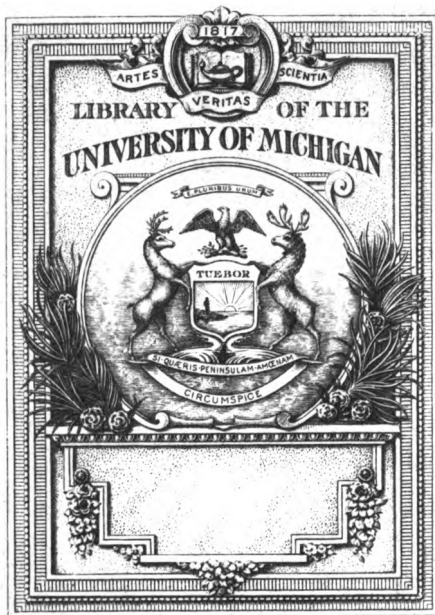


Henry Kelsey.



THE GIFT OF
W.K.Kelsey

Chaque-à-la
St. Louis, Mo.,
Dec 25, 1880.

Alden, Isabella (Macdonald)

GRANDPA'S DARLINGS.

BY
PANSY.

AUTHOR OF "THREE PEOPLE," "ESTER RIED,"
"JULIA RIED," "WISE AND OTHERWISE,"
"HOUSEHOLD PUZZLES," ETC.

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For Call
W. R. Kelley
10-27-43

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GRANDPA'S DARLINGS.



CHAPTER I.

"SEEPINS."

IT was a queer looking room. Auntie Julia had swept and dusted it, and done her best to give it a cleared-up air, but it didn't look cleared up a bit. In the first place the little round table was out of place, drawn up before the fire, and then it had strange articles on it for a sitting-room table; there was a little bit of a hair brush, about six inches long, handle and all, and in it the very tiniest specimen of a fine comb that you ever saw. Oh, it wasn't as long as your littlest finger; there was a little white silk heart, stuck

full of bits of pins, and for these things the books and papers were pushed one side, as if they were of no consequence ; then I think there was something on every chair in the room. I know there was a white cloak, very long, and lined with blue, and the funniest little speck of a white silk bonnet, about large enough for the cat, lying in the large rocking-chair. Then on the sofa-chair, which was drawn up before the fire, was a wonderful little heap of flannel, and cambric, and lace. Another chair did duty as a towel-rack, for there were to be unusual proceedings in the sitting-room that morning ; but the low rocker contained the sum and substance of all this disturbance— a crowing, dancing, laughing baby, with great, beautiful eyes, and wonderful, long eyelashes ; not a large baby, nor yet a small one ; at least, not a very young one, but she was dainty enough in size to have answered very well for a large wax doll, only I should pity the poor little hands that should hold this springy, fluttering doll, in one place, for one minute at a time.

Dear me! how she kicked, and crowed, and spat her mites of hands together, as one troublesome garment after another fell off.

Baby didn't believe in clothes; she generally yelled when they were being put on, and fairly chuckled when the last pin was drawn out, and the fair limbs were free and light. Gradually the company gathered to see the performance — grandma and aunties. Generally, baby was dressed in her own room, but on this particular morning her fire had gone out, and the room grew chilly, so mamma and all the aunties had been rushing up and down stairs, making ready the sitting-room for her royal highness.

Grandma had to be waited for a little; she was in the kitchen, with the sharp knife and two fat chickens; but presently she came, and baby was dumped into her bath tub. Ah, you should have seen her then; such a kicking, and splashing, and splattering, and yelling as there was! She had several little accomplishments; one was to toss water at us, with her two tiny hands, and

another, to put up her sweet rose-bud lips, all dripping with water, as if to kiss you; and when you had almost got the precious kiss, suddenly to draw back and bury her round wet head in mamma's lap. What a baby she was, and what a long process the dressing was, to be sure; with first one auntie and then another to claim a kiss, with baby in her little skirts to insist on going that minute to grandma for a frolic, without waiting for her dress, which, to tell you the truth, she never liked. If her plump little doubled-up fists were coaxed into the embroidered sleeves without my lady's giving a good loud yell or two, we considered that there had been a triumph. Then we had the usual discussion as to whom she looked like.

"I declare!" grandma would say, "I never noticed before that her eyes were so much like Isabella's."

Then I: "Oh, mother, how can you think so? They're exactly like her papa's."

Then Auntie Julia: "Oh, nonsense! They

are not like anybody's eyes that ever *I* saw before.”

Then mamma: “They are very sleepy eyes, and I want her to have her walk before she sleeps.”

Then there was a rush for the white cloak and the cat's bonnet, and such a squirming, and kicking, and squealing as there was, before that bonnet was tied under the ridiculous little chin. Grandma danced up and down, and clapped her hands; Auntie Julia knocked on the window, and rattled the string of spools, and blew on the whistle; I barked like a dog, and peeped like a chicken, and crowed like a rooster, and mewed like a cat, and at last she was ready, and I carried her off in triumph.

I'll not tell you about our walk — it would take too long, but in due time we returned, and found the sitting-room restored to order, and mamma in the sewing-room, finishing an important dress for our important baby. From her presently came a request.

"*Would* Auntie Belle get baby to sleep? Mamma is in such a hurry."

Ah! *would* I?—that was the question. I would *try*; but nothing certainly looked more improbable than that those great, dark, wondering eyes would shut, and that busy little head that bobbed so restlessly on my shoulder would consent to lie quiet in the crib. Still there was nothing like trying, and I distinctly remember that I *tried*. At first we sat by the window, but baby worked industriously at catching the one fly that buzzed there; then when I had disposed of him, she bent all her energies on catching a sunbeam that was playing with the leaves outside and their shadow within. I meekly drew down the shade, changed my seat, and tried again.

I sang a song so sleepy and soft that I thought she could not resist it. I fitted words to it as I sang, about the door, the floor, the light, the night—anything to keep my tongue steadily moving, and when I had completed the twenty-seventh verse, her eyes shone like stars, and the

head cuddled in my neck, and bobbed as vigorously as ever. Then I tried quick music, and the result was that the head came round to my face, and presently two baby hands were pulling earnestly at my mouth, and as I opened it to laugh, the wondering eyes looked eagerly down my throat. Evidently she was looking for my tune. She wanted to seize it in her baby fingers, and pick it to pieces.

Oh, foolish little darling! Working so busily to catch the shadow of a few leaves on the carpet, and failing in that, to try to pick from my throat the poor little tune, instead of doing your duty, and going to sleep!

I looked in despair at my writing materials on the table, for I was a writer of books then as now, and I may as well tell you just here, that this same baby of which I write now spends long hours curled up in some out-of-the-way corner, reading my books; but she did not care that day whether there was ever another book written or not. I laid her flat on her back, and softly

trotted her, at which she laughed merrily. I put her over my left shoulder, and she reached after the curtain tassel, and swung it gleefully. I tried the right shoulder, and she clutched at a handful of my hair with a yell of delight. I said:

“Oh, baby! baby! What *shall* I do with you?” and she answered:

“Agoo-ba-ba-mam-mam-mam-gah-yah-agoo-o,” drawing out the “oos” with great satisfaction.

At last she succumbed, the fringed lids drooped, and the little hands relaxed. I sang softly, more softly, and softer still, and presently went with cat-like tread, and laid her in the crib. With what care I tucked her in, and how carefully I turned to tiptoe away, when, to my dismay, I heard a low musical “Agoo.”

Oh, the naughty darling! How she tried my patience that day! There was another siege with the fly, the tassel, the hair, and with the card-receiver and the inkstand added thereto; then another, and I said, “A *real* victory this time, surely!”

Another trip to the crib, and a tucking up. Then grandma came on tiptoe, and whispered :

“Is she asleep at last?”

“I should hope so.”

“I don’t believe she is. Her eyes don’t look shut.”

“She *is*. She has cheated me once, but it is real this time.”

“She isn’t. There is a roguish pucker to her mouth.”

And at that particular moment the wicked little sprite opened wide her dancing eyes, and laughed the merriest of laughs.

“Well, now, you may *lie* there,” I said, emphatically. “You are a naughty little Brownie and I shall not take you up again.”

And I walked away and left her, and she kicked, and chuckled, and played “Bo peep” at me with the corner of the blanket, but I wrote on, unheeding.

By and by there came a yawn, and when I looked that way again, one little pink arm was

tossed over her head, the other still reached out for her blanket, but the eyes were soundly and sleepily shut, and the soft, regular breaths showed that she had gotten herself to sleep.

In vain, after that, did I try to continue my story. Quiet reigned, but I could not write. The baby had bewitched me. I fell to conjecturing what the thoughts were that kept her busy brain awake so long.

Finally I wrote out the result of my conjectures. I have read it to her since, and she says I am undoubtedly correct. I will copy it here to solace other troubled aunties.

