blush, “ I wanted to try some such employment, but Harry said, however poor we were, he would work himself to death before he would let me help in any way. I don’t think he is quite right—but——”

“ Well, never mind ”—and the Master’s wife laughed off her evident disappointment at the frustration of her kindly intentions—“ I must get some one else for my governess.”

“ Perhaps”—and with a sudden idea Jane turned towards me—“ perhaps, Eunie, you would like——”

I flushed up in a moment. It was an involuntary emotion, the last lingering remnant of my old pride. I—the daughter of Colonel Lychett—to become a daily governess, teaching the alphabet to little boys! Impossible!

“ Don’t you see,” smiled the lady, “ that

Eufice wouldn't like it at all? Else I might really have asked her, she managed Bion so well, and is so sensible and clever—almost too clever to spend her time altogether over little boys.—Well—Janie, do you know my new grand piano came home yesterday?"

(Most grateful was this turn of the conversation to me.)

"Is it a nice piano?" asked Janie. "And what shall you do with your old one?"

"Oh, sell it if I can; it is still worth ten pounds or more, which would buy Missy some new music. Otherwise she can have it to practise on out of papa's hearing."

"It was a very good piano," said Janie, in an absent way. My mind was wandering too.

I began thinking whether I had not acted ungraciously in never even saying "thank you" to the Master's wife about teaching her little boys. But she did not take this amiss—she was far too kind.

We spent a merry day with her and her little baby. After dinner she compelled me to sleep, "to strengthen myself for the evening's

entertainment." From this slumber I was roused by a mysterious noise in the house, accompanied by a voice that I knew was the Master's. I jumped up eagerly.

Now, I had never seen the good Master since the night he carried me in his arms from the quarry, when, humanly speaking, I owed my life to his promptitude after he had met Lias Lee, learnt my absence, and immediately planned and headed the search.

It was no wonder that my heart thrilled with gratitude and pleasure at hearing the voice of the good Master. If I could only rise and go to him! I might crawl somehow, lame as I was, to the parlour-door to thank him.

"Bah—nonsense!" cried his wife, as I began to explain this to her. "You are to do no such thing. You are to be dressed in a civilised fashion, and allowed to join the civilised world at the tea-table. Come, haste—Janie, help her! Smooth her hair, and—well, I think she shall keep on her cap for to-day, if only to please Mr. Reuben."

I ought to explain that this invalid cap was

a *chef-d'œuvre* of Sally's workmanship, and since I had worn it, Cousin Reuben had often regarded me with a melancholy tenderness, saying I looked something like my poor mother. Alas, that was impossible, seeing she was so beautiful! But, since my illness, I had at times discerned in my poor face a gentle "good" expression, which might have resembled hers. I hope so.

"Now," cried the kind lady—when all was arranged, and I was trying to stand upright on one feeble limb, the other being quite powerless, and thinking how changed I was from the once bold, active, energetic Eunice Lychett—"now, he may enter, I suppose. Here, William, come in and help us to carry this poor child."

"Hey, Eunice! Why, my poor little girl!" He looked at me a minute with compassion; I must, indeed, have been greatly changed. Then he took me up in his kind arms, and, heading a triumphal procession as it were, carried me fairly out into what his merry wife called "the civilised world."

Bion clung to my skirts, protesting energeti-

cally, that "if he were a big man, Sister should never need to walk again,—he would carry her about everywhere."

The master laughed, and then said, gravely, "that he hoped not: it was a great blessing for young people to be strong and healthy."

I knew from his tone that he was thinking of his own weakly boy, whom he was accustomed to carry about so tenderly. And out of my love and sympathy for this good father, I did—what was a foolish thing, perhaps, but I could not help it—as he laid me down, I kissed surreptitiously, his coat-sleeve. It did him no harm, for he never knew it; and it was a very great relief to my feelings.

But the sofa—where did the sofa come from? There was no such luxury before at Stonyhide.

"Oh, that was nothing! A good fairy had sent it," the worthy pair both protested. I was to lie down and ask no questions. Doubtless, as soon as I was well, the good fairy would come and carry it away again.

So we sat down to tea with great mirth—with an occasional strong inclination to tears

on my part, for I was weak in body and likewise in mind—and it moved me to see so many people I was fond of making such a festival of the recovery of poor useless me. I had Bion perched on the end of my sofa, with his little fondling arms around my neck—Janie making tea beside me—the Master, his wife, and Cousin Reuben, sitting opposite, all talking together with evident satisfaction. Sally hovered about, to watch that they were not all killing her patient, of which she seemed exceedingly apprehensive. Altogether, it was one of the happiest meals I ever ate in my life—sweet exceedingly to my palate, but unutterably sweet to my heart. It made me feel abundantly the *voies*—first, of loving—secondly, of being  
“d.

He lon afterwards (seeing, perhaps, that I was must, overcome, being very feeble still) the he tooknd his benevolent wife took their de- a triumph. The parlour was left quiet, with no fairly out it Janie and Bion, except Mr. Reucivilised wo. pathetically watching me, having Bion clungnately to his little hymn-books

and his red pocket-handkerchief. Worthy old soul! there never was a more affectionate, simple-minded man.

Janie forbade me to talk, so I lay noticing the familiar furniture of the parlour, which I had not seen for so long. There was the chimneypiece, with its various ornaments of Purbeck marble; the two book-shelves, thinly peopled; the organ in the corner, all the same as when Bion and I first saw it. Yet there was something not right. I could not at first think what, but afterwards remembered clearly.

The piano—so well beloved of little Bion—was gone!

It could not have been sent away in readiness for Janie's house-furnishing, for, alas, her marriage was not to be for a long time! Years of patient struggling lay before the young couple before they could hope to win for themselves a home.

What could have become of Janie's piano?

This was the first question I asked, as soon as she would allow me to speak. Bion had gone out of the room, and was faintly heard

from the kitchen, half humming, half whistling, in a childish way, one of his little tunes.

“The piano, Janie? why don't you tell me?”

Janie hesitated still longer—but I *would* know.

“It happened when you were very ill,” she said. “Bion was so miserable about you. He used to cry and tell me how often he had vexed Sister, but that if she only lived he never would vex her again. He hardly did anything all day, but sat at your room door—he never thought of the piano.”

My throat felt very queer, but I would not let Janie think I was crying. “Go on,” I said; “tell me all about it.”

“When you were a little better, and we were no longer afraid for you every hour, I noticed one day that Bion was sitting very thoughtful. I asked him what he was thinking about. He said, ‘About what he should do. He was a big boy now, and intended to be very good. Especially as they said it would be some time before poor Sister got quite well—several weeks, or——’”



"Janie, you need not hesitate," I said; "I am not afraid. Perhaps months—years. Well, I'll try to bear them. Now, tell me all my boy said."

"It was little more about you. Only 'that he had made up his mind, since Sister did not like the piano, that he would not tease her with it any more. It did not signify, he could learn to play when he was a man,' he said. 'Would I take it away out of the house?' So I took it."—

"When!"

"Lias fetched it one day when we were out walking."

"Did he fret after it, my poor Bion?"

"Not much. He cried a very little when he first missed it, but I dare say he is quite content now."

I made no answer—my spirit was moved to its inmost depth. I should have been broken-hearted at the pain I had caused my darling child, had it not been for the sweetness of knowing he had given up so much for Sister, and must therefore love her so well. For the

stern sense of duty, which can perform any sacrifices, is not in a child. What he had done must have been for love, and love only. Yet how hard for him! No wonder he sometimes wandered drearily up and down the house, not knowing what to do; no wonder he made out his little tunes in whistling or singing, or anything he could. His despairing passion for music was ineradicable. But it was not too late.

“Has Lias got the piano still?” asked I, so quickly that Janie, doubtless, thought me the most heartless sister in the world. She merely answered, “No—it is sold;” and went to put on her bonnet, for Harry Archer was come.

They left us. I lay on the sofa, which in this mysterious way had been lately added to the Stonyhide furniture—the dear old sofa, which afterwards grew so familiar to me, during many days, weeks, months—when, in dreary but salutary loneliness, I learnt some of the best lessons of my life. My heart was very full; every time I caught snatches of Bion’s little voice humming down below, it brimmed over

—my darling boy! But I was not long in settling a plan in my mind; when he really appeared, I smothered down all outbursts of tenderness, just as if I did not know or care how good he had been. Very likely Janie thought so. But, no, she was too good herself to think ill of any human being!

After tea I said, indifferently as it were, “Bion, I want something to amuse me. Go and grind at the organ.”

He looked surprised; but went. His performance was brief. Poor little fellow! his countenance soon became annoyed, and at last he ceased grinding.

“Why do you stop, Bion?”

“It teases me—it sounds so ugly—all out of tune.” (I had never discovered the fact, of course.) “I don’t know how to make it better, so I’ll give up playing.”

He did so, but very disconsolately. It seemed strange the child should be so unhappy after such a trifle—but, then, he was born a musical genius. All the stories about the young Mozart and little Joseph Haydn rushed

into my mind, confirming me the more in my resolution.


When Sally came to carry me off to bed, I persuaded her, instead, to bring me pen, ink, and paper, for I wanted to write a letter to the Master's wife.

"That I will—I do like for to see young folk grateful," was Sally's answer.

What I wrote I will tell in the next chapter.

## XV.

### The New Piano.

 THINK it must have been a very miserable specimen of a letter. I know I wrote it with a trembling hand—with many heart-burnings and tears, until the latter washed away the former in course of time. My chief aim, whatever might be the composition and result of the letter, was to write *the truth*. This truth was simply as follows.

I told how hardly I had treated my little brother before I was ill ; how he had given up for me his favourite, almost his sole pleasure, the piano ; and how I found it impossible to restore it to him.

Then putting together the two points in her

conversation which I remembered, I entreated the Master's wife to sell me her old piano, and let me pay for it in the way I could, by accepting what had before been so repugnant to me,—the situation of teacher to her little boys. I assured her that my bad feeling shown to-day was only the relics of most foolish and desperate pride, that I had overcome now; that I should like to be her children's governess very much, and would do my utmost to deserve her goodness. That for my qualifications—O Pride, this was thy last dying pang!—she might inquire of my former instructress, Mrs. Dangerfield.

Finally—and I hardly know how I screwed my courage to ask this favour, save that any favours seemed less painful coming from the Master and his wife, because I loved them—I begged that, if they would trust me, Bion might have his piano at once, even though it would be like paying me my year's salary in advance, and I was such a young girl to be depended upon. Yet I felt so old, I thought they need not fear.

How the letter ended I forget: doubtless abruptly, for towards the last I had a great hesitation and terror of its failure; and what should I do with my poor Bion then? I closed and sealed it all in a hurry, for Sally came in rubbing her eyes, and protesting she would not wait another minute. She took the letter in her care, to be sent next day, and the matter was so far decided.

I must have lain awake half the night pondering over it, and thinking how I should manage, supposing, as I had very little doubt, my plan was agreed to, and I became governess to the Master's children. A wild zebra in harness was no extravagant type of what I should then be, compared to my old self; but, latterly, the young zebra had been mournfully tamed.

Also, though an apt girl to learn, I hated teaching excessively. Yet, perhaps, that was as well, as it gave me something to struggle against, and a stout warfare either with myself or anything else was always more grateful to my nature than passive endurance. Then

my pupils would be little boys, and I liked boys—could understand them a great deal better than I could girls. Perhaps I might turn out not such a bad governess, after all.

So, some time before dawn, I settled myself to sleep with a quiet heart.

The next day—oh, how long it was!—Sally carried me in and made me comfortable on my sofa, with my books all round me; but even “Flaxman” failed me now. The sight of Bion was really painful to me. I longed to tell him all, and kiss him and thank him, and speak of the prospect opening before him—a beautiful piano of his own, that he might play on from morning till night, and Sister would not once be angry!