“‘By O baby.’ That’s what my auntie sings, over and over. I know what that means; it means shut your eyes and go to sleep. But I can’t go to sleep; my eyes won’t stay shut; they fly right open. Why don’t auntie pin them, I wonder? She pins her collar on. Pins scratch; I scratched my finger one day. I wonder, would they scratch my eyes? Then why don’t they scratch my auntie’s collar? There’s a fly; he

creeps all over the window. I wish auntie would rock him to sleep. Maybe he could go ‘by-by;’ I can’t. He says ‘z-z z z’ all the time. I tried to pick the sunshine off the carpet. I got my hand all full, but it slipped away. I want the sun; I never had it; I told auntie to get it for me, but she didn’t understand. Auntie don’t understand very well; nobody does. The sun is bright; so is the fire. I wanted the fire last night; mamma wouldn’t let me have it; people won’t let me have anything. There’s a green tassel; I pulled it; I pulled auntie’s hair, too; auntie squealed; the tassel didn’t squeal; it don’t speak at all; I wonder why? Maybe it hasn’t any mouth; but the fly hasn’t any either, and it speaks.

“I am awful tired, but I can’t seepins. Auntie put me in the crib once, because I shut my eyes to rest them, but then I opened them again right away, because I don’t like my crib; it don’t sing; auntie keeps sings in her mouth; I looked in it, but I didn’t see them; but they are there. I

wish the pussy cat would come in ; I wish that old song was all gone. I don't think it's pretty. I wish mamma would come, or grandma, or something. There's the ink in that round box. Auntie writes ; I want to write ; I can ; I tried once, and it wrieded just like auntie. I'll snatch at it ; I didn't get it ; auntie held me tight ; they always do, when I want things. Then I squealed, and she moved her chair away from all the pretty things.

"I'm in my crib now ; there's nothing to do. Auntie's gone ; she don't love me, 'cause I don't go 'by-by' ; but I can't. Auntie is writing with a bright yellow stick ; the stick says, 'st-st-st,' and makes little marks ; it talks like the fly, some ; but I don't know what it says. Why don't my crib sing to me ? it don't have any mouth to keep sings in ; I've got a mouth ; I can sing ; I'll sing to myself — 'Ah-ah-ah-ah !' that's my sleepy song. Now I guess it's night ; my eyes 'most shut up ; I can sing myself seepins — 'Ah-ah-ah-ah !' I guess I'm all asleep ; when I wake up I'll tip that

pitcher over, and see the water run away from me ; I know just how I can do it. There's a pin on the floor ; when I get up, I'll pick at it, and put it in my mouth ; I always put pins in my mouth. I want to feel of the bright light that they have when it gets dark ; I'm going to do it to-night. There's a book ; books talk when you tear them ; they say, 'sk-sk-sk ;' I'll tear that into little bits when I wake up ; then I'll put the bits in my mouth ; I always do. Now I'm gone ; by-by. I'm good baby now.”





CHAPTER II.

GOING TO CHURCH.

ONE day we took her to church — her very first appearance there. I dressed her myself; and it seemed to me I should never, *never* get all the funny little skirts and dress and things on right-side-out, and buttoned and pinned and tied to my satisfaction; then the crowning act of triumph was to get the dainty white hat tied under her chin. Throughout the process she capered and danced and crowed and chattered. To go to church was something for which her little soul had longed ever since she had balanced herself on her toes in the big chair and watched

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the people pass on their way thither. At last we were started, not without many anxious injunctions from mamma, who was to follow us a few minutes later. Her parting sentence, given between the last two or three kisses, was:

“Now, Minie will remember not to speak a word when the minister stands up in the pulpit. He will talk, you know, and Minie will not speak a word, will she?”

And Minie's answer was slow and impressive:

“No, indeed, not at all. When the minister speaks Minie will keep *just as still.*”

Fairly seated in the great church, with the solemn-toned organ pealing through the building, surprise and awe kept the little midget very quiet; pretty little pink flushes came and went on her fair face, and her lips were parted in the eagerness of listening and looking, for the people were coming in one constant procession past our seat. Ever and anon Minie caught glimpses of a familiar face; but the awe was upon her still, and beyond lifting up a small fore finger and

solemnly pointing it at them she made no demonstration. Presently came the home faces, grandma and grandpa, and papa and mamma, and aunties — one, two, three.

Now grandma had chosen this unfortunate Sunday in which to appear in a new bonnet, in the soft white border of which there nestled one wee pink flower, so dainty and perfect that Minie's absurd little nose was all in a tremble to smell of it. The organ had softened into the lowest and tenderest of trembles; plenty of friends surrounded Minie, faces that she always saw about her; somewhat of the strangeness had worn away; she looked about her eagerly, the minister was certainly not speaking; to her short-sighted vision he was nowhere to be seen. She spoke in breathless haste lest he might get ready to speak before she finished:

“Oh, grandma, grandma! hold down your head quick, and let me smell the posy.”

Then such a shaking of heads and whispering as followed! Mamma even gave *her* a little bit

of a shake, and took her quite away from my protecting arms and set her down firmly on the seat beside herself. She did get one smell, though. As she was whisked past the beautiful flower she snuffed up her little nose with a noise that even the minister must have heard. There was a sudden putting of handkerchiefs to people's mouths, and a good deal of unnecessary coughing done.

The minister for that particular Sunday was no other than the little lady's "Uncle Sharlie," which accounted for her being there herself, everybody being so anxious to hear him that we *almost could* not stay at home to look after midget. She settled into absolute quiet and looked up at the pulpit with a face as wise as an owl's. So perfect was she that her mamma, beguiled into forgetfulness, relaxed the hold of her little hand, and we all gave undivided attention to "Uncle Sharlie" for the space of five minutes. I think it was all that any of us heard of *that* sermon.

Taking advantage of our trust in her goodness, the small sprite slipped suddenly and silently from her seat, and in another second had glided past two astonished aunties, and was marching solemnly down the aisle.

Mamma looked at grandma the picture of despair, and telegraphed her a question, to which grandma shook her head. The question asked was: "Shall I try to catch her?" And grandma's eyes and head said: "No, no! You know she will squeal like a little Indian if you try to; perhaps she will be quiet." Those dreadful squeals, shrill as bugles, that the naughty little maiden was in the habit of giving over things that did not suit, kept us all meekly in our seats, using our fans vigorously to keep down the rising blood, and waiting for what would come next.

Very softly the slippered feet moved down the carpeted aisle — no cat could have done it better. Now and then she stopped when she saw a familiar face to make a call; occasionally she took a seat on some foot-stool, and looked industri-

ously for "*pictures*" in a hymn-book, then slipped out on her travels; occasionally she paused in her slow walk, and fixed her great wise eyes on the minister.

Every second I expected to hear her ringing voice peal out "Uncle Sharlie;" but no, the little lips were puckered into a determined silence, and after looking at him steadily for a moment or two she would move quietly on. As she neared the pulpit our hearts fairly stopped beating. What, oh, *what* should we do if she should take a fancy to mount the steps and pay "Uncle Sharlie" a visit? The squeals must be endured in that case, and the wee culprit be carried out of church. I almost saw her little feet kicking in a frantic attempt to get away, but I closed my fan and put up my Bible, making ready to start at a minute's notice. She would go quietly with me if she would with any one. But her good genius must have walked beside her just then. She paused by the pulpit steps; she even put one tiny foot on the first stair, but as quickly drew it

back, and slipped silently across the church to the other side, and continued her social visits here and there.

I hope "Uncle Sharlie" will never again preach so long a sermon as he did that day; at least so long a one as it seemed to me. Why, I thought it must have been hours since she first began to walk softly through that great church. I wore my fan out, and midget's mamma bit a hole in the corner of hers, and grandma mopped her face every two minutes with her handkerchief, and unpinned her lace shawl. It was not so much what the little morsel *did*—she was quiet enough—a mouse would have made more noise; but there was all the time the wonderment as to what she *would* do next.

At last the sermon was ended, "Uncle Sharlie" sat down, and the pastor arose and read the closing hymn. Meantime midget made a call on a solemn old gentleman, who looked at her sternly through his glasses. When the organ rolled its voice through the church she started

and turned around — not a familiar face was near her ; she stood on tiptoe and looked up and down the aisle. Her mamma gave me a despairing nod, and whispered :

“She’ll cry now. I mean to go for her.”

“No, she won’t,” whispered grandma. “Let her alone. I want to see what she *will* do.”

What she did was to come with swift, silent steps up the aisle, around the corner seat, with a very sober face, until she caught a glimpse of “Uncle Sharlie” in the pulpit, then she subsided into her jog trot again — she had discovered a friend. Just as the minister had reached the “Amen” of the benediction her naughty little feet stepped into grandpa’s pew, and recognizing in the rustle and bustle and whispering all about her that the hour of silence was over, she looked up at mamma with a serene face, and said :

“I didn’t speak a word, not a single word at all, did I, mamma?”

What a grieved, astonished pucker her lips put

●

on as mamma nervously grasped her hand, and said :

“Speak a word ! you little midget. You might as well have spoken twenty words.”

At home we all sat down with our hats and sacks still on to rest and breathe after the morning's excitement. Mamma fanned herself with great energy.

“I declare,” she said, “I haven't had such a sweat this summer. Did you ever see anything like it?”

“I expected every minute that she would take the preaching into her own hands,” said “Uncle Sharlie.”

“I thought she would go and make you a call,” said grandma. “She looked it out of her eyes.”

“I'm only too thankful that she didn't squeal,” said I, tugging at my glove that was wet and would not come off.

Under all this fire of comment Minie sat on grandpa's lap, where she had taken refuge, look-

ing with wondering eyes from one to the other, and speaking only the one sentence over and over again :

“I didn’t speak a word, not a word at all, *did* I, grandpa?”

“Not a word,” said grandpa, hugging his darling close to his heart. “You did the best you knew how, and that is what can’t be said of everybody. They told you you mustn’t make speeches, and you remembered it. Next time maybe they will think to teach you that you mustn’t take walks. Meantime see if we all succeed in doing as well as she did—behaving the best we know how.”

Dear grandpa, there never was a time when he had not a shielding word for those who *intended* right.



CHAPTER III.

“MAKING BELIEVE.”

It was a summer morning, bright and clear, but yet it was cold. The sun was just peeping up behind the hills at our back door — not awake enough yet to warm the great earth that was waiting for him. Things had been astir at grandpa's for some time ; so they had been at the “other house.” The other house meaning Minie's home at the upper end of the garden. Grandma had gone very early to the other house, for there was a journey in prospect. A very early start was to be taken, and somehow no one in our family ever *could* get ready to do anything

without grandma's help. "Auntie Dule" and I had been left to get the breakfast, and she rattled the fire until the tea-kettle puffed, and the coffee bubbled, and the potatoes in the spider sissed; then, bidding me see that things didn't boil over or burn, she threw her apron over her head and ran up the hill. Just where I wanted to go! I hadn't seen my darling in twelve hours, and wished that people didn't have to eat breakfasts when they were going away, or that I didn't have to get them, or something.

Pretty soon "Auntie Dule" came down the hill faster than she had gone up, and burst in the kitchen door.

"They want you to come up and see if you can do anything with Minie," she said, as she jerked the bubbling coffee-pot to the corner of the stove; and added: "Those potatoes are burning. What a creature you are to get breakfast."

"What is the trouble with Minie?" I asked, anxiously, looking around for a bonnet.

"Oh, she is cross; won't let anybody touch

her. It is almost time for the stage, and she isn't dressed."

In three minutes more I stood in her mamma's room. Shall I ever forget the funny little figure that I found curled up in a great arm chair? One tiny arm and shoulder, slipped out from her white nightgown; the other, just ready to be slipped. Just so far had Minie's toilet progressed when the poor, sleepy darling roused to the thought that she was being dreadfully ill-treated, being waked up in the night, and picked out of her snug bed, and her pretty dream. She had been told every morning for years—so she thought—that she was "going away off to auntie's house one of these days," until the truth was she didn't believe a word of it—didn't believe there *was* any "auntie's house," and was heartily tired of the whole story. Such a pitiful little lip as was puckered up at me, and quivering voice said, pleadingly: "Auntie Belle *will* take Minie? She is tired, and sleepy, and cold." I sat down in a low

chair and gathered the queer little bundle into my big house apron, and, without a word of dressing, I began to tell a story about a wonderful kitten with brown tail and white feet, and somehow the kitten could only be found at auntie's house. Pretty soon I began to bathe the pretty little limbs and take away the ugly, chilled feeling with some vigorous rubbing: then, before she knew it, the ridiculous little skirts were going on, the kitten story continuing with increased interest. As I settled the dainty linen suit into place, my small lady roused to consciousness:

"Why, auntie, you are putting on my traveling dress!"

"Of course I am, darling. Don't I tell you that you are going to travel?"

She peeped out at the other room with shining eyes.

"And mamma is all dressed up," she said, eagerly; "and papa has his duster coat on, and

the big trunk is packed. Why, we're really, *truly* going! Why, I'm *so* delighted."

Then came "Auntie Dule" to get a glimpse of her darling.

"Oh," she said, as the trim little vision in braided linen suit and brown traveling boots caught her eye. "Dear me! you look so very nice, I'm afraid all the little boys will fall in love with you."

"Fall where?" asked our astonished little maiden.

This was new language to her. Instead of explaining, we all laughed at the amazed look in her eyes. She put her head on one side and thought; then a radiant smile broke over her face, and she said, eagerly :

"Auntie *Dule*, do you mean they will *love* me?"

Auntie nodded, and then Minie clapped her bits of hands together and said :

"Oh! Why, won't that be ever so nice?"

Which sentence she seemed to consider the height of proper language.

Meantime grandpa had come up, and at this point he took the small lady in his arms, saying, as he stood her on the center table to shake out her skirts:

"Little woman, did you ever hear of an old saying with five words in it: 'Handsome is that handsome does?'"

"How does that mean, grandpa?" the little woman asked, tilting her head on one side like a canary bird.

"It means that even the little boys, silly beings though they often are, will not love anybody who doesn't act very nice, no matter how pretty they look. You may be dressed in your nicest, and if you are cross, or selfish, or sullen, nobody will love you. Will you always remember that?"

"Um," said Minie. I don't know that that is quite the way to spell it, but it is as near as I can get to the word that she was fond of using

instead of Yes, sir. "Um, 'member it ever, always." Which was another sentence of her own making, which she seemed to think was very strong language. Grandpa laughed :

"See that you do," he said, in a tone which said : I presume you will forget all about it in an hour. "Now give me ten kisses and I'll carry you down to get some breakfast."

The kisses were given with a will, many a loving hug and pat thrown into the bargain. Minie loved her grandpa "much dearly," so she said, and truly she had reason. God never gave a better grandpa to any of his little ones than he gave to her. For the benefit of those who would like to know some things that she did while on her journey, I will copy a letter from her mamma :

DEAR GRANDMA:—We reached here safely last evening. Minie did not seem tired at all, and is as fresh as a bird this morning. She made a great many friends on the cars. People

came to borrow her every little while, and I could hear them laughing at what she said. I suspect she told some remarkable stories. I heard one of them. A gentleman sitting before us asked her to come and sit with him, and she went promptly enough.

“Can’t you go home with me and be my little girl?” he asked her.

“I don’t know,” she said, putting her head on one side, as if she were thinking about it. “Have you any mamma there for me?”

“No,” he said, laughing and blushing; “but I think I could hunt one up.”

“Oh!” she said, loftily. “Well, *mine is* hunted up, you see. I wouldn’t have to wait for her.”

After he got done laughing at that, he said:

“I’ve got an old yellow cat at home and two cunning little white kittens. I don’t believe you have any at your house.”

“Oh, yes I have,” she said, promptly. “I’ve got an old, cat and five little cunning kittens.

They are brown and white and gray, and oh, *all* colors."

"Indeed!" he said. "That *is* rather ahead of me. What can your kittens do?"

"Oh, play with their tails, you know, and run after a ball, and lots of things."

"Do you put them in the barn to sleep?"

"Oh, no!" she said, with a horrified air. "No indeed, *not at all*. I've got a little crib for them, and little sheets and pillows and everything; and I rock them to sleep in my arms every night. They've got cunning little white night-gowns and night-caps with lace on; mamma made them." Don't you think he must have thought her mamma was an idiot? He seemed wonderfully amused and kept asking questions; among others, "Do they sleep well all night?"

"Well, yes," Minie said, "most always; only one night they were sick, every one of them, and I had to sit up with them all night, and mamma gave them aconite and belladonna every two hours, and they got better." He laughed so

hard that he shook the seat, but he went on with his questions, “What in the world made them sick, do you think?”

“Oh,” said the ridiculous little mouse, “we didn’t know, but we most expected they had been eating tommytoes and pillarcats and flutterbys for their supper.”

“Eating what?” he asked, in great astonishment. At this point I, who had been listening in a kind of maze, thought it quite time to interfere.

“Why, Minie, Minie!” I said, leaning forward, “what dreadful nonsense are you telling the gentleman?”

“Why, mamma!” she said, turning her wondering little face to me, “I’m only making believe, you know.”

I took her on my lap and we tried to have a very grave talk. Do you believe I could make the queer little mouse understand that she had done wrong in telling such stories?

“They didn’t *mean* to be stories, mamma,” she

said again and again. "I was only playing that I had five kittens, and put them in a crib to sleep. I would if I had any; I think it would be real nice, don't you?"

"But, darling," I said, "the man didn't know you were playing; he thinks you really have five kitties."

"But, mamma, I know I was playing; I know it isn't true."

And I could not make her understand.

"Darling," I said, "see here. Suppose I should write to grandpa like this: 'Minie is very sick; I had to sit up with her all night; I give her medicine every two hours.' Would it be true?"

"No, ma'am," she said, promptly.

"But suppose I wrote to him the next day, and said, 'I was only playing that Minie was sick; she isn't sick at all.' Would that make it all right? Do you think grandpa would say we had done right to make them all so much sorrow and trouble just for play?"

She thought a minute, then she said: "But, mamma, the man didn't love my kitties; he didn't care whether they were sick or not. Mamma, I don't think I made him any trouble."