But suppose my scheme should fail? No, I must not tell the child anything.

So I comforted myself with being especially tender to him, making him sit on the head of the sofa and sing over all his little tunes. Though, on the whole, he did not much care for singing; his rich ear wanted the full harmonies of instrumental music to satisfy it.



At tea-time Mr. Reuben came in. He seemed pleased to see me, but did not notice me much. I had left off the invalid cap to-day, and, being restless and weary in my mind, I did not look like my dear mother.

Bion jumped on Mr. Linnington's knee—they had become wonderfully good friends now—and amused himself with pulling out, one after another, the contents of the old man's pockets. Among the rest was a sealed letter.

"Bless my heart! I was quite forgetting! Yes—I believe that's the one." And he slowly put on his spectacles to look at the address.

"Is it for me? Cousin Reuben, make haste! Bring it to me, Bion. Oh, if I could only get across the room!"

"My dear!" said Mr. Reuben, in mild astonishment—"yes, it is for you. 'Miss Eunice'—no, 'Miss Lychett.' What a careless hand she writes! Yes, the Master's wife gave it to me for you, my dear. Take it, Bion, to your poor sister. Always wait upon her, like a good boy."

Bion ran, active and kind, but I forgot to

thank him. I turned my face to the wall, lest, were there bad news, I should in any way betray myself, and tore the letter open.

Here it is, I have kept it ever since :—

“ My dear Eunice,—My husband and I both think that so good a sister will make the best teacher we could desire for our little boys.

“ Your piano shall come home to-day. And that all may be clear between us for a year to come, I here inclose ten pounds as payment for instruction—to commence, if you are able, next New Year’s Day.

“ I am, ever your affectionate friend,

“ \_\_\_\_\_.”

Oh, joy ! it was settled now. Bion would have his piano. Should I tell him ? No ; he had run down below to Sally. I was forced to turn my face into the sofa-pillow and weep out, all by myself, my happy, happy tears.

Suddenly there was the stopping of a spring-cart in the yard outside, and Sally’s voice was heard loud in contradiction of somebody.

Bion crept away upstairs ; he could not bear sharp tongues and quarrelling.

“What is the matter, my dear ?” asked Mr. Reuben, meekly, from over his tea.

Bion did not know.

“But I know. Wait a minute, and you’ll see, Cousin Reuben. You’ll see, my darling, darling boy !” And I hugged the child, almost beside myself with joy.

Sally was heard volubly,—“I’ll go and speak to th’ Master. It be all a mistake, I tell ’ee.”

“No, Sally,” I called out, “it’s no mistake. Oh ! will nobody help me to crawl to the top of the stairs ?”

A merry, jolly laugh, which we recognised, now burst forth. Sally grew furious.

“Get along !” she cried ; “you be all drunk together, I reckon ! Nobody’d be sending pianners to we.”

“Pianos !” I shouted from the top of the stairs. Alas ! I couldn’t run down ; I was a poor, helpless thing now. “Let it come in, Sally. It’s my piano,—that is, my brother’s ; I bought it my very own self.”

"That 'un did. I heard the whole story. Bless 'ee, Miss Lychett! what a good sister you be!" answered Lias's hearty voice, as he and two other men began to coax the precious burden up the narrow stairs.

Bion and I watched them; he trembling with eagerness. I don't know how *I* looked, because I only thought of him.

"Sister, is that Janie's piano come back?"

"No, a great deal better one than Janie's. Shall you like it?"

"Shall I?" His eye flashed unutterable delight. Ah! that boy was a born genius.

The instrument was put safely together. It was large for the tiny parlour, but that did not signify; it looked so nice. The men went to the kitchen, Mr. Linnington following in a state of entire mistiness and astonishment as to the whole affair. No one was left but our two selves and Lias Lee, who stood by the fire, warming his coat-tails, and beaming all over with satisfaction.

"Sister, may I open it?" I nodded. Bion rushed to the piano, and his slender fingers ran like wild-fire over the keys. It was a

pleasant-toned instrument; even I could distinguish that Bion was enchanted. "Oh, how beautiful! Janie's was nothing to it." And he played tune after tune, tears of delight running down his cheeks. At last he paused, thoughtful.

"Sister, where did it come from? Whose is it? How long will it stay here?"

"Always. It is my Bion's very own. Sister gives it to him, that he may learn to play, and play all day over, as much as ever he likes."

Here I pause. It is impossible to tell how happy Bion was—how happy we both were. In truth, I hardly know what either of us did, or looked, or said. I only remember the one fact—of our intense happiness.

Until very late that night, Bion sat playing; and I lay listening to him,—as I have listened ever since, year by year liking 'it better, whether I understand it or not. In so far as my appreciative faculty been cultivated, that Bion now smiles merrily and incredulously when he declares, after his old fashion, "that sister has no taste for music."

## XVI.

### Seven Years After.

**I**T is now seven years since that day, and the well-used and well-beloved piano still stands its ground, and keeps up a tolerable reputation for harmony. But many changes have taken place, as must necessarily happen in seven long years.

Worthy and dear cousin Reuben has gone to that place where he will sing the praise of Him he so faithfully and simply worshipped; not in his old cracked voice and from his little hymn-books, but in the song of saints and angels. I nursed him till he died,—when dying, he mistook me for my mother, and called me lovingly many times “his dear cousin Eunice.” I must have looked like her then.

Janie Allardyce has been the young cap-

tain's wife three years. She lives at Swanage with old Mrs. Archer, except when she goes with her husband on his voyages—the happiest thing for a sailor's wife. She is no better a matron than she was a girl; in fact, she couldn't be, for she never had a fault that I could find.

The Master and his excellent wife both live and prosper. So does worthy Lias Lee; though he still remains a counting-house clerk, and his sole attempt at literary fame is the publication of an eccentric little poem now and then in the country paper. Perhaps he is happier than if he were a greater man.

Bion and I have lived at Stonyhide until now, when the death of our cousin leaves us free to wander,—in fact, makes removal necessary. Mr. Reuben constituted us his sole heirs, and we are richer than we ever thought to be in the eighty pounds per annum that we share between us. Therefore I have concocted a plan—the last of my many schemings—which, having won the master's approbation, is shortly to take effect.

My brother and I are going to study for three years in Germany.

It may seem very ridiculous and altogether impossible,—indeed, I can hardly believe it myself,—but, last year, a stranger, an artist, staying at the master's house, saw my poor drawings, and said that I had absolute "genius;" that, if I studied properly abroad, at Munich especially, I might soon earn a living and in time become a real artist! I thought it all carefully over, and then made up my mind, that, genius or no genius, I would try.

Another reason greatly biased me,—that Bion has, I find, likewise made up *his* mind to be a great musician and composer. I think him one already; but, of course, he must study, and Germany is the best place for musical instruction. So we shall try our fortunes together. We are not afraid, having so great love for one another; and I being so much the elder and rather a wise woman in my way. "Besides," as Sally says—(poor old Sally, who will not go with us, but would rather live and die near the old place, on the little income her



master left her)—“ you know, Miss,—and it’s a blessing of Heaven, considering all things,—that you’re not *too* good-looking.”

Certainly not, honest Sally. But I smile, and do not mind.

However, Sally cannot pay this questionable compliment to my brother Bion. As I stood clearing out parlour-shelves and packing up boxes, I watched that boy, sitting at his piano, which he is loth to part with, even for three years, and vows it never shall be sold as long as the wood holds together. He is, I think, the very perfection of boyhood. His fair curls, all clipped short now, cluster round his head ; he is rather thin, having grown a little too fast for a lad of fifteen ; he is not so delicate as to awaken any fears. As to his face, the Master’s wife will have it he is just like a head of the young Beethoven. I only know it is my boy’s face—the most beautiful to me in the world.

But I can’t waste time in looking at him, so must go on with my labours. . . . Tuts ! what is this dusty brown-paper parcel coming

tumbling down from the topmost shelf? Bion starts, and stops in his playing.

“What’s that? Sister, have you hurt yourself?”

He comes to look, and watches me unwrap the little parcel. Out of it slips a book.

“Well, I declare! After all these years! See, Bion, it’s our old ‘Grimm’s Tales.’ Do you remember?”

He does not the first moment, being such a child then; but gradually all comes back into his mind. He handles the book very tenderly, and with a thoughtful face.

“I remember all about it now, Eunice.” And then he comes over and kisses me. I kiss him, too, laughing, but am so weak-minded as to let fall a tear or two amidst the laughter.

“What shall we do with it, Bion? You are are a great boy, now—too big to care for ‘Grimm’s Tales?’”

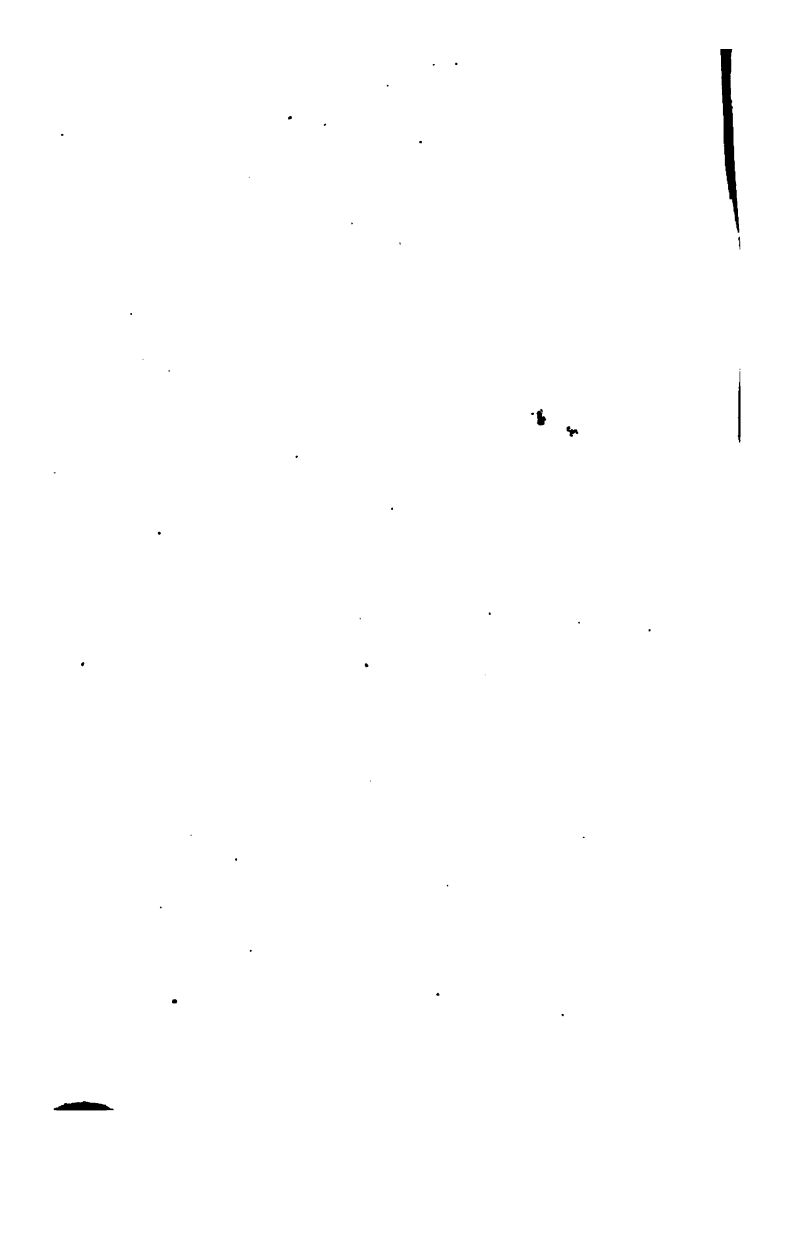
“Don’t I, though? I’ll keep it as long as ever I live.” And he walks off with it under his arm—my dear, good boy!