I hope you see how useful my illustration was.

After a good deal more talk I either partly convinced her, or else she thought she would put an end to the whole matter, for she suddenly leaned forward and said, in a clear, ringing voice:

"Man, man, I was only 'making believe,' you know. I haven't got any kitties; are your kitties make-believe ones, too? I never had any, and they sleep in the barn; I mean they would if I had any. Only we haven't got a barn, and I didn't mean to tell you stories. I was just 'playing,' and you musn't ever tell stories, ever at all; it's wicked, and Jesus won't love you a bit if you do. You don't ever do it, do you?" By this time everybody around us was laughing.

"Is it possible," the gentleman asked me, "that the child hasn't *any* kitten?"

"Never had one in her life," I told him, "except her play kittens, which certainly seemed as real to her as if they were alive."

"I should think so," he said. "She certainly has a vivid imagination. What in the world does she mean about their eating 'Tommytoes and pillarcats?'"

Then I had to tell him that story, over which he laughed, as though he might have a little one at home whose queer doings had taught him to be amused with the children.

This is only one of the many adventures that your darling had. I was thankful when I had herself and her absurd little tongue safe within the walls of Uncle "Sharly's" house.



CHAPTER IV.

REAL THINGS.

MINIE's little palate was a great trouble to us. It knew the taste of good things, and longed after them, and her pretty little tongue coaxed for them in a way that was heart-rending to refuse. But there were *so* many things that she could not eat, and no sooner was an article set down to that long list of things that made Minie sick than her perverse little stomach was seized with a desire for that thing, and nothing else. One of the dainties that she longed for was currants, and currants she could not eat. All sorts of devices were resorted to, to save the plaintive little face from growing sad over the

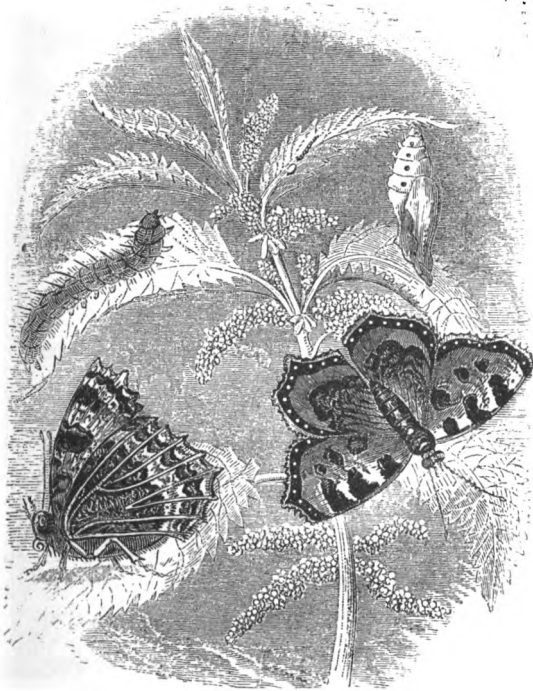
sight of the forbidden fruit. "Auntie Dule," particularly, was very wise in planning so that the baby might live in a perpetual state of forgetfulness over its existence; but it wasn't always easy, for her eyes were very bright and watchful.

On a certain summer afternoon, when the little lady was down at grandpa's, visiting, as it drew toward tea time "Auntie Dule" stole away, bowl in hand, to pick some currants for tea. Mimi was supposed to be going home before tea time, so her heart was not to be disturbed by the sight of them. Trot, trot, went the little feet across the kitchen floor, and just as "Auntie Dule's" sun-bonnet was vanishing through the door it was checked by a shrill voice:

"Auntie Dule, where is you going?"

"Oh," said auntie, hesitatingly, "to China, maybe."

Mimi didn't know where China was, but she had almost faith in her auntie, and, for ought she knew, China *might* be just outside the garden



"Flutterbys and Pillarcats." — Page 45.

gate; so she accepted the statement and went on:

“Well, what is you going to do with that bowl when you get to Sina?”

“Oh, dear me!” auntie said, growing puzzled. “Pick butterflies and caterpillars, maybe.”

“For tea!” said Minie, her eyes opening wide with startled horror.

“Aye, I guess so. Do you want some?”

Away flew Minie with her astonishing piece of news, through the kitchen, through the sitting-room, straight into her place of safety, grandma’s arms, her cheeks aglow, her voice trembling with excitement.

“Oh, grandma! grandma! Auntie Dule is gone *away* to Sina, to pick a bowl full of flutterbys and pillarcats for tea. *Do* people eat them, grandma?”

Meantime “Auntie Dule,” chuckling over the success of her surprising statement, escaped to the garden with her bowl.

This story was told to grandpa at the tea table

after Minie had gone home, with many descriptions of her shocked tones and looks, and much laughter. Only grandpa looked grave. When the laugh was over he said to "Auntie Dule :

"How many years do you suppose it will be before Minie will discover that you haven't told her the truth?"

"The truth!" said auntie, in surprise. "Why, of course it wasn't truth. I was only in fun, you know. Who ever supposed that the absurd little monkey would believe it?" and she laughed again at the thought.

"But you see she *did* believe it," grandpa said. "Believed it because you told it to her. She has great faith in your word, you see. I would be very careful not to give that faith a shock if I were you."

"Why, dear me!" auntie said, with puzzled face; "I never thought about its being anything serious. Don't you think it is right to say anything in *fun* to a child?"

"I don't think it is right to say anything but

the truth to any one," grandpa said, emphatically ;
"least of all to a *child*."

Under the impulse of this talk auntie took pains to explain to Minie, with great care, that China was not out under the apple tree, but a great way off ; that people did not eat "pillarcats and flutterbys;" and that, in short, she was only "making believe" in what she told her. Minie listened attentively, seemed to take in the idea and be satisfied.

It was not long afterward that the letter came from her mamma, about which I told you last week.

After we had read it and laughed over it, grandpa turned suddenly to "Auntie Dule" and asked: "Do you see the fruit of your own planting? Minie learned to 'make believe' out under the currant bushes, didn't she?"

We all took that home for a lesson, and after that tried to speak the exact truth to the queer little girl. And yet her ideas of things became very much mixed. For instance, she was very

fond of dogs, little curly blink-eyed creatures that waddled along the street, seeking for things to bark at. She knew I could hardly endure the sight of them, and she was very fond of me, and very anxious to secure my approval of everything that she said and did. One glowing summer day we took a walk, she in spotless white and charming silver-buckled slippers. As we turned down Fulton Street there came along one of those snarly wretches known as poodle dogs.

Minie was in a flutter of delight. She clapped her hands and called after him, "Doggy, dear doggy; wait a minute, till I see you better." He trotted on just ahead of us, and she expressed her satisfaction in every possible way. She even appealed to me to know if he wasn't a "darling." I said, "I guess so," in an absent sort of way; and in reply to other exclamations of pleasure gave sometimes a half answer, sometimes silence, until suddenly she turned from the dog and looked up into my face. I suppose I looked

grave, for my thoughts were miles away from there, and I was puzzled and troubled about some bit of business that did not want to go right. Poor Minie thought my sober face was all owing to her raptures over his dogship. Instantly she was her dignified little self, trying to make me understand that her heart was all right. "I don't love him a *bit*, Auntie Belle," she said, in a grave, earnest way that she had. "Not a single bit at all. No, *indeed*. Only — *he has got such a little cunning tail!*"

Oh, how grandpa laughed over that when I told him about it — laughed until he had to get out his handkerchief and wipe away the tears. "The world is full of just such people," he said, afterward. "I meet them every day of my life. They don't care for this fashion or that amusement, only — 'they *have* got such little cunning tails.'"

The saying passed into a proverb with our family, especially with grandpa. Whenever he heard any one trying to make a foolish apology

for something that they wanted to do, or somewhere they wanted to go—while they didn't want to have the *name* of caring for such things—he would be sure to say: "There's another dog that has a *little cunning tail*."

It is queer what a fashion people have for telling little bits of people what is not quite true, and of telling them to do ridiculous things that you don't mean them to do. These were things that, as you have seen, grandpa particularly disliked. Yet so natural does it seem to be to indulge in them, that once he was caught in just that way himself. They were going to New York—papa and mamma and Minie—and the small lady, all in a flutter of delight, was getting bits of errands to do for each of us; something nice that she was going to buy us—a collar for grandma, a "wuffle" for "Auntie Dule," a pencil for me; and "what for grandpa?" she asked, staying her dancing feet before him, and speaking gleefully. The carriage was at the door;

everybody was waiting. What should grandpa say?

“Oh,” he said, hastily, “a cigar, I guess.” Such a strange thing for grandpa to choose, who never touched a cigar, and didn’t like to have any one else touch them! Everybody laughed, understanding that for once in his life even grandpa was “making believe,” and everybody forgot that Minie was an earnest-hearted little woman who believed that people said what they meant, and meant what they said.

One day she went, dressed in her prettiest, down town for a promenade with Cousin Ed. Now, Cousin Ed. was a young gentleman who had much heart and much money, and the ways in which he filled Minie’s heart with comfort can not be told here. It would take too much room. The little maiden chose this particular time in which to do her shopping, and besides the collar and “wuffle,” and pencil, what was papa’s bewilderment to find stored among his freight a large size box of “choice Havana cigars!”

Gunpowder or brandy casks couldn't have surprised him more. But Minie was wisdom and gravity combined.

"Why, papa, I know all about it. It is my present for grandpa. Cousin Ed. bought it. My cigar, you know. Grandpa sent for it. I told Cousin Ed. so, and he said *one* wouldn't last long, and he would get the man to put in some more. Oh, my! what a many! I didn't think there would be such a many as that. Won't grandpa be pleased?"

"Won't grandpa be dumbfounded?" said papa, taking in the idea, and laughing loud and long. Wicked Cousin Ed. knew perfectly well that the grandpa at home hated the whole family of cigars and all their relations, though innocent little Minie did not.

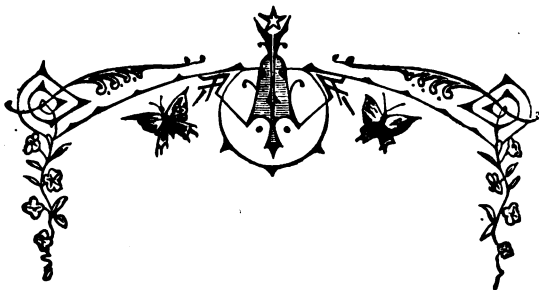
"Serves me right," said grandpa, after he could speak for laughing over his queer present. "Serves me just right. I had no business to tell the haby to bring me one. Only a little while since I lectured some of you about that very

thing, too. It only goes to show how determined we are that the pure-hearted little things shall grow to believe that everybody is 'making believe.'" Then he stooped and gathered the waiting little woman into his arms.

"Aren't you pleased, grandpa?" she said, with a little quiver of the lips. "Minie thought you would be."

"Yes," he said, pressing loving kisses on her lips, "grandpa is pleased with his little girl. She is a good, honest little woman. She does just as she promises to do, and is in real earnest about it all. Minie must do so always, and then she will be an honest big woman one of these days; and as for grandpa, he will try to help you after this every time."

Dear grandpa, there isn't a memory of Minie's young life that is not woven in with sweet thoughts about that precious, wise-hearted, faithful friend, who helped her "every time."



CHAPTER V.

SHOWERS AND SUNSHINE.

MINIE spent one very happy day in packing her trunk. That queer little trunk! I wish you could have seen it. It was the shape and color of papa's; had a lock and key, and leather strap—everything complete. But it was so little and cunning that even Minie could drag it around by the handle after it was packed.

Well, it was locked and strapped and marked; a card tacked on the end, like papa's, with Minie's full name and place of residence. Was she going a journey? Bless your heart, no. She was going down the garden walk to grand-

pa's, to spend a week, for papa and mamma were going to Buffalo. Such a time as we had getting that trunk packed to her satisfaction! She couldn't have been more particular if she had been a young lady getting ready for Saratoga or Long Branch.

At last everything was ready, and we stood on the steps, watching papa and mamma start. Minie's cheeks were pretty red; there were two tears in her eyes, and a hard lump in her throat. She kept swallowing and swallowing, and trying hard not to cry; and she didn't, for just at that happy moment who should drive up but grandpa, in the big wagon, and with the shop-boy beside him?

Out they both jumped. "Is this trunk ready?" asked grandpa, with a very business-like air; then they both took hold, grandpa at one end and the boy at the other — exactly as the carmen had just done with papa's; and Minie, very much interested, watched them place it in the wagon,

and in giving directions and cautions, as papa had done, forgot to cry.

For all that, it was a very sober little body who took hold of my hand, a few minutes afterward, and started on her journey down the garden. She gave me some good advice on the way.

“Auntie Belle, you must say your prayers every night and morning, *always*, no matter if your mamma is away; because God isn't away, you know — he never packs his trunk and goes a journey; and you needn't stop saying them because your mamma's knee is gone away, because grandma's knee is just as good.”

“But *I* haven't any grandma,” said wicked I, willing to see what the sober little brain would answer. “My grandma went to heaven years ago. What can I do in such a case?”

“Why, there's grandpa,” she said, eagerly. “Oh, no; you haven't got any grandpa either, *poor Auntie Belle!* No grandpa nor grandma. What will you do? Well, *I* know; you can go right straight to God's knee, then — that will do

just as well, because he never will die and go to heaven. He always stays."

Then the advice went on :

"And you must be a good girl when your mamma is away, and do just what she would like, same as if she could see you, 'cause God sees you all the time, you know — in the dark night, and all; and he won't like it if you don't please your mamma. He said so."

I received this kind advice very soberly, and I hope it did me good. It is certain that in my later days I have had a good deal of that thing given me that was neither so sensible nor so gently given as this.

All through the long summer day Minie was brave and bright. She took her nap on grand-ma's bed instead of mamma's, where she had always been, before she went to walk with me; and shut her eyes and talked very fast when she passed papa's office. She went through with the undressing for bed at night without a misgiving, popped her head into her pretty night-gown and

came up the other side of it with a chuckle of pleasure. She even knelt down and folded her sweet hands and murmured her "Now I lay me," even to the "Bless dear papa and dear mamma, and take good care of them all night, for Jesus' sake. Amen," without a single tear. Her womanly little heart had taken in the mother's teaching, "Grandma's knee will do just as well."

It was not until the clothes had been folded away in a nice pile, ready for morning, and the boots and stockings laid beside them, by the neat little maiden herself, that, as she sat on grandma's knee and "Auntie Dule" brought the brimming glass of cold water that was always her "last thing before eyes go shut," a great sense of her loss and her loneliness suddenly rolled over her, and with one pitiful wail that touches my heart to think of even to-day she sobbed out, "Why *can't* my mamma hold it?" and burying her head on grandma's neck she cried as if her little heart was entirely broken. What a time we had of it then! How we all

tried to comfort her at once. How "Auntie Dule" sputtered in indignation: "When *I* have a baby I won't go to New York, nor anywhere else, and leave her!" How grandma snuggled her, and kissed her, and whispered sweet little words in her ear! How at last grandpa, walking the floor, grieved to the heart with her heavy sobs, said, suddenly:

"I wonder where the lady is that that trunk belongs to?"

"What trunk?" asked grandma.

"Why, a trunk that I brought in my big wagon to-day. They said there was a young lady coming to spend a week with us, and I thought we were going to have some pleasant times. I don't see why she didn't come. I'm disappointed."

The wailing in grandma's neck suddenly stopped. Minie sat up straight, wiped her red eyes on her night-gown, then said, earnestly:

"Why, she *did* come, grandpa. *I'm* the young lady."

“You!” said grandpa, stopping in his walk and looking down at her. “It can’t be. Aren’t you the child I heard crying? Young ladies don’t cry when they go to visit their friends. They are glad to go visiting, and they have a real nice time. There must be some mistake.”

“No,” said Minie, positively. “*I’m* the young lady, and I don’t cry, either—not a bit at all; no, indeed.” And her eyes shone like two stars. Not another cry did we hear from Minie, though she staid with us a week and three days. No young lady could have behaved more properly or enjoyed herself more thoroughly than did she, and a nice time we had.

She brought her kitten with her. It deserves telling about. It was a pretty brown thing, as kittens go, though I’m no lover of the biting, scratching little wretches; but, oh! how Minie loved hers. And grandpa didn’t. In fact I hardly ever knew any one who had such a dislike for cats as grandpa had. We never kept any, and he never allowed one to come inside the

garden gate if he could help it. He didn't want Minie to have one, and for a long time her mamma wouldn't allow it; but, dear me! how are you going to keep kittens away from children or children away from kittens in this world? There's my Ray half wild at the sight of one. Well, Minie was just as bad, and a kitten she got somehow, we hardly know how, and she brought it with her down to grandpa's. We all agreed that it must be kept out of grandpa's way; it would never do to annoy him with the sight and sound of it; so it was carefully put away before business hours were over and grandpa at leisure

But one evening we left the wood-house door open for about two minutes, and in popped kitty, hiding herself under the lounge until we had all forgotten her and were in the sitting-room, grandpa with his glasses and the evening paper; then she walked in, and of all the places in the world to choose she sidled up to grandpa, rubbing against his slippers, and filling the room

with that horrid "purr" that is so particularly disagreeable to people who dislike cats.

Minie's face was a study then. She slid down from my arms and went softly and swiftly around to grandpa's knee, faithful to her little brown disobedient darling, even while she trembled for it. Not that she was afraid grandpa would hurt it. Dear me, no! grandpa never really *hurt* anything; but he would be almost certain to jump and say that heart-rending "scat," and more than likely he would give it a gentle push with the toe of his slipper to help it along; and it seemed to Minie as if any of these things would just about break her heart. So she stood watching at grandpa's knee, saying not a word. Once she tried to take up the naughty kitten, but it drew away from her and actually mewed quite loud; it seemed bent on its own destruction.