We had a great laugh that evening over the

queer pictures. In fact, Grimm is henceforth constituted one of our household gods.

I do think, when to-morrow the Master's little steamer bears us and our worldly goods on the way to another country, and we take our last look, for a time, of the Dorset coast, I shall pluck up courage and tell Bion the whole true history of Sister and

*The Cornu Ammonis.*



## MARY GREY.

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**T**HE room is dark, except for the round patches of light which the shade of the dim rushlight makes upon the walls and ceiling: you must tread quite softly for fear of disturbing the sick woman who lies on the bed there.

A little girl, about fourteen, is sitting, her head in her hands, over the smouldering fire. She is very sad, for she knows that her mother is dying, and that nothing can save her.

Outside it is bitter cold, and the snow is falling in broad, silent flakes.

“Mary dear!” said a feeble voice.

“Mother, I’m here!”

“Come here, dear child,—close to me, and take my hand in yours, dear ’

Mary knelt by the bedside, and took the poor, thin hand.

“Mary, I wish to speak to you whilst I have strength. I don’t think I shall be here long—I feel to be going very fast.”

The child held back her sobs, though she could not help the hot tears running over her cheeks.

“When I’m gone, Mary, you must try to take my place, and be a mother to the little ones. I know you’re young, dear, but I know you’re good and brave, and will try to do your best.”

Mary could not speak, but she kissed her mother’s hand every now and then, to show that she was attending to her.

“There’s Sally, you’ll mind her, and try to teach her all I’ve taught you. She’s sharp sometimes, you know, but you’ll not be sharp in turn, that never comes to any good—a soft answer, Mary dear, turneth away wrath. . . . Look well to the boys, to keep them out of bad ways, and teach them their duty when they’re young, so it will come natural to them

as they get older. You'll see to little Moggy, and make her mind you whilst she's little. . . There are many things I should like to tell you, dear, how to take care of the house, and make your father comfortable, but I haven't time—only to say this, Never waste anything—your time particularly, every minute is worth something ; and remember that you'll never be too poor to prevent your helping some one else in something ; and, above all, remember, Mary dear, that whatever comes, it's God's will it should be so, and never murmur. You must do all you can for yourself, and leave the rest to Him—He is caring for you, be sure. Have you understood all I have been saying ? ”

The child tried to make her voice steady, as she answered, “ Quite, mother dear, and I'll try never to forget it.”

“ I think if you were to lie down by me, dear child, and I knew you were asleep, I could sleep a little too.”

Mary obeyed, and her eyes soon closed, for she was weary with sorrow and watching ; but the mother lay awake praying to God to bless

and keep the poor children she was going to leave.

A few days after this Mrs. Grey died. Her husband grieved sadly for her ; she had been a faithful wife and kind companion, and he knew that no one could ever be to him what she had been ; but he bore his loss as a Christian should do, knowing that it was God's will, and feeling that she was "not lost, but gone before."

The children missed their dear mother terribly, but they were not so desolate as many thought, for she had always brought them up to do their duty towards God and towards their neighbour, so now, though she was gone, they remembered her words and her example, and tried to do what would have pleased her had she been alive. The spirit of their mother still watched over them.

Grey was a labouring man, but as he had always been strong, and hearty, and in constant work, earning twelve shillings a-week, his family had never known what it was to want, though certainly, amongst so many hungry



mouths, there seldom was more than just enough.

Mary was, as Mrs. Grey said, a good and brave girl ; she remembered what her mother had said to her on her death-bed, and when all the cares of managing the family came upon her shoulders, she did her utmost that her mother's loss should be felt as lightly as possible. If she was ignorant at first, she soon learnt better, as all may who try. She recollected all her mother's little economical ways ; how she used to have a regular day when all the clothes were to be looked at and mended, for she always said that there was nothing for saving things like keeping them in repair ; how Saturday was to be a day of thorough cleaning, because, if once you let dirt get a-head of you there's twice the work to do ; she remembered how her mother every week laid by from her father's wages the schooling for the children, the club-money, and any little matter that might be owing to the shop, for Mrs. Grey always said, "A little bill was easier to pay than a large one, and that she'd no comfort in

having the things, unless she'd money to buy them with."

Mary used to think of all these things as she was busy working, and tried to do everything as she thought her mother would have done it.

People often said, that there were no children at school who came so punctually, or so tidily dressed, as the little Greys.

Mary always took care to be up very early herself to give the children their breakfast, and see they were off in time ; she looked well to their clothes over-night to see they were not torn, when the children themselves were fast asleep. No wonder the little Greys were tidy and punctual. The children loved their sister very much, for they saw how careful she was of them, and she managed to persuade them to help her in a great many little things on Saturday when they had their holiday ; in winter, the three eldest, Sally and the boys, would go and gather wood for her, for she used to laugh and tell them she would not cook their dinner unless they brought her wood. She was so good-humoured that they always did

what she told them willingly, and were very happy to think they were helping in something. Even little Moggy used to be set to work, to something that she fancied was very useful. Mary used to say, that the sure way to be in mischief was to be idle.

The neighbours said that she was too young to be able to manage a family ; but her father always answered, that he knew Mary, and that he would rather trust her with the house and children than many an older person.

You may be sure that, with so much to look after, she had not time to be idle herself ; indeed, she was always at work, but always happy and smiling. But though so busy, she managed somehow to find time to lend a helping hand to any of her neighbours who might want her assistance.

She was always ready to "mind the children" if their mother was obliged to leave them ; if any one had a heavy wash to do, they might be sure of Mary to help them, even though she could only come for an hour, and more than one tired wife got a little sleep whilst Mary watched by the sick husband.

Everybody liked her, and was willing to do a good turn for one who never thought of herself so long as she could be of any use.

It was on a Saturday at the end of June, more than a year after Mrs. Grey's death, that as Mary was busy scrubbing her brick floor, Jane Nixon dropped in to "have a chat."

Mary would rather Jane had come any other day; but as she was too good-natured to let her see that she wished her away, she begged her to sit down whilst she went on with her work.

Jane Nixon was a slattern and a dawdle, who imagined she had not strong health, because she preferred being idle to employing herself. She watched Mary at her work for some time, and said at last,—

"Dear me! don't that tire you dreadfully?"

"It does certainly tire my back a little, but then I'm used to it."

"Well," said Jane, "I never found anything a bit less disagreeable for being used to it; besides, what can be the good of so much cleaning? it'll all be dirty again as soon as the children come in."

“ I don't think so, at least not so dirty as it was before ; the children will take care to wipe their shoes when they see I've been cleaning up. I do so like to have everything fresh and tidy for Sunday ; and then I've hardly anything to do, and can go to church twice if I like.”

“ Well, I don't call it having nothing to do to go toiling twice a-day two whole miles to church. I thought Sunday was a day of rest ;” and Jane yawned and stretched herself.

“ Oh, and so it is ! I think that only those who've worked hard all the week can tell what a real rest Sunday is. We've time then to think of what makes us better all the week, and on Sunday I can have father and the children all day long ; and after church we go for some nice walk, and father tells us all about dear mother. Oh, there's no day like Sunday !”

Jane did not take much interest in how Mary passed her Sunday, so the subject dropped.

“ Mary,” said her visitor, after a long silence, “ what's that ?”

“ What ? that on the table there ? Oh,

that's a lot of list the lady's-maid at Fir Grove gave me; she came into the kitchen when I was there, and said she'd been making the young ladies some new flannel petticoats, and that I might have all this. You may be sure I was obliged to her, for it will make Moggy a capital tippet against the winter. I can buy some coarse lining for a few pence, and then sew this on in strips; she'll be quite set up!"

"It'll take a lot of work and time, and look very bad when it's done," said Jane contemptuously; "but, Mary, what were you doing at Fir Grove?"

"Oh, I carried old Dame Richardson's can up for some broth they allow her; her boy's gone somewhere, and she asked me to do it for her, as she felt very crippled! but you see I hadn't my journey for nothing, for I got poor little Moggy a tippet."

"How I should like to be a lady's-maid!" sighed Jane. "Shouldn't you?"

"Oh, I'm afraid, Jane, to be a lady's-maid we must know a great deal more about many things than we do now!"

I don't know what Jane would have answered, but the room became suddenly dark. The girls saw standing in the doorway an old man ; his hat was much battered, and his coat torn in more than one place ; all his clothes looked soiled and dusty.

" May I come in and rest for a few minutes ?" he said. " I've sprained my foot very badly, and should be glad to sit down for awhile, if I could."

" Oh, yes, and welcome too," said Mary, with her pleasant smile. " Sit in this comfortable chair, sir."

" Thank you, my dear," said the old man, as he sat down ; " and now do you think you could give me a glass of water ?"

As Mary was taking down a clean mug, Jane caught hold of her and whispered quite loud, " How can you let that dirty old fellow come in ? he's some tramp—he'll rob the house, I'm sure !"

The old man must have heard what Jane said, though he took no notice ; but she did not care whether he did or not. Mary did

not answer, but fetched fresh cold water from the pump, saying, as she handed it to her guest, "I'm sorry, sir, I cannot offer you any bread, but we haven't more than just enough, and when the children come in they're always so very hungry."

"Oh, my dear, don't think of that," said the old man; "I'm not in the least hungry, only I felt a little faint from the pain of my ankle."

Jane, who was disposed to find fault with everything, now thought Mary very mean, for not giving the old man some bread, when she knew she had some in the cupboard.

"I am sorry for your ankle, sir," said Mary; "would you let me bathe it with warm water, I'm sure it would do it good, and bind it up with something."

The old man was very much obliged, so Mary bathed his foot for some time as tenderly as she could.

"Now here's a handkerchief to bind it up," said he, and he drew one from round his neck.

Jane's sharp eyes noticed directly that it was a very nice silk one, and then she thought



he could not be a tramp, particularly now that she looked again, and saw that all his clothes were very good, though his hat was battered, and his coat rather torn—it must have happened somehow in an accident!

“You’re a good girl, and a kind one,” said the old man to Mary, when she had finished her job. “What’s your name, my dear?”

“Mary Grey, sir.

“And have you any brothers and sisters?”

“Oh, yes! First of all there’s Sally, then come the two boys, and then little Moggy, dear little Moggy—you’d like her, sir, if you knew her!”

“I’m sure I should like them all, if they’re like you, Mary. You won’t mind my resting a little while longer here, shall you?”

“Oh, as long as you please, though I must finish my work now, as my father will be coming home, and he likes to see the place tidy and comfortable.”

“Don’t let me interrupt you—I should like to see you work.”

So Mary went on scrubbing and dusting

and polishing, whilst the old man sat resting himself. Jane did not say much, she was wondering who he could be.

Presently a stout woman, with a red, anxious face, came into the cottage, leading two chubby little children.

“Oh, Mary Grey, it’s a shame to put upon you when you’re so busy, and on a Saturday too, but my husband is just taken with fits, and as I can’t attend to him and them too, I thought I’d just run over and ask you to mind the children for awhile.”

“To be sure, Mrs. Wiggins,” answered Mary, pleasantly; “I’ll take good care of them. Poor dears, they’re shy at first, I dare say.”

“Oh, thank you, Mary! I really am obliged now! I’ll send Anne over with their suppers, as I know you’ve mouths enough of your own to feed, and come for them in the evening;” and Mrs. Wiggins hurried back to her husband.

Mary stopped in her work till she had found some old bits of toys for the children to play with, and spoken kindly to them to make them

feel at home, and then went on as basily as ever.