Just then grandpa noticed it. He dropped his paper, leaned forward, and looked, first at Minie, then at the kitten; then he said in a tone as gentle as Minie's own, "Poor pussy." Could we

believe our eyes! What did he do next but reach down and put Minie on one knee and the kitten on the other.

“Well, well, well!” said grandma, growing more earnest over each word, “wonders will never end. If there you don’t sit holding a kitten! What next?”

Grandpa stroked the brown-headed darling with his right hand and patted the kitty with his left, as he said :

“She is a young lady visiting us, you know. We must be very polite to company.”

There was a change in the order of things after that. Kitty came and went freely, undisturbed by anybody, least of all by grandpa. The little maiden even dumped it into his arms to hold whenever she wanted to feel very safe about it. I never could discover that grandpa grew very fond of other cats ; he “scatted” them as promptly as before whenever they appeared on the wrong side of his fence ; but that particular

little brown kitten was Minie's darling, and Minie was "grandpa's darling."

I mean that she shed no tears over her father's and mother's absence. She had her trials, however. One warm afternoon I found her sitting on her low stool just in the shadow of grandma's door, her wee white apron doing duty to catch the tears that were slowly dropping one by one from the tip of her bit of a nose. In surprise and dismay I picked her up and carried her out to the privacy of the corner sofa to tell me what was the matter. Little by little, between heavy sobs and several tears, the sad story was told.

She had been watching grandma take out her toosies and rub them and put them in a tumbler, and she went to the kitchen and got another tumbler, and was going to put *her* toosies in it, and they wouldn't come out — they stuck *just as fast*, though she pulled and pulled. She even took the sharp-pointed little scissors to them, and made the "lud" come, but the teeth wouldn't stir at all. She didn't think they were made like

grandma's at all — something was wrong about them. Grandma didn't have a bit of trouble; hers slipped out *just as easy*. Now *wasn't* that trouble?

“Real, genuine trouble, too,” grandpa said when we told him. “You needn't laugh about it. It is as real to her as most of our trials are to us.”

“But the idea of crying because her little pearls of teeth are her own instead of being false ones put on a plate,” said grandma. “Who ever heard the like? Just as if she wasn't enough sight better off with them fastened in tight.”

“Aye,” said grandpa; “but the thing is to make her believe it. I suspect you and I are better off this minute without something that we think we want than we would be if we had it, only how are we going to be convinced of it? Whoever undertook it would have as hard work as auntie did trying to prove that real teeth were

better than false ones ; and I don't suppose you succeeded," he said, turning to me.

"No," said I, thoughtfully ; "I don't believe I did."

The other day that same Minie, a tall slip of a girl, with nothing about her like the Minie of babyhood except her brown eyes, walked into my house, her strap of school-books on her shoulder, and a very dismal look on her face.

"Auntie Belle," she said, "only think ! I have seventeen teeth that will have to be filled, and the dentist said he didn't believe they were any of them worth filling. He said he shouldn't wonder if I should have to have false teeth before long. Won't that be horrid ! taking out teeth and putting them in ? Ugh !"

"Ah, ha !" said I. "People change their opinions sometimes."

Then I told her the story of the little maiden behind the door weeping her apron full of tears. Do you want to know what she said ? She laughed merrily, then she said :

“ Oh, what a little ninny! Oh, dear me, I feel real bad about my teeth. Auntie Belle, I’m wiser than I was then.”

And as she went away swinging her strap I wondered what she would say about herself and her wisdom after ten years more are added to her life.





CHAPTER VI.

MISCHIEF.

ONCE in awhile there came a day when the very spirit of mischief seemed to enter into Minie. At those times she trotted from one delicious bit of wickedness to another, not seeming quite certain which was the funniest. Mamma was sick and lay on the lounge, trying to keep still. I reigned as mistress of the house, with occasional visits from grandma to see that all went well. It was one of Minie's mischief days. She had been through with the usual order, tipping over water-pitchers and sending shoes in swimming. Twice we had rescued her from an open razor, and once arrived in time to shut the

door to the cistern before misery came through that.

“I should think you *would* be sick!” I said, despairingly, to mamma toward the middle of the afternoon. “The wonder is that you are alive. Why, my feet actually ache running after that child. Does she *always* act like this?”

“Well,” said mamma, turning the pillow and trying to find a cool spot for her head, “I don’t think she uses a great deal of wisdom over the day’s work at any time; but she has been unusually industrious and bewildering to-day I think. What is she doing now?”

“Oh, she is quiet for once in her life. I have given her a bar of soap and a paper of tacks, and she is supposed to be building a fence around grandpa’s barn.”

Then we went to talking, and the small lady was forgotten for the space of ten minutes. The utmost quiet reigned in the bedroom where she was at work. Her mother had just said: “I think you would better look after Minie. I

never knew her to be still so long without being in mischief" — when we heard the little voice exclaim in a choked sort of way: "Massy sakes! how it schmells."

"Massy sakes" was a word that she had caught from some one, and only used it in times of great excitement. "Schmells" was a word that she had just succeeded in pronouncing, and she didn't quite pronounce it yet, you see.

"What *can* she be about?" said mamma; and I went to see. On the floor behind the bedroom door sat my little lady, her fence but half built around the cake of soap, her tooth-brush hammer lying idle by her side, while she mopped her face and rubbed her dripping head with a handkerchief that was soaked through and through with benzine!

"*Minie!*" I said. "Oh, *Minie*, what *have* you been doing now?"

"Schmelling of mamma's fumery," she said, innocently. "And I wet my face with it to make me cool you know; and I wet my hair with it just

as mamma does when she combs it — only I most guess I got too much on, and it doesn't schmell quite as nice as mamma's other bottle did."

"I shouldn't think it did," I said, in utter dismay. "I'm sure I don't know what in the world to do with you."

What I had to do was to get warm water and soap, and scrub and soak and brush the poor ill-used skin and head and hair, trying to get off a little of the dreadful perfume; then the business of dressing had all to be gone through with for the third time that day, for once she had been in the ink and once in the water. Finally, after an hour of hard work, a meek little maiden, with very damp hair plastered down over her head, and with a faint odor still of the horrible benzine all about her, went on tiptoe to tell poor sick mamma how sorry she was for this seventeenth piece of mischief.

"Didn't you see how badly it smelled?" said mamma, as they talked the matter over.

"Yes'm," she said. "It schmelled dreadfully

much ; but, mamma, I thought it was *fashionable* to schmell that way, so I thought I would *have* to stand it !”

“ Why do you stretch your hair back in that way ?” I asked Minie the other day, when she came in from school with her hair drawn back from her temples and fastened firmly at the back. “ It looks very uncomfortable.”

“ Oh, it isn't !” she said, briskly. “ I like it that way. They all wear their hair so nowadays, you know.”

“ You are not quite as honest as you were at three yeas old or less,” I told her. “ Then you were willing to own that you thought the ‘schmell’ was ‘dreadfully much,’ but because it was ‘fashionable’ you thought you could stand it. Now you have reached the point when you are not only willing to stand it, but to ‘make believe that it is very nice.’ ”

Minie laughed a little, but she questioned me closely about the benzine story ; and the next day she came in with her hair arranged in loose,

graceful waves, though stretching back from the roots was still "fashionable." She is a thoughtful young miss sometimes.

Ten minutes of penitence in the little rocking-chair beside mamma's lounge, and then Minie begged to go back to her tack fence.

"I *hope* you haven't given the child a hammer!" mamma said, a new wrinkle of dismay in her face.

"Nothing more dreadful than a tooth-brush," I told her; and she said, with a laugh:

"A tooth-brush! She will be using it on her teeth next."

Luckless sentence! But for that the young lady might not have thought of her next bit of work.

Grandma had come in, and I was stirring a johnny-cake for tea and talking with her, when an exclamation of dismay from the bedroom sent me there.

"It tipped," said Minie, looking up with startled face. "I held it just as tight, but it tipped

itself and spilled all over ; it is mamma's 'Odont,' you know. I poured it into the wash-bowl and brushed my 'tooses' all clean, and I was going to pour it back into the bottle for next time, but it wouldn't pour ; it just spilled all over, and my *apun* is *just* as wet."

"I should think so!" I said in disgust. "Whatever possessed you to meddle with the Sozodont?"

"Why, I wanted to brush my tooses," she said, earnestly. "Mamma does, you know ; and it just dropped so slow out of the bottle I thought I'd empty it out, and put it all back again, but it wouldn't go."

The dressing up had to be gone through with again, for the "Odont" had gone through the dress, even wetting her little flannel shirt. She was very meek and quiet during the dressing ; she always was after any special piece of mischief. Then she took my hand and walked slowly and solemnly out to manma, her eyes on

her shoes, the hem of her apron being twisted into a rope by the other hand.

“She ought to be put in the bedroom in her chair, and have the door shut, and stay there until she could be a good girl,” was grandma’s severe sentence after being told of the day’s trials. So I tramped the wee maiden back to the bedroom, lifted her into her little rocking-chair, and tied her in with a green cord, at which she complained because her dress was red, and red and green did not look well together, which bit of conceit, I shall have to confess, she learned from me. I went out and left her alone, but I left the door open, my heart not being sufficiently hard to shut her in.

It might have been ten minutes afterward that a pitiful little voice, with a quiver of trouble in every note, called out :

“Auntie Belle, why don’t you shut the door?”

“Why don’t I *what?*” I asked, coming to the doorway.

“Why don’t you shut the door? Grandma

said shut me up, and you have left the door wide open."

There was a great tear rolling slowly down each cheek, and her eyes were red as if more tears had fallen. Her bits of hands were meekly folded, and her pale little face was very sad.

"Do you *want* the door shut?" I said. She shook her head.

"I don't *want* to be in here at all," she said, putting strong emphasis on the "want." "But it is punishneff you know" (she made that word out of punishment), "and grandma said 'shut the door;' you *ought* to shut it."

Thus reminded of my duty, I *did* shut the door; but I shut myself in and kissed away those two tears, and finished the tack fence, and so beguiled the time of exile that she told her mamma that grandma's "punishneff" was nice when Auntie Belle was in it.

By and by came grandpa, and to him was told the story of Minie's day of mischief. He took the little culprit on his knee and held her hands

in his while he told her that he had a little piece for her to teach mamma that evening at bed-time; and over and over she repeated the two lines, clasping her two hands together as she said the word "hands:"

"Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

"Why must I learn it?" mamma asked, in a puzzled tone, after Minie had conquered the lines and gone about her work. Nearly always grandpa's words had hidden meanings in them, and mamma was searching for hers. "Why must I learn it?"

"The *child's* hands are not to blame for being idle," he said, gravely. "It is your business to keep them busy. If you fail to do it, don't complain of Satan for coming to her aid."

"But, father," I said, feeling that on this particular day it had been my business, "I *did* give her soap and tacks, and she left them and went in search of something that suited her better."

"Yes," he said, still speaking gravely. "You

have given her one thing to work with, and expected her to be busy with it all the afternoon. Now Satan knows enough to give her variety."

"But, father, it is utterly impossible to keep her interested in her playthings all the time. I've tried it, and it can't be done."

The mamma raised herself on one elbow and spoke eagerly. She seemed astonished to think that she was mixed up in the mischief. The grandpa still kept a perfectly grave face as he answered:

"Satan, it seems, is able to do it. I am safe in saying that the child has been very much interested in everything that she has done this afternoon. I don't doubt but that Satan is smarter than you, but if she were my daughter I should make a pretty hard fight with him as to which should find work for her hands, even while they were very little."

"You *do* have such queer ideas," murmured mamma, as she sank back on her pillow; but she studied that idea a good deal after that.



CHAPTER VII.

GOING SHOPPING.

You can't think what pretty ways of coaxing Minie had. She didn't tease, nor whimper, nor whine, but right into the midst of your talk, perhaps, would come a pair of soft arms about your neck, and sweet little kisses would be laid gently on your cheek, on your nose, on your chin, while the pleading eyes besought you for some favor that you had almost refused, and the tongue said never a word.

She and mamma had come down the hill to have an after-dinner chat with grandma and the rest of us. Papa had come as far as the door, had been kissed by his darling "eleven seven

times," her warmest token of love, and had gone to his office. The small lady stood on a low stool, and her pretty rosy lips were temptingly near to mamma's ear, but she did not whisper, she only kissed.

"That child is coaxing for something, *I* know," said grandma, breaking into the midst of a sentence. "What is it she wants?"

"She wants some nuts," said mamma, laughing to think how plainly grandma understood her darling's pretty ways. "I have almost promised her some for several days. But, Minie, don't you see there is no one to go with you after any?"

"Several days is a good while for a child like her to wait," said grandma, somewhat grimly.

"I know it is, but I always forget it when I am down street. Auntie Belle, I don't suppose you want to take her down now, do you?"

"It is too warm to think of doing that, or anything else that makes it necessary to move," said I, lazily.

Auntie Dule had a brilliant thought just then.

“Why don’t you let her go by herself? It is only around the corner, and she knows the way as well as you do.”

“Fiddlesticks!” said grandma. “That *baby*? Though, to be sure,” she added, reflectively, “you went of errands for me at her age.”

Meantime Minie’s face was aglow with delight and her tongue forgot its silence.

“*Do* let me,” she said, eagerly. “*Do* let Minie. She knows just where to go.”

“Well,” said mamma, amused at the idea of making her baby useful, “you may go. Get your hat and take your little basket on your arm. You may get a pint. Here is the money. A pint — can you remember?”

Oh, remember! Of *course* she could. She was all in a whirl of pleasure, and kissed Auntie Dule three times, even in her haste, because she had the delightful thought. From door and window we watched the wee white-robed maiden start out into the world, for the first time, alone.

"I'm afraid she will get run over," said grandma.

"Why, she doesn't have to cross the street," said mamma. "It is just around the corner; but if she meets a large dog she will be afraid."

Then Auntie Dule, who had been at the bottom of the whole proceeding, suddenly lost faith in her plan, and turned eagerly to me.

"You are all dressed, suppose you run around the corner and keep an eye on her? You needn't let her see you."

"What a very brilliant brain you have this afternoon," I said, sleepily, but I hunted my hat in haste and went, and this is the way I came to know about the funny thing that happened.

Through the crowd of men and boys, cigar-smokers and tobacco-spitters and the like, who stood around the corner, Minie quietly picked her way, I following at a safe distance, until she went slowly past the three large stores, looking earnestly up at the windows, and at the fourth she dodged in, something in the window had

remembered the place for her. It was a favorite store, but not a busy hour, and a dozen or more men were standing around, most of them waiting for the mail that was being distributed in the post-office next door.

In the midst of this unknown crowd stood Minie, a shy, sweet white speck; she had never been among strangers before without having a tight hold of some friendly hand. I stepped just inside, behind the shadow of a box, and watched. The buzz of tongues was suddenly checked, and one large, rough man said: "Halloo, here is an angel right in our midst."

"She isn't an angel," said another, "she is a fairy."

"Hey, little fairly queen, where is your train?"

Gravely sweet and dignified stood Minie, a good deal startled, very much wondering, but not afraid. Nobody ever hurt *her*; she hadn't the least idea that anybody ever would. One of the clerks who knew her now came forward and asked her errand. On him Minie bestowed a

shy, happy smile; it was very pleasant to have found a friend. The store was very still while she earnestly told what she wanted :

“ A pint of peekers.”

“ A pint of what ? ” said the astonished clerk, and the lookers-on laughed loud and long ; but the clear little voice steadily repeated its errand, “ A pint of peekers.”

“ Well,” said the clerk, “ I declare I’m muddled. We’ve got almost everything in our line that has ever been heard of, but this is the first time that a ‘ pint of peekers ’ has ever been called for. What in the world can she mean ? Are you sure, child, that you have got it right ? ”

Yes, she was sure. Minie always *was* sure of everything.

“ Ask her to describe them,” suggested one man, and the clerk, catching at the idea, asked what they looked like.

Poor Minie blushed over this. “ They were brown,” she said, “ and speckled a little, and all smooth and pretty.”

Then they all laughed again, and I, behind my big box, laughed, too, and wondered which was the greater dunce, Minie for not telling him that they were "nuts," or he, for not asking whether "peekers" were to eat, or drink, or wear, or what.

"Well," said the puzzled clerk at last, "my small lady, I guess you will have to go home and tell your mamma that we don't keep 'peekers.'"

But at this Minie shook her brown head very decidedly.

"That would be a story," she said, gravely. "You *do*, for I've seen them right here in your store lots of times."

"Oh ho! you have; if that's so you can tell when you see them again, I presume. Well now, young lady, I'll tell you what we'll do — you and I will take a walk, you may walk on the counter and I'll walk behind it, and we'll look into every box and drawer and keg in this store until we find 'peekers.' Will that do?"

Minie nodded gravely, and he carried her in

triumph to the further counter, the men following to see the fun. Very busily she began to look up and down the rows of shelves and into drawers, as one after another was opened for her inspection. Presently the clerk bethought himself to ask another question :

“Where do we get them from when you come to buy them?”

“Away down there out of a drawer,” said Minie, confidently, pointing with her small finger to the furthest end of the long store. Then what a chorus of laughter there was.

“Why in the world didn't you tell me that before?” said the laughing clerk; “then we wouldn't have wasted our time in looking up here.”

“You didn't ask me,” said Minie, sweetly and simply. “I thought maybe you kept them in lots more places.”

“Sure enough,” said the laughing lookers-on. “You thought he knew his own business without your teaching him, didn't you?”

Then they went down to the lower end of the store, and I, coming out of my retreat, followed behind the others. The clerks knew me very well, and smiled and bowed, enjoying the fun. The only one of them who didn't see me was the one who was so industriously waiting on Minie. It was very funny to see her. Her face, so quiet and grave, began to wear a very anxious look. She had been a long time away, perhaps she would have to go home without her treasures after all. She could not point out the drawer, so one after another was opened, until suddenly the sober look on her face gave way to one of great delight, and she said in a shrill little voice that rang through the store:

“There! there they are! Peekers, ever so many of them; please give me a pint.”