Jane Nixon felt rather affronted that Mrs. Wiggins had not trusted the children to her, as she saw she was there doing nothing, "But people were so ill-natured, they never thought she was able to do anything."

When the old man was quite rested he got up, and said he felt so much better that he could now walk home.

"And now, Mary, as you've told me your name, I'll tell you mine—I'm Smith, Mr. Joseph Smith, of the nursery-garden, about three miles down the road. Do you know the place?"

Mary knew it quite well, she had often peeped through the gate in passing by, and thought how beautiful it must be inside.

"Yes, sir—close to Burchat's."

"Exactly so ; and to show you I'm not unmindful of your kindness and good-nature to me, I'll invite you, and all your brothers and sisters, to come into my garden any day you can—Monday, if you like—to eat strawberries."

“ Oh, sir, how kind ! that will be delightful ; I have so often longed to go in.” And Mary’s eyes quite glistened with pleasure for thinking how the little ones would enjoy it.

“ Well, then, come on Monday,” said the gardener, as he shook hands with her ; “ that’s arranged, all of you—for the matter of that, you may bring as many as you like, for the strawberries won’t keep this hot weather till next market-day, and it is much better some one should enjoy them than that they should all spoil. I except, however, that girl there,” pointing to Jane ; “ but I dare say she wouldn’t wish to have anything to do with a *dirty old fellow* like me. I am not a tramp, though I certainly do look rather shabby now, with my battered hat and torn coat, but falling head-foremost over a heap of stones doesn’t at all improve the look of one’s clothes. Good-byè, Mary, I shall expect you to-morrow ;” and the old man left the cottage.

Jane was very vexed with herself and with the gardener, but she tried to appear as if she did not care.

"It was lucky for you, Mary, you called him 'sir,'" said she; "what made you do that?"

"Oh, because he was old!"

"Well, I don't see that it's any merit of his to be old! he can't help it."

Mary thought for a moment, and then answered, "Old people know so much more than we do, Jane, that we ought to be more respectful; and, then, we're sorry for them when they can't do so much for themselves; and, then, as they can't enjoy themselves as we do, it's right they should have something to make it up to them."

Jane Nixon said she hadn't time to stop and hear Mary preach, so she wished her "good-day," and walked out.

Mary thought a great deal about the strawberry-feast, and arranged whom she should ask to go with her besides her own little ones—not too many, as that would be trespassing on Mr. Smith's good-nature. The little Wiggins's should go, that would keep them out of their mother's way; then she would ask Sally

White, because she had such a hard time of it, living alone with her cross old grandmother ; and Dick Benson, he had been so good-natured in helping her to get back her pig when it ran away. Oh, it was glorious !

When Grey came in from his work, his daughter told him all about Mr. Smith and the strawberries, and he was almost as pleased as she was—the children could hardly sleep for thinking of it. Mary, however, did not forget, before she went to bed, to put aside from her father's wages, which he always trusted to her, sevenpence for the children's schooling—little Moggy did not learn to write yet—the club-money, and something which was saved every week for the rent. Grey was not far wrong when he said that his little Mary was the cleverest housekeeper in all the parish. The day was lovely, and in the evening Mary collected her little troop of children, and they walked to Mr. Smith's nursery-garden. He met them at the gate very kindly, and told Mary, that, thanks to her care, he was able to walk about quite bravely to-day.

The strawberries were not less delicious than the children expected, and when they had eaten as many as Mr. Smith thought was good for them, he took them all round the garden, telling them the names of many pretty flowers.

Mary thanked Mr. Smith very much for his kindness when they took their leave, and the others, though they were too shy to speak, looked pleased and grateful.

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THE summer and autumn passed away very quickly and happily, but in the winter a heavy trouble fell upon the Greys. The father, who had hardly ever had a day's illness before, was laid up with a severe attack of rheumatism, which threw him quite out of work, for if ever he tried to do a little job, he was sure to be much worse the next day. Grey had always belonged to a club, and now, in the hour of need, he felt the comfort of his providence—he was able to draw five shillings a-week whilst illness prevented his working; but

poor Mary found it a hard matter to manage on five shillings a-week when she had always been used to have twelve. When her father was first taken ill, she hoped and expected that a little rest and care would set him right, but as week after week went on and Grey could still do nothing, she began to grow very serious. They had none of them ever known want before, but now too often they had to go supperless to bed because there was nothing to eat. Mary could bear it bravely for herself, but it went to her heart when poor little Moggy cried for the bread she could not give her. Sally and the boys were very good, for though they were so hungry sometimes they did not know what to do with themselves, they did their best to look cheerful, and not add to the troubles, but all their poor faces were beginning to look white and thin for want of proper food. Mary noticed, too, how often her father said he had no appetite and could not eat, and she was sure he did it that he might leave more for them. It was very hard to be obliged to take the children from



school, where they were getting on so well, but it could not be helped, the money could not be spared. Their father heard them read every day, and taught them a little, but it added very much to Mary's troubles having to look to the children all day. Sally certainly helped her a great deal, and was a very good girl; and Ned, the eldest boy, often managed to earn a shilling by doing odd jobs for a neighbouring farmer—that was always something; but still they fared but badly on six shillings.

Still Mary worked as diligently as ever, though she could not sing over her work as she used to do; but for all that she would be cheerful, because she put her trust in God that He would help them in His own good time.

Winter came and went, but still Grey got no better—the rheumatism seemed to have settled in his limbs, and made them quite stiff and powerless. He comforted the children as well as he could, telling them to keep up their hearts, for that when warm weather came in spring he should, please God, get round again.

Mary hoped this would be the case, but her

spirits sometimes failed her, as she watched the nice furniture that she had known all her life disappear bit by bit—her father's Sunday coat, her own warm shawl, which had been her mother's, all gradually went to buy them bread. Day by day Mary turned it over in her head what she could do to earn something. At last she remembered how she had seen boys weeding, raking, and tying up flowers in Mr. Smith's garden, and she thought if he could give her some employment in this way, she might gain a few shillings, and yet by coming every evening, take care of the house, and see that everything went on right. Her father approved of her plan, though he was very sorry to see her reduced to labour instead of him.

She went the next day to Mr. Smith, and found him busy in his garden. She made her request to him without fear, for she knew him to be a kind, benevolent man ; besides, he had never forgotten her care of his sprained foot, and would often speak of it to her, and tell her she might walk in his garden whenever she liked.

Mr. Smith looked rather surprised when he heard that Mary Grey wanted out-door work, and told her he did not think it would suit her : but she begged so hard that she might try, that he said he would think about it, and she might come the next morning and hear what he had decided.

The following day, when Mary appeared at the gate, she met Mr. Smith.

“ Well, my dear,” said he, taking her hand in a kind way, “ I think I’ve just got something to suit you ; you’re too young and delicate for out-door work, but I’ve found something. My daughter, who lives with me, wants a little maid just like you to take care of her children, and she says she’ll have you. Of course you won’t expect any wages at first, but you’ll get your keep, and most likely a bit or two of clothes.”

To his surprise Mary burst into tears. “ Oh, sir, pray forgive me—you’re so very good, but indeed I can’t.”

The old man, though very kind, was a little sharp, and he did not like being but out of his way.

“Heyday, Mary child! why, what’s all this?—you’re too good for the place, I suppose?”

“Oh, no, sir, not *that*!—I never thought of that for a moment, but you see, sir, if I was to be your maid, I should be well fed and clothed myself, but what would they do without me at home? But if I could earn ever such a little trifle myself, I could share it with father and the children.”

“Well, Mary, you’re a good child, I must say; you must not mind my having been a little hasty, my dear—you shall have your own way, and you may come and set to work as hard as you will with the boys; they’ll show you what to do, and I’ll give you three shillings a-week—so that’s a bargain, and we’ll shake hands upon it. You may begin to-morrow if you like.”

Mary had succeeded better than she ever expected, and after thanking Mr. Smith over and over again, she ran home to tell her father.

Mary was a good deal tired with her work at first, but she soon got used to it; indeed, she was so active and diligent, that Mr. Smith

said she did more work than two boys put together, and was well worth her three shillings.

Happy Mary! when she took home her first week's earnings, and felt that she could with a good conscience give the little ones a hearty supper, and send little Moggy quiet to bed!

Three shillings does not seem much, but it made all the difference to the Greys, I can assure you.

Mary had been working two months now for Mr. Smith.

One day, as she was very busy trimming some rose-bushes, she noticed a lady, who walked all over the garden with Mr. Smith, and who seemed to take great interest in the flowers. Once, as they passed near, Mary thought she caught the sound of her own name; but it must have been fancy, "what could they be talking about me for?" thought she.

Now though Mary cannot hear what Mrs. Taylor and Mr. Smith are saying, we can, and here it is!—

"Very well, Mr. Smith, you can send those dahlias and hollyhocks to Fir Grove to-morrow,

without fail : and, whilst you are putting up the other things for me to take in the carriage, I will step into your house, and rest. I want to ask your daughter if she knows of any girl who would suit me as a nursery-maid, mine has gone off in a great hurry, and I'm left with only the nurse. You don't know of any such person, Mr. Smith ?”

“ No, indeed, ma'am, I don't,” answered the gardener ; but just that instant his eyes fell on Mary, and a thought struck him, “ Yet, now I think of it, I do know a girl, who'd be a credit in any family ; that's her, ma'am,—Mary Grey—trimming the roses, there.”

“ Why you would not have me take a dirty girl like that for my nursery-maid, Mr. Smith ! she never can have been used to in-doors work.”

But when the gardener explained who Mary was, and told all her little story, Mrs. Taylor became quite interested, and said she would speak to her in the house, if Mr. Smith would send her in.

When Mary appeared, in a clean white

apron, which Mr. Smith's daughter had lent her, her hands washed, and her hair combed, she looked so nice, with her pleasant smile and modest way, that Mrs. Taylor was quite taken with her.

After asking a few questions, and telling her the recommendation she had had from Mr. Smith, Mrs. Taylor said that if Mary was willing she would take her as her nursery-maid, and give her eight pounds a-year.

Eight pounds a-year! Mary hardly knew what to say to Mrs. Taylor, she was so amazed and delighted.

"Well, Mary," said Mrs. Taylor, smiling, "I see you intend to accept my situation, though you don't say so. Probably you will want some tidy gowns, or something to set you up; so I shall leave some money with Mr. Smith's daughter, and she will see that you have everything right. I shall expect you as soon as your things are ready,—the sooner the better. Good-bye, Mary."

A happy girl was Mary when she told the news of her good fortune that evening at the

cottage ; she made a most difficult calculation of how much she should have a-week—her wages being eight pounds a-year, and found there would be more than three shillings, with one mouth less to feed. Sally, who was now as old as she was when their mother died, would be able to manage as well as she had done, so that she did not mind leaving home at all.

The father was equally delighted, the only difference between them was, that Mary kept on wondering what she had done to deserve so much good luck, whilst Grey thought that any good fortune that came to Mary was no more than she deserved. They both agreed, however, in thanking God, who had cared for them in the time of trouble.

In a few days Mary was ready to go to her place. She soon learnt her work as nursery-maid, the nurse often told her mistress that she had never known a better or more active girl, and the children grew very fond of her.

Mrs. Taylor gave her her wages weekly whilst her father was ill, that she might help her family ; and often, too, she got a holiday,




when she would run down to the cottage, and help Sally to wash or mend. When the warm weather came in, Grey recovered his strength, and was able to go to work again as usual, but he often remembered the time of his illness, and blessed God who had given him a child like Mary.

It is now several years since what I have been writing about took place. Mary still keeps her place with Mrs. Taylor, she is a favourite, both with her mistress, who likes the thorough way in which she does her duty, and her fellow-servants, for whom she finds time to do many little services,—indeed, they say in the house, that Mary gets through her work quicker and better than any of the others, so she is always able to lend a helping hand, if she is wanted.

The greatest pleasure is to get leave to spend Sunday with her father at the cottage; she likes so much to go to the old church, and screw herself into the old corner, where she always sat when she was a child.

## GRATEFUL DICK.

T was a wild, stormy night ; the wind swept across the moor, and whistled among the fern and heather ; a star would peep out now and then between breaks in the clouds, as they scudded across the wintry sky ; but there was no moon ; and though it was but seven o'clock it was quite dark, for the sun set three hours since ; it was icy cold, too, and snow began to fall. On such a night people draw near the fire in their warm rooms, and say, "How pleasant it is to hear the wind outside, and to feel so snug and comfortable within !"

But when people say so, do they sometimes think of those who are out in the storm,—of ships tossing on the wide sea,—of the house

less who have no place to shelter their heads, and the poor who have to toil and must brave the cold and the wind? It is good for the heart to let the fancy wander off to these sometimes, and not to rest satisfied always by our own fireside.

On that wild December night, a woman was making her way across the dreary moor. She had been at work in the fields all day, and was going home; but in Northumberland, where she lived, the farms are large and the cottages thinly scattered, and she had to walk three miles, morning and night, to and from her work. The last house she had passed was two miles behind her, and she had thought, as she passed, how cheerful the lights looked in its windows: but now she walked faster, and with more courage, for she could see another light glimmering through the falling snow, far up on the hill-side, and she knew it shone from her own little cottage, and that she should soon rest and be with her children. "Poor things!" thought she; "it's lonesome for them all day; but I must earn their bread."

What sound was that she heard? It was like the voice of a boy in distress. . . . There it was again, coming from the depths of the wild glen beneath! She shouted as loud as she was able, and her shout was answered.

She began to clamber down the precipice, in the darkness and storm, to help the poor boy. It is very difficult for those who have never been as toil-worn as she was to know how great and good an action she was performing. It was a task of difficulty, and of some danger, too. She had to cling by tree-stumps and points of rocks, and slipped down steep places, and had to catch at ferns and branches to stop herself. Every now and then she called aloud to the child, and by the answers she knew she was getting nearer and nearer to him; at last she seemed to have reached the very spot where he must be.

“Hold out your hand, and try to grip mine. Who are you, and how did you come here?”

A cold little hand soon caught hers, and held fast by it. “I am little Dick, from Grarby Manor Farm; and I thought I could

find my way home by the river, but the waters are out with the floods, and the path's covered and I lost myself ; and then I was afraid to move, for fear I should be drowned, so I was going to sleep all night in this tree, only I called out in hopes some one would hear."

"Keep fast hold of me, and we must try to climb up again."

Dick kept tight hold of his guide, and climbed sturdily after her.

"Why, you're trembling with cold now," said she ; "you would have been frozen before morning. You must come home with me."

By this time they had reached the top of the bank, and stood still for a moment to take breath. The snow fell faster than before, but through it still beamed the welcome light on the hill-side above them.

"Thank you for coming to help me," said Dick. "I am right glad to be safe up on the moor again ;—indeed, I do thank you heartily," and the boy's voice was full of gratitude ; "but I want to go home."

"It's five long miles to Granby, and mainly

impossible for you to go such a night as this ; are you afraid your mother will be frightened about you ?

Dick said he had no mother, only grandfather, and he would not be frightened, for he did not know of his coming till to-morrow.

“ And what’s your grandfather’s name ? ”

“ Michael Holdfast ; we came out of Suffolk with the squire last year, to settle at the Home Farm, when he came to live in this wild country. I don’t like it as well as the old place, for my part.”

The woman grasped his hand convulsively, and then put her arm round his waist ; but she did not speak. However, Dick felt as if she led him on with her so resolutely, that it was of no use to think of going home. They climbed the hill-path silently, battling with the wind, and half-blinded by the snow, till they stopped at the door of a very small cottage, or cabin, built of rough stones, and she raised the latch and opened it.

Dick thought no more of longing to go home, it looked so bright and warm in there

after the darkness and cold of the hill ; there was a good fire, and a nice smell of toasted oat-cakes, and a cloth on the table for supper, and two pretty little girls ran forward to welcome their mother, and asked why she was so late.

“I have brought you a little boy to take care of,” she said. “He had lost his way. Give him a stool close by the chimney-corner. Make haste, Lizzie, and take his wet coat and cap, and hang them on the peg. There now, you’ll be all right soon.”

She had soon taken off her bonnet and shawl, and put on her cap and apron, and, scarcely taking a minute’s rest, was busy making the porridge, while Lizzie helped her cleverly, and little Effie stood staring at Dick, who began to make friends with her. Then they sat down to supper, and Dick, though used to wheaten bread and better fare, thought he never had enjoyed a supper so much. When it was over, Lizzie and her mother cleared all away, and they sat round the fire ; but even then the mother was not idle ; she took out

her knitting, and little Effie sat on her knee, and Lizzie on a stool at her feet, knitting, too, one of those woollen caps that the women of Northumberland make for sale. Dick had many questions to answer about his grandfather, and his father and mother that were both dead, and the woman who came to do for them in the farm, because there was no wife or mother in the house. But his eyes began to close before he had answered all the questions, and Effie had been fast asleep for the last half-hour, so the mother put her into bed, and then spread for Dick a bed of dry heather, which she brought out of a sort of out-house behind the cottage; and on this, with a plaid thrown over him, he was glad to stretch himself, and was soon fast asleep, and heard no more of the wind that shook the door, and howled along the hill; nor felt the kisses that she pressed on his cheeks. Long after both her children were asleep she knelt by his side and looked at him. "His brow is like father's," she whispered to herself, as she put aside his hair, "very like, very like!" But at last weariness



overcame her, and she lay down in bed by her children, and slept too.

She was gone out to work before Dick awoke, for the snow had disappeared in the night and work could still be done ; but she had left his breakfast for him, and told the little girls to put him on his way home afterwards. And so they did. They walked by his side till he reached the cart-road that led to Granby, and then they turned back hand-in-hand, and began to climb the hill together. Dick looked after them, and as he saw Lizzie leading her little sister so carefully, he thought it was a very desolate thing for them to be left so all day. His kind heart would have been even more interested for them if he could have seen how the little creatures went on in their loneliness. When they got home they had to clear away the breakfast-things, so they went down the rocks to the spring, carrying a little tin can, and they had to make two or three journeys before they got water enough, for they could not carry much at a time ; then Effie would sit on the floor, playing with the

stones she had picked up, while Lizzie washed the little basins, and plates and spoons, and swept up the room ; and then they tried to learn their spelling, ready for the evening, when their mother used to hear them their lessons, and then they would play again ; and when it grew dark Lizzie knew it was time to make up the fire, and put the cloth on the table, and listen for mother's step on the path.

Dick very soon came back to see them. He had thought of nothing since his adventure that night but how he could best show his gratitude to them ; so he came, bringing them some picture-books, which gave them great delight, and an invitation from his grandfather to spend New Year's day with him ; and "grandfather hopes the mistress will come, that he may thank her himself," said Dick.

She turned pale at first, and said, "No, oh, no, it was impossible ;" but, after a few minutes' thought, she agreed to go. What a grand thing it was for Lizzie and Effie to look forward to ! Dick had told them about his grandfather's beautiful house that had four

rooms in it, and about the pigs, and ducks, and geese, and hens ; they longed for the day. Their mother washed their frocks, and mended up her Sunday gown ; and they were always talking and thinking about this visit, the first they had ever been asked to make in their lives.

But such a sad misfortune happened on the last day of the year ! There had been a great fall of snow, and the path was very slippery, and poor Effie fell down and cut both her knees so badly she could not walk a step, so she must stay at home, and her mother and Lizzie could not leave her. A message was sent by a boy who chanced to pass that way to Granby, to tell the reason why they could not come. Oh, it was very sad ! The poor little things cried, and could not be comforted.

It was a bright, frosty New Year's day. How happy they would have been walking by their mother's side, over the sparkling snow, to see Dick at the farm ! They could scarcely eat their breakfast, and their mother looked anxiously over the hill, and thought that if the

snow lay long she might soon have no breakfast to give them.

They were roused by the barking of a dog, and then came a little tap at the door. Lizzie went to open it, and gave a cry of joy, for, whom should she see there but Dick, with a bright, rosy face? and he said he was come to fetch them.

“But Effie——”

“Effie shall come too! Look here!” said Dick.

“Why, what a funny chair!” cried Lizzie. Is that for Effie?”

“Let *me* see!” exclaimed a little voice from inside the cottage; and in a moment Effie appeared at the door, carried in her mother’s arms.

“You see,” said Dick, “when James Hogg brought the message, I was so grieved and vexed I did not know what to do with myself; and grandfather, he was so sorry, he would have come over in the light cart for you, only there’s no road. So a thought came into my head, and I said to him, says I, there’s that

broken sledge that young master used to drive the young ladies in last winter ; it lies in the yard, and he gave it to me. If we could fasten the bottom of it to an arm-chair, I could drag the little girl over the snow in it. So grandfather lent me a chair, and one of the carters nailed it all together for me, and here it is !”

Little Effie had almost jumped out of her mother's arms for joy before he finished speaking, and Lizzie ran straight to the chest, and took out their Sunday frocks and mother's gown, that had been put away again. And soon Effie was seated in her carriage.

“ Here's a little lady to sit beside you,” said Dick, handing a paper parcel to Effie, who opened it eagerly, and found a pretty doll, which made her scream out with delight.

“ Grandfather bought it of a pedlar, and sent it to comfort the little girl. And now, here goes my coat on, and away we go !”

Effie and her doll sat side by side ; Dick and Lizzie drew them, chatting and laughing all the way ; and the mother followed, with a pale, anxious look. When they drew near the

farm-house, she said she must rest awhile, and sent the children on before. She sat on a large stone for some minutes, and hid her face in her hands. When she raised it her cheeks were wet with tears, but she walked with a firm step to the door, and went in. She heard cheerful voices and laughter in the parlor, and, looking in, saw her little Effie seated on the knee of an old man, with white hair and a hale, good-humored face, while Dick and Lizzie stood by his side. In a moment she, too, was at his side on her knees, looking up in his face, but she did not speak.

He looked at her, then tried to start up, but Effie gave a cry of pain, and clung round his neck. He sunk down again, and his lips trembled, but he put Effie down on the floor.

“Father!—will you not forgive me, father?” said the kneeler at his side. “He is dead who caused strife between you and me, and I have been a widow these two years, and my children are fatherless. I have suffered sorely. Oh, love me again as you once did!”

The old man did not speak, but he opened

his arms, and she fell upon his breast, and then he told her she should never leave him, but that he would be a father to her children, and they should share his home with Dick. "You remember your poor sister Effie," he said. "I lost her four years ago, and her boy lives with me ; and, now I have found you again, we will forget all our sorrows."

It had been meant that this New Year's day should be a day of pleasure, but it was much more ; it was a day of happiness and blessedness. Dick had little thought, when his grateful heart made him long to bring his new friends to his home, that he was bringing his own mother's sister and two dear little cousins there. They never went away. The cottage on the hill found another tenant, and its late mistress and her children lived happily at Granby Manor Farm.

## CLARA AND HER BROTHER.

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**I**T was early spring, and the March wind careered over the open downs, but scarcely touched the sheltered nook in which Mr. Wilmot's house stood ; it was within view of the sea, but high ground and thick plantations screened it from north and east.