“Pecans, as I live!” said the astonished clerk. “What a dumbhead I was not to think of them.”

Things always do seem so clear and plain, you know, after you have been told all about them.

Well, she carried home the pint of peekers in

triumph, and we all shared them. In the evening I had been telling the story over to grandpa, especially dwelling on the, to me, very funny part, that she didn't, when asked to describe them, say that they were nuts.

"That isn't so very funny," said grandpa; "at least it isn't very strange. Older people than she, and those who are supposed to be wiser, do queer things in that line. What do you suppose my experience has been? I have been half of this afternoon engaged in trying to find out the road to Deerfield. I wanted to map it out so clearly that when I started there would be no time wasted in correcting mistakes.

"I went over to Judge Bryan's. I happened to know that he had had occasion to drive there several times, and I thought he would be likely to know the way. I wish I could remember the directions he gave me. I was not to turn at the red school-house nor the stone school-house, and there was a turn to the left just past the red school-house that I wasn't to take, or else I was

to, and he wasn't quite certain which; and then I was to go on about three miles, or perhaps four, or it might not be more than two, and there the road forked, and I was to take the road that passed the mill about a mile ahead. I got into a complete fog, and I guess he did. The more he told me the turns *not* to take and the red houses to pass the less I knew.

“His daughter Louise was moving around in the library putting up the books, and after a while she gave her attention to us. Pretty soon she said to me: ‘Why, isn't it to Deerfield that you wanted to go?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, it was. Then she turned her gray eyes on her father. ‘Well, father,’ said she, ‘wouldn't it be well to tell him to follow the creek?’ ‘Yes, yes!’ said the judge. ‘Why, of course—certainly, child, you're right; that is the whole story in a nutshell—just follow the creek.’ So you needn't laugh at Minie's description of ‘peekers’ any more.”

Grandpa walked back and forth through the

long sitting-room in silence for some minutes, then he halted again by my chair.

“You are a Sunday-school teacher,” he said, earnestly. “Don’t you go to giving your scholars just such easily understood directions about finding Christ and heaven as Minie gave the clerk and Judge Bryan gave me. I’ve seen that done before now, and it is a much sadder mistake than about pecans or the road to Deerfield.”

I wondered then, and I have often wondered since, whether there was such a thing as a story so funny or so pointless that Minie’s grandpa and my dear father could not get some helpful lesson from it for himself and for me. After that I tried to teach my class in Sunday-school the plain way to heaven.





CHAPTER VIII.

PROMISES.

“MINIE must be very careful indeed, today ; not go out of the house, even to the back kitchen for a drink of water, without first stopping to put her little shawl around her and something over her head.”

This was what her mamma said to her one winter morning when she was not yet three years old. Minie had been sick with a cold ; she was better, and we were very anxious to keep her so. The day was cold and stormy.

“Will you remember ?” mamma repeated ; and the earnest brown eyes were lifted to her face, while the grave little voice answered :

"Truly I will, mamma — every time."

"She is very good about keeping a promise," said mamma, to me. "I really think it would take considerable to make her forget."

I don't think either of us had an idea of how much it would take. It was toward the middle of the afternoon that I came up the hill from our house and dodged into Cousin Mary's, next door to Minie's home. There I found Minie's mamma.

"With whom have you left the small lady?" I asked her.

"Left her alone," she said, laughing. "I just ran in of an errand. She promised not to leave the room where I put her, unless something wonderful happened. You know she always has an 'if' or two in her promises."

"Can you trust to such small promises as hers?" Cousin Mary asked us, with a smile that said, "*I* shouldn't consider it safe."

"They are not 'small' promises," I answered her. "The body may be small, but the conscience

is very much in earnest. I would trust her where I wouldn't many an older person."

The words were hardly spoken when Cousin Mary called our attention to the window.

"Put not your trust in babies," she said, laughing. "There comes yours in spite of her promise."

Sure enough! there was the small sprite coming down the snowy steps, her blanket shawl pinned securely about her throat, and a cloud wound about her head. Mamma went in haste to the door and spoke quickly, not to say sharply:

"Minie, what are you coming out in the snow for?"

Minie's answer was prompt and hurried:

"Oh, mamma! come quick, quick!" Then she dodged back into the house.

"One of her 'ifs' has happened, you may depend," I said, as I followed the mother in haste.

None too soon were either of us. A bright coal fire was glowing in the sitting-room, and

lest its heat and shining might fade the bright colors of the carpet the careful lady of the house had laid down a newspaper before the grate. The coals, in settling, had lost one of their fiery company, and it had dropped on the waiting paper. When we reached the scene, not only that paper but several others with which Minie had been amusing herself were in flames. Some very quick work had to be done to save more important things than papers. After the pitchers and pails had been put away, and the carpet mopped of the extra water we had thrown on, we found time and breath to question and be surprised.

How *could* it have happened?

“Minie don't know,” said the earnest little woman. “I was cutting out my ‘picsures,’ and I smelled ‘somefing;’ then I looked, and the paper was all curling up and getting black; then I ran for mamma.”

“Did you notice how she was wrapped?”

mamma asked, a faint smile of pride on her pale face.

“Indeed I did,” I said. “Minie, how came you to wait for your shawl and hood when the paper was on fire?”

The small grave face was turned slowly toward me, and great thoughtful eyes were fixed on my face as she said, slowly :

“Why, Auntie Belle, I *promised* mamma that I would wear them *every* time,” and Minie considered *that* question entirely set at rest.

Then came another question to my mind, however, and the horrible thoughts coming with it made me shiver.

“I am amazed,” I said, “that such an important child as she is didn’t try to put out the fire without calling for help. Oh, dear me: what might *not* have happened if she had. Minie, you are a sensible little girl for a three-year-old. How came you to let the burning paper alone and run for mamma. Didn’t you think you could put out the fire?”

"Yes," she said, quietly, "I knew I could; but mamma said: 'Never touch the fire. Never, never. No, indeed; not at all,' and I promised I wouldn't."

"I don't see but that you can go and leave her safely enough," I said, half laughing, half crying. "You have her hedged about with promises."

It was during that same winter that there came a stormy day when mamma and Minie were quite alone. The morning work was all done; papa had gone to his office hours before; on the hot stove a kettle of soup bubbled and puffed; genuine, old-fashioned Scotch barley soup it was to be, such as none but grandma and her daughters know how to make. Mamma skimmed the pot, added more boiling water, then, partly covering it, turned away and looked regretfully, first at a roll of flannel waiting to be cut, then out of the window, down the snowy path, to grandma's.

If only she had that pattern of grandma's she could get the flannels nicely cut out before dinner time, but it would never do to send

Minie, the path was too snowy and too icy. Should she go herself and leave the small lady to be housekeeper? But there was the dreadful stove; she had always felt afraid of fire; a hundred times more afraid was she since the time the papers burned; but she might put her so far away from the stove that there would be no danger from it.

Finally she brought out the little rocking-chair, grandpa's latest gift to his darling, and set it by the south window, the furthest possible corner from the stove. "Minie," she said, "will you come and sit in your little arm-chair, and not stir from it while mamma goes down to grand-ma's on an errand?"

Then began Minie's usual "ifs." "But, mamma, what if the bell should ring while you are away, couldn't I go to the door?"

"Well, you might do that I suppose," said mamma, speaking very doubtfully. "Or — no, I would rather not; let it ring and never mind it;

mamma won't be a minute away, hardly ; I am only going after a pattern."

"And, mamma, if my blue ball or my red one should roll away the least little mite, couldn't I get down and pick it up?"

"No," said mamma, speaking positively this time. "I don't want you to move the least little mite while I'm away. Do you promise?"

"Yes, ma'am," she said, with a little sigh over the lonely prospect, and away went mamma down the snowy hill.

The errand took longer than she meant it should ; errands generally do, I think. The pattern couldn't be found. Did you ever know a pattern that *could* be when it was wanted? Grandma always knew where to lay her hands on anything even in the dark, everything but patterns ; she kept those in a great green box : but she used to declare that the one that she laid on the top, ready for use the next day, always dived down to the very bottom of the box and hid itself in the most unlikely corner. I don't

know how that was, only I know that the flannel pattern was missing, and it seemed to the nervous mamma that she waited for about an hour while they tumbled skirt patterns and sack patterns and sleeve patterns this way and that looking for *the* pattern.

“Here it is at last,” grandma said, with a relieved sigh. “I *knew* I put it in here, and *know* I put it on top, too; how it ever got under all those old basque patterns is a mystery to me.”

Meantime, what might *not* have happened up the hill?

“What *could* happen?” said skeptical Auntie Dule, who was only hindered by a piece of pork and mustard tied around a sore throat from flying up the hill to see for herself that all went well. “I’m sure I don’t know,” mamma said, nervously. “I might pick out twenty things, and none of them would be the ones; they never are.” With which very odd explanation of her fears she flew up the hill.

Auntie Dule raised herself on one elbow and looked after her. "I wish I knew that she was all right," she said, wistfully.

"Why, what *could* happen to her," I said, tossing