In a warm room of this warm house, half darkened by Venetian blinds and guarded by double windows from every breath of air, lay a pale young girl on a couch. It was for her sake that this residence had been chosen, for she was the only daughter of the family, and her extreme delicacy alarmed them for her life. She had several books beside her, and



sometimes tried to read a little ; but her eyes constantly wandered away to the clock on the mantle-piece ; than she listened as though expecting some one ; soon, as if disappointed, she sighed, took up another book, and at last, throwing that down, ended by covering her head with a shawl and trying to sleep. Presently she rose, walked up and down a little, and then rang the bell.

“ Are you sure my brother is not come in yet, Lydia ? ” she asked of the maid who answered it.

“ He came in an hour ago, Miss Wilmot, ” replied the maid.

“ Make up the fire, please, Lydia, then, and bring me another shawl ; I feel cold, and that is all, thank you. ”

And having obeyed, Lydia left the room, and another hour passed, while the solitary occupant of the room tried to throw off the impatience which ruffled even her gentle spirit by the rapid movement of her fingers in embroidering a group of flowers on canvas, till a quick step was heard on the stairs, and

the door was thrown open so suddenly as to startle the poor invalid, and a handsome boy, his cheeks glowing with health sparkling with animation and good spirits, came in.

“Congratulate me, Clara!” he cried. “The sum I wanted is made up, and I am to order my boat to-morrow.”

“Dear George, I am so glad!” replied his pale sister, forgetting all her sad and lonely hours in a moment.

“And my father has given me leave to go out in one of the fishing-boats this afternoon, to take a lesson in steering.”

“Oh, how nice! But this afternoon? Do you not remember that Charles and Alice Hamilton are coming, and that we are all to have tea together in this room, and that Alice is to sing to me?”

“Well, I suppose I must stay at home then. How provoking!”

“No, you shall not stay at home on any account. I will write and ask them to come another day.”

“Yes, to be sure. That is the best way.

Ask them to-morrow. No, not to-morrow, because I go out for a long ride with Herbert ; nor next day, because I know I have some engagement. We will fix a time to-morrow."

"Did you remember to go about my little bird?"

"Oh, I quite forgot! Really I have been able to think of nothing but my boat. How are you, by-the-bye, Clara? Can't you come down to the pier this afternoon in the close carriage, and see me start?"

"It is too cold. I could not bear it," replied Clara. "At least I would try if you wish it."

Everything happened according to George's wish, for he was the darling of his father and mother, who were proud of their handsome son. Clara's little tea-party, to which she had looked forward for a week, was put off, and, wrapped up in shawls and furs, she was driven down to the pier: A boat had just come in, and the fishermen were unloading it with the intention of going out again, while George, who had agreed with them to take him on board, stood watching their proceedings. The

busy scene delighted Clara, whose ready sympathy made her enjoy all bright and social scenes. The wife of one of the men, with her baby in her arms, had come down to see him arrive, and the little thing crowed and held out its arms to its father, whilst he laughed and talked to it. Clara forgot the cold, drew down the glass, and laughed with them.

“What a strange girl you are!” said George. “I only wish the fellow would mind his business and get off again.”

Clara never thought George wrong about anything, so she supposed it was foolish to laugh, drew up the glass, and leaned back in the carriage, feeling tired and chilly; and soon afterwards, the fish being all carried ashore in baskets, George jumped into the boat, they pushed off, hoisted the large square-sail, and away they went before the wind, merrily. Clara then drove home, and was laid on her couch very much exhausted, and spent a lonely evening, for her father and mother were engaged to a dinner-party. She often looked at the piano and longed for the songs Alice had

promised, and at the window, and wished George had not forgotten her bird. She thought the evening very long, yet she delayed going to bed, in hopes George would come up to see her when he came in. He was expected at eight, but that hour had passed,—nine o'clock struck,—then ten, and still he had not come. Then she heard the carriage stop, and her mamma, richly dressed and with jewels in her hair, entered her room and reproached her for being up so late.

“But George has not come in, mamma, and I am anxious.”

“Not come in? My dear boy! I never liked that excursion,” cried Mrs. Wilmot, and hurried away to make inquiries. So poor Clara, trembling and agitated, and listening to every sound, was again alone, except when alarming reports were brought by Lydia of a fog over the sea, of fears entertained by the other fishermen, and of the unusual darkness of the night.

“Oh!” thought she, “if he will but come home safe, I will never be unhappy about any-

thing again. How could I think about my bird, or Alice, or such trifles? If he has got into any danger or is hurt, what will become of me? Let me die if only he is safe. My life is worth so little—oh, so little!”

It was nearly twelve o'clock when a strange bustle in the house made Clara rush down stairs heedless of cold or weakness. As she approached the hall she saw her brother borne in by two men; his head was bound up, his clothes were dripping wet, and his arm hung useless by his side. But he lived, he breathed; her father and mother were beside him, and when Clara laid her nervous hand on his, and spoke to him, he uttered her name. She sank down on a chair unable to stand, and saw him carried up stairs, and heard directions given to prepare a warm bed for him, and to run for surgeons and physicians; then a faintness came over her, and there Lydia found her, some time afterwards, in the dark by herself, and led her up to bed.

The fishermen had been tempted to remain out later than they intended by unusual success,

and then by George's wish for a longer sail, when they were suddenly enveloped in the fog which had been observed ashore, and while shrouded in impenetrable darkness they were run down by a steamer. The boat was completely wrecked, but, as the whole party were good swimmers, they kept afloat till they caught hold of the mast and other portions of the boat, and were drifted ashore by the tide ; but George had been violently dashed upon a rock by a large wave, and had received some severe cuts about his head and face and broken his arm.

Poor Clara scarcely knew whether to be most grateful that his life had been preserved or most miserable at his injuries. She wanted to go to him, but Lydia would not suffer it, and at last her mother calmed her by coming to tell her that the arm was set, the wounds were dressed, and the medical men did not apprehend danger. .

After such a night it would have been natural to expect that Clara would have a serious **attack** of illness ; but it was not so. Her

strength seemed to rise with the necessity of exertion and the consciousness that she was of use ; and she was of the greatest use. George had never been ill in his life, and his impatience and irritability, now that he had severe pain to suffer, were so great that it was soon found no one could manage him at all except her. He would not take his medicine unless she gave it to him, nor allow the surgeon to remove the bandages unless she was near to hold his hand. Why it was that she had this power over him, people wondered much, for she had seemed to yield to him in everything ; but the secret was her great love, her entire forgetfulness of self, and therefore the soothing influence that her presence exerted over him. When he complained of pain, fretted about the disappointment of delaying his boat that was to have been such a pleasure to him, and found fault with everything that was done for him, a few kind words from Clara would quiet him directly. This influence was soon apparent in other ways.

“How do you manage to be so contented



when we all go and leave you alone?" he said one day to her. "I should go distracted if you were to go and leave me in that way. And how is it you can sit up so long by me now? You must be very tired. You *are* very tired. I can feel your hand shake. Go and lie down, Clara, or you will make me worse."

George had caught a ray of sympathy from his sister, and no longer thought entirely of himself; and this thoughtfulness of her, so unusual with him, gave her a thrill of happiness which did her more good than the warm room and the double windows had ever done. She lay down because he wished it, but she did not feel tired.

Little by little Clara contrived to make her brother feel that his impatience was painful to his father and mother, and to bring them into his room in the evenings as he grew better, and make them all cheerful and happy again. When alone with him she could, now that he was able to bear it, tell him endless stories and legends, and repeat poetry to him, when the room was darkened because of the

injuries his eyes had sustained, and read to him when he could bear the light. Her hours of solitude had left her time to store her mind with riches which he had never suspected before; he began to feel very humbly about himself, as he became conscious of her superiority. As self thus began to sink in George's estimation, his thoughts had time to extend over a wider range.

"That poor fisherman I went out with," said he one day, after lying silent for some time, "is quite ruined. The loss of his boat is the loss of all to him. I wonder what he is about?"

"I hear of him, and his wife and little children almost every day," said Clara. "I have been able to comfort them a little, and help them to manage till he can get another boat. Perhaps it will be a long time first, but I have put all my money into a savings-bank to begin, and he has got some money there himself, and when you are well again I mean to ask papa and mamma to subscribe, and get other people to help. "Oh, I don't despair!"

“Clara! how much better you are than I am!”

George was silent for some time; then he told Clara that he wanted to see the fisherman that evening, and asked her to send for him, which she promised to do, and in the evening he came. He was a fine, strong young man, and bore his misfortune bravely, making no complaints; but when he left the room a tear was trickling down his cheek, for his heart was full of gratitude. George had given him all the money which he had accumulated for the purpose of buying his own boat, and this, with what he already had, was sufficient.

Clara, who had stood by, threw her arms around her brother's neck when they were alone.

“It is good and beautiful of you, dear George,” she cried; “but I cannot bear you to be disappointed of your boat.”

“No, no, do not be sorry. It is good for me; it is best for me; besides I only lose a pleasure, and he had lost his means of living.”

Clara's face beamed with joy as she heard

words from George with which she could so entirely sympathise.

When George at last recovered, his face was by no means so smooth and handsome as it had been. A large scar on his cheek, and another on his forehead, disfigured him a good deal. Over these his mother often lamented, and, if the truth must be told, he often lamented too ; but if he had seen the working of his spirit more clearly, he would have rather rejoiced over them, for it was wonderful how often these scars reminded him of his long illness and Clara's love, and tenderness, and goodness, and cultivated intellect ; and recalled him to better feelings when he was inclined to relapse into his old habits. Then it was that he recollected the friend he had found in his sister, and went to her to gain greater worth of character, and to try to repay to her some portion of the love he owed. This new interest and happiness in life worked like a charm on Clara. Though she had before had every care bestowed on her, she had withered for want of love and sympathy, and now she

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felt a new strength breathed into her. People thought it was the summer air that blew into her now open window, filled by George's care with flowers and birds, that had cured her, and it did its part; but the affections can shed warmth over the spirit, and revive it, even as the sun lights up nature with his beams.

## THE BROKEN PITCHER.

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**I**T was a beautiful day, and the birds were singing gaily among the trees, and hopping merrily from bough to bough ; and as gaily, too, Bessie Lee sang as she walked along the path which led from her aunt's cottage to the spring where she often went for water.

This spring was in a lovely spot, and was itself one of those rustic fountains which artists love to sketch. It was just beyond the village, out of sight of the dust of the high-road, with trees growing round it, and wild-roses and honeysuckle clinging to the trees ; and there, in the centre of a rude stone basin, the clear water bubbled up sparkling in the sunshine ; and, when the basin was full, poured

out through an opening in its rim, and flowed away through the meadows in a bright stream, at which the cattle and sheep drank, and along which blue and white water-lilies grew.

All looked so beautiful in the cloudless sunshine, that Bessie Lee forgot she ought at once to fill her pitcher and return home. Instead of which, she seated herself on the broad stone steps that led down to the little hollow where the fountain stood, and with the pitcher at her feet, sat looking idly round her at the trees and birds, and the bright butterflies dancing through the air, and the bees that came humming among the flowers.

Now, while Bessie Lee was sitting there wasting her time, two boys were sauntering near — not exactly wasting their time, for the leisure was given to them to amuse themselves; but for all that, I am afraid we shall find that they have misspent their time more than Bessie did hers. One of them, Walter Clayton, was a lively, good-tempered boy, always ready for all sorts of sport—and too often ready for all sorts of mischief also.

This was not owing so much to positive wickedness of disposition as to recklessness, which prompted him to do whatever he liked, without pausing to think of the vexation it might cause to others.

And yet Walter Clayton was always considered a generous boy, and selfishness was the very last fault he would have owned to. For he was always ready to share with his playmates anything belonging to him, or give money to organ-boys, or to Savoyards with little white mice. But there may be just as much selfishness in pleasing ourselves at the expense of other people's feelings as in grasping or keeping every thing we can.

As the boys came near the fountain, they perceived through the trees, Bessie Lee sitting on the steps. She had taken off her bonnet because of the heat, and now it had slipped from her hold, and lay on the ground beyond the pitcher.

"Look at that lazy girl," whispered Walter; "it would be good fun to have a shy at her old bonnet, and give her a fright."



"And perhaps make a hole in it," suggested the other boy.

"And if I did, it would not be the first hole in it, I'll engage," replied Walter, laughing. "So here goes!" and he flung the stone.

The next instant there was a crash. The stone had missed the bonnet and struck the pitcher, which it broke in pieces. Poor Bessie screamed with fright and started up. She looked round, but she did not know in what direction the stone had come; and she could see nobody, for the boys were safely hidden behind the trees, where Walter was laughing heartily at the mischief he had done.

Then Bessie Lee began to gather up the pieces of the pitcher, as though that could do any good, and to cry bitterly.

"Poor girl! I dare say she's afraid of being scolded when she goes home," whispered Alfred Arnot.

"She need not, for I'll give her the money to buy another," replied Walter, putting his hand in his pocket. Then, for the first time, he recollected that he had spent all his money

that morning in buying some white pigeons to which he had taken a fancy.

Alfred felt his pockets, and found that he had no money either.

"How provoking!" said Walter; but he only laughed all the more heartily. "See, Alfred what a fright the girl seems in! I dare say she thinks that some ghost or fairy served her this trick. But what a fuss she makes about her worthless old pitcher! I should have liked to pay for it, but I can't, so what's the good of wishing? The thing was of no value to anybody, and it was a shame to give a big pitcher like that to such a little girl to carry—she should be much obliged to me for breaking it."

"She does not look so," observed Alfred.

"She's a silly, then. But I am not obliged to make a fool of myself also, by making a fuss over what can't be helped. So come away, Alfred, it's time we were going home. You know we are to have the ponies at three for a long ride."

Young Arnot could not help thinking that

though Walter had no money to give the little girl, he might have gone and spoken to her when he saw the distress she was in, and comforted her by telling her that he would pay afterwards for the mischief he had done. But Alfred was too timid to say what he thought at the risk of being contradicted and laughed at by his bolder companion. So they went away together, and soon forgot the whole affair.

But Bessie Lee was still crying. The pitcher was a much more valuable thing in her estimation than in that of the two boys. For they were the sons of rich gentlemen, while she belonged to poor people, and was, moreover, an orphan, living with an aunt who had several children of her own. And she was frightened to think what her aunt would say when she learned what had happened.

For Bessie had been in the habit of being very careless, and had broken a number of things since she came to live with her aunt, which had occasioned her a great many scoldings. But she had very much improved of late, and had felt so pleased and proud that

very morning when her aunt remarked how much more careful and steady she had grown, and now it seemed very hard to have the pitcher broken without any fault of hers. It was some time before she could make up her mind to go back and tell of this misfortune ; but at length she took up the pieces, and crept reluctantly homeward.

Her aunt was getting impatient at her delay.

“ When is Bessie coming with the water, I wonder ! ” she said. “ I want to fill the kettle and put it on the fire for tea.”

“ Here’s Bessie ! ” cried one of the younger children.

“ What has kept you so long ? ” began Mrs. Hallet, coming to the door, when the sight of Bessie’s red eyes and the fragments of earthenware in her hands at once told what had delayed her. “ Why, what have you been about, you naughty girl ? ” continued the aunt, angrily.

Bessie burst into tears again, saying as well as she could between her sobs, “ Indeed, aunt, it wasn’t my fault ; I did not break it ; indeed I did not do it ! ”

"Then who did? Come, don't cry, then, but speak plain, and tell me how did it get broken?"

"I had set it down, and somebody threw a stone and broke it."

"Who threw the stone?"

"I don't know. I looked round and could see nobody. And I didn't see where the stone came from."

"I don't suppose you did," said Mrs. Hallet. "I don't doubt you struck the pitcher yourself against the stone and broke it; you naughty, careless girl!"

"Indeed, aunt, I did not do it; I was not careless," said poor Bessie, beginning to cry again.

"How can you look me in the face, and tell me such a story?" demanded her aunt. "You know very well you broke it yourself, as usual: and now you come with this lame account home, and expect me to believe it."

"Indeed, aunt, I have told the truth!" was all that Bessie could say in her defence.

"You wicked little storyteller!" cried the

aunt, "how dare you persist in such an abominable falsehood? You were afraid I should be angry, I suppose; because you knew how well you deserved it by your idleness and carelessness, and so you made up this story to screen yourself. But there is nothing I detest so much as a falsehood; I would rather you broke twenty pitchers (though I'm sure I could afford it ill enough!) than told one story. So you had better own the truth at once, or it will be all the worse for you."

But Bessie could only persist in her first account, which Mrs. Hallet was resolved to consider a falsehood; and, after a good scolding, the poor little girl was sent upstairs in disgrace, with the intimation that she should have no tea that evening.

That seemed a very long afternoon to Bessie Lee, alone as she was in the little attic room, with nothing to employ her; nothing to do but to cry, and think how hard it was her aunt did not believe her. This was not very amusing; but when she got tired, and left off crying, she had nothing pleasanter to think

about. Then at length she knew by the shouting of the little ones that her uncle had come home to tea, and she began to cry very bitterly as she thought of how he would ask what had become of her, and how her aunt would tell that she was upstairs there in disgrace, and wherefore. She could fancy to herself how shocked her uncle would be to hear such an account of her, and all he would say about how wicked she was.

Then, after a time, she heard her cousins laughing, and they all seemed very merry and very happy, and nobody seemed to have time to think of the poor little girl who sat up there all alone, tealess and miserable. Not that Bessie cared about tea, for she was neither hungry nor thirsty, but she felt it hard that every one else should be so merry while she was unhappy. And again, and again, she wondered who could have been so wicked as to break the pitcher, and bring all this sorrow upon her.

When it grew dusk her aunt brought up a slice of dry bread and desired her to eat it

and go to bed. Bessie obeyed, crying all the while, for it was the first time, since she came to live with her, that her aunt had parted from her at night without bidding her good night kindly and kissing her. However much she might have displeased her, Mrs. Hallet had hitherto always forgiven her soon, and she now felt the difference.

So Bessie went to bed, and though she was not asleep when her two cousins, who shared the room, came up, she lay so still that they thought she slept, for she felt too vexed and sad at heart to speak to them. And they talked together so cheerfully, and laughed so gaily (though it was low, not to awaken her), that it made her heart heavier and sadder still. It made poor Bessie Lee also feel more than she had ever done before, since her first arrival among them, that she was nothing to any of them compared with what they were to each other, and that she must be very amiable and very good if she would hope that her aunt, and uncle, and cousins, should love her. For they all loved each other naturally ; but she had no



father or mother to love her even if she did wrong, and no brothers and sisters to be grieved when she was unhappy.

But what Bessie Lee felt as a little girl, is merely what every one is made to learn as he or she grows older, and begins to mix with the world in general. For it is only our nearest relatives who will look over our faults and love us in spite of them : other people are equally ready to like or dislike us as we give them cause. But Bessie thought it very hard, that when she was doing her best to be good she should be treated as if he were not worth any one's caring about.

Next morning her uncle spoke to her very seriously, and told her how wicked it was to tell a falsehood, and how sorry he was to find she had done so ; promising, at the same time, her aunt's forgiveness as well as his own if she would now acknowledge her fault and tell the truth.

Perhaps if Bessie had then tried gently and earnestly to convince her uncle that she had already told the truth, and had related simply and

distinctly all she knew about how the pitcher chanced to be broken, he might have believed her. But she had come to the conclusion that she had been very ill-treated in not being believed at once, and was rather inclined to be sullen this morning on finding herself lectured afresh ; so that there appeared more of obstinacy than truthfulness in her manner of asserting that she had told her aunt the truth the day before.

The consequence was, that her uncle did not credit a word she said, and went out, after telling his wife that Bessie seemed incorrigible, and that they must punish her severely, both to prevent her again doing the same, and as an example to their own children, who might otherwise learn, when they had done wrong, the dreadful habit of telling falsehoods to avoid being found fault with.

Bessie heard him say all this, and crept away into a corner to cry ; and when one of her little cousins came up to her and asked what was the matter, her aunt told the child to go away, for that she was a very naughty girl, and he must not speak to her.

Mrs. Hallet had accustomed all the children, who were old enough to be of use, to help her in putting her house to rights every morning, and Bessie was generally the most active and busiest among them. But this morning, when she began as usual, her aunt bade her leave off, for she did not want any storytellers to help her. So Bessie had to sit down quietly to her knitting, at which she wrought as hard as possible, anxious to show diligence in something. But nobody took the least notice of her industry.

All that day, and all the next, Bessie felt very lonely and unhappy. At meal-times she was called to take her place, and helped the same as her cousins to whatever was on the table. No difference was made in this respect between her and the other children; but her uncle and aunt never spoke to her or took any notice of her at other times, and her cousins were not allowed to play with her.

The worst of all this was, as poor Bessie felt, that it showed how much her uncle and aunt must be displeased with her for persisting, as

they believed she was doing, in a falsehood ; and she wondered whether they would ever like her again, or believe what she said, as they used to do. Once or twice she was almost inclined to wish that she had really told a falsehood, and owned to breaking the pitcher when her aunt insisted she had done it ; and the poor little girl, in her loneliness and grief at seeing herself so ill thought of and avoided, felt tempted to say now that she had broken the pitcher and told the story.

But her mother, who was not a twelvemonth dead, had taken great pains to teach her all that was good, and had carefully impressed on her the propriety and necessity of scrupulously telling the truth at all times and under all circumstances. And Bessie Lee had as great an aversion to a falsehood as either Mr. or Mrs. Hallet. She knew that it was both wicked and contemptible ; and so, in spite of the great temptation she felt to escape undeserved punishment by owning to a fault she had not committed, she had the courage to persist in the truth, and bear patiently all the

unkindness and contempt with which she was treated.

Two days passed in this manner. On the third, there was to be a fair held two or three miles distance. This was not, like the generality of fairs, a place crowded with low people and tipsy men, where respectable persons have very little inclination to go. There was no noise nor disturbance in it, but plenty of nice stalls with beautiful toys and pretty things, such as they have at the bazaars, together with ribands and all sorts of finery to please the farmers' wives and daughters who used to come to buy at it, for the place was far from any large town.

The ladies also who lived near used to take their children to walk through the fair. And there were many poorer people to be seen there, too, but that did not prevent their being respectable. And though, of course, they might have done much better by staying at home to work as usual, still it is not agreeable to be always working, any more than for children to be always studying without any recreation, and

the young people have much the best of it, for many of these poorer fair-goers were in the habit of working hard six days every week, and had scarcely another holiday all through the year.

Bessie had heard a great deal about this fair from her cousins, who had never in all their lives seen any other things so fine as they had seen there, and neither had she beheld anything so fine as they told her of. And she had been so delighted to learn that they were all going to the fair this year, and had counted so greatly on the pleasure it would give her, that she was ashamed to tell even her cousins how much she thought about it.

But this morning she got up wondering how it was to be, and whether after all she was to go.

She was not long left in doubt. As soon as breakfast was over and cleared away, Mrs. Hallet told her two eldest daughters to go up and dress themselves while she got the younger children ready.

“Come along Bessie,” cried Marry Hallet.

"No, Bessie need not," said Mrs. Hallet; "for she is not going with us."

Bessie, who had been on her way to the door on her cousin's summons, stopped short now and hung down her head.

"Never mind, Bessie," whispered the second girl Annie, "never mind, we'll bring you a nice present back with us."

But her father overheard, and said, "No, we shall not do anything of the sort. If Bessie wished for amusement and presents like other people, she knew what to do. But I am determined not to encourage obstinacy. However, I hope that all this will prove a sufficient lesson for her, and that in future she will behave so that her aunt and I can treat her with the affection which we would willingly show her."

Her uncle spoke very gravely, and Bessie got into her usual corner and cried quietly to herself, partly at his remarks on her, and partly from disappointment. But by the time the party were all dressed and ready to set out, she had dried her eyes and tried to look as composed as she could.

Before they went, her aunt said to her more kindly than usual, "Now take care of the house and of yourself while we are away. I have put some cold meat and bread already cut, in a plate in the cupboard, for your dinner. And see that you have the kettle boiling, and a nice fire ready, when we come home, for we shall get no dinner to-day, and shall want something to eat with our tea."

"Yes, aunt," said Bessie, as steadily as she could. And she was very brave, and never shed a tear until they were all out of sight, but then she cried very bitterly.

And then I am not sure but what Bessie Lee for a little while thought that it would have been better to have told a falsehood, than to be accused of telling one, and punished for keeping to the truth. For, after all, she said to herself, what was the good of doing right, if it only made people scold you and believe that you did wrong? And if she had told the story she might have been with her cousins going to see all the beautiful things they told her of, and, more than all, she would have gone



with them to look at the wild beasts, of which there was to be a good collection at the fair, and Bessie Lee had never seen a lion, a tiger, or an elephant, except in pictures, but they were all in the menagerie which her cousins would go and see, and she had so longed to see an elephant.

But it was only for a little while that Bessie Lee thought this, for she knew and loved truth far too well. And then she began to remember how her mother had taught her to speak the truth and try to be good, no matter what should happen to her, for that God sees all we do, and knows all we think, and no one who does wrong wilfully can be happy. This she felt was very true, for had she been with her cousins, dressed in her Sunday clothes as they were, and going to see all they expected to find that was strange and beautiful to look at, she should not have been happy. For she should have felt ashamed and angry with herself, and conscious that all was gained by telling a falsehood, for which she deserved punishment instead.

And was it not much better to be punished without deserving it, and to feel that whoever might believe that she had done wrong, God knew she had done right? So little Bessie Lee thought, and as she thought and thought she began to feel quite satisfied and happy in the consciousness that her Heavenly Father approved of her conduct.

It seemed a long day to the little girl left alone at the cottage. Yet it was more cheerful than yesterday or the day before, for it was pleasanter to be alone than to have people speaking to and looking at each other kindly, but taking no notice of her. And the sun was shining so gaily on the green fields round, and on the bright flowers in the little garden before the cottage, that it seemed to make her feel glad to look at them.

So Bessie brought out her knitting and sat in the pleasant sunshine, and as her fingers moved busily she went on thinking more cheerfully than she had yet been able to do under the pressure of unmerited disgrace, and more sensibly too, for all the anger against her uncle

and aunt, which she had been carefully nursing up during the last two days, died gradually away, as she owned to herself that it was no wonder that they should have misjudged her as they had done. For she had been so very careless and unfortunate in breaking things, and her story about the pitcher was so unlikely, that it was perhaps natural they should suppose it false, as they had not known her long enough to be sure that she never told falsehoods. But by and by, Bessie thought, if she was always good and truthful as she meant to be, they might believe that after all she had spoken the truth on that occasion also.

This was a pleasant thought to the little girl, and it made her heart grow lighter, until at length she found herself singing gaily for the first time since that unfortunate visit to the fountain. And so, as I have said, the day was a cheerful one to Bessie; and though she often wondered what her cousins were then doing, and if they were enjoying any pleasure she should have especially prized, it was without any envy of their enjoyment, or foolish repining because she did not share it.

As the evening drew on, dark clouds began to gather in the sky which had been so beautifully clear. The wind also rose, and swept along in noisy gusts, which whirled the dust of the highroad into the air.

"I think there will be a storm," said Bessie to herself. "I hope they will get home before it comes on."

And then for the twentieth time she ran into the house to see after the fire, and look at the preparations she had made for their return. She had, indeed, made all as nice as ever she could. She had fresh swept the floor, and whitened the hearth, and dusted and arranged everything, and set the table already for tea, as neatly as possible; and you would have wondered how so humble a room could look so comfortable and pleasant as that did when she had put it all to rights. Bessie found something more to do even now, she was so anxious that they should find everything right this evening when they came home.

When she came out again the clouds had gathered over one third of the sky, their deep

leaden hue contrasting darkly with the bright blue of the rest of the sky. She sat down to watch the clouds, they rose higher and higher, spreading every minute more and more over the sky. The storm was evidently coming quickly—more quickly than Bessie by any means liked, for she felt half frightened at the thought of being alone in the cottage during a thunder-storm,—a silly fear, for what difference could the company of other people make to her? and she was sorry, besides, to think her relatives might be exposed to all its fury on the road. How anxiously she wished they would come before it commenced.

At length large, heavy drops of rain fell all round, clattering on the roof and trees and pailings. Bessie was just going to run in from the gate where she had posted herself, when she caught sight of those she was looking for. She clapped her hands with delight, but then stood quite quiet as she remembered her being in disgrace. On they came, running as fast as they could, and her uncle as he passed bade her come in, and before the rain had time to

wet any of them they were all safe in the room, which with its bright fire and neatly arranged tea-table, looked very cheerful after the threatening gloom out-of-doors.

"How nice and comfortable everything looks!" said Mrs. Hallet, as she took off her bonnet and shawl, and shook the rain from them. "You are a good girl, Bessie, to have got all so nicely ready."

These kind words made Bessie feel quite happy, but she did not say anything as she set to work to help in taking off her little cousins' things. Her cousins were all in a flutter about what they had seen, only Mary and Annie did not talk so much of it for fear of vexing Bessie, but the little ones kept saying,—

"Oh, Bessie, we have seen such beautiful dolls dressed just like queens and great ladies."

"And such nice gingerbread, Bessie, all made into castles, and horses, and lambs!"

"And we've seen such pretty funny little monkeys; I wish we could have brought one home to play with. And such a great big elephant; wasn't it a big one, Mary?"

"Never mind about it; see, we're going to have some gingerbread nuts for tea," said the good-natured Mary, as she emptied the contents of a paper bag into a plate, for she was afraid Bessie might be vexed.

But Bessie was not vexed. She should have liked to see the elephant and the monkeys, but was too well satisfied with having done what was right to feel vexed about what she had lost by it.

The storm which they had half forgotten now burst over them in earnest. Vivid lightning now shot from the dark clouds in quick successive flashes, and thunder roared and rattled loudly overhead. Just then a carriage was driving along the road, and as it came in front of the cottage, the horses, alarmed by the lightning, suddenly became violent and unmanageable. The footman had sprung down and run to the heads of the horses, as Bessie observed them, and her uncle, seeing also what was the matter, ran out to assist in holding them.

But the horses could not be quieted, and it

was found requisite to take them from the carriage and lead them away. A lady with two boys was in the carriage. The lady had been a good deal frightened, and willingly accepted the invitation of Mrs. Hallet, who had gone out in the rain to ask her to walk into her cottage during the thunder-storm.

The lady appeared quite pleased at the comfortable appearance of the room she entered, and the nicely-dressed children she found there; for though Bessie Lee was in her every-day frock, her hair was so smoothly arranged and she was altogether so neat that she looked as nice as her cousins. Then the lady talked to them and learned that they had just returned from the fair, and asked them questions about how they liked it, but when Bessie was asked, she had to reply she had not been there.

"What not been there?" and the lady looked surprised.

"No, ma'am," said Mrs. Hallet; "Bessie has been a naughty girl, and was not allowed to go. But she is not going to be naughty any more," she added, stooping to kiss her niece,



who had turned very red with shame and held down her head.

The lady took no more notice of the matter, but Bessie felt exceedingly vexed, and she stood for some time looking at the rain falling and the lightning flashing, without attending to what was said, until she heard one of the young gentlemen whisper to the other, "It is she, I am sure it is."

"Yes, I see it is," replied the other. "Are you not," said he to Bessie, "the little girl whose pitcher I broke at the spring the other day?"

"What, sir!" said Hallet, quickly, "did you break it?"

"Why, yes, I only meant to hit her bonnet, but the stone struck the pitcher."

"Then her account was true, after all! As she did not know who had done it, we did not believe her, and punished her for telling stories."

Walter Clayton looked very foolish. "I—I had no money that day, and so did not like to speak to her," he stammered; "but I wished to see her when I had money to pay her for it."

"I don't want your money, sir," replied Hallet. "It was not the worth of the pitcher my wife or I cared about, it was the idea that our niece had told a falsehood about anything, if it was not of the value of a crooked pin. And though you had no money, do you not think it might have been better for a young gentleman like you to have come forward and said you had done the mischief, than to leave all the blame to fall upon a poor little girl, who has been kept in disgrace ever since, and left at home to-day as a punishment for telling a story."

The boy blushed deeply, for he saw that Hallet would have said more but for the presence of Walter's mother.

"I am very sorry," said Walter, "but do let me pay for it now."

"No, sir," said Hallet; "I have told you I don't want your money, I only wanted to know the truth."

"You are quite right," said Mrs. Clayton, who had sat listening to all in silence. "I hope," she continued, addressing her son, "that

this will teach you that you may do mischief which money cannot remedy, as you seem always to fancy it can. And I trust it will also show you how much sorrow you may bring upon other people by your heedless love of sport."

Mrs. Clayton said this because she knew Walter well enough to guess how it had all happened. She then called Bessie to her, and spoke kindly to her, and praised her for persisting in the truth, as she heard she had done. And when the storm was over, and Mrs. Clayton drove off in her carriage, to which fresh horses had been put, she promised she would come in the morning and take Bessie to the fair to make up for that day's unmerited disappointment.

How happy Bessie felt that evening, and how much her uncle and aunt and cousins made of her. And how glad she felt that she had not told a falsehood, for if she had it would have been discovered now, and she should have been so ashamed!

And the next day was very happy also.

Mrs. Clayton called for her as she had promised, and on the way talked to her and questioned her kindly, and Bessie's heart was quite opened by the lady's goodness, and she told all that she had felt and thought during the last three days, without ever thinking what Walter Clayton might feel about it until she noticed his gloomy face, and then she regretted her thoughtlessness.

"Nay, don't be sorry about it now," said the good little girl timidly, "I did not mean to vex you."

"I know you did not," said Walter. "But I was thinking that I would try and never do anything again which should cause any one so much trouble and distress."

Mrs. Clayton smiled approvingly, for she saw that Walter was sincere in what he said. But they had arrived now, and there was no more time for talking. And now Bessie was taken to see the elephant, lion, and all the other wild animals, about which she had read sufficient to make her curious. And she saw many other things also which she had never

seen before, but Mrs. Clayton's kindness gave her more pleasure than anything there, or even the beautiful presents that lady bought for her.

Then, after a delightful drive back, Bessie was set down again at her own home. And how affectionately her aunt and cousins received her, as though she had been absent for days instead of two or three hours, for they were desirous to make up to her for past unkindness.

And how the young people gazed in wondering admiration at the pretty things which were handed out of the carriage. All were for Bessie, except a handsome jug which Mrs. Clayton had brought Mrs. Hallet in place of the pitcher her son had broken. Walter had begged very hard to be allowed to buy it himself, but his mother would not permit him. She preferred to let him feel that the only amends he could make was by telling the truth as he had done already, and teach him that it is impossible for money to compensate for the sufferings which heedless folly may occasion.



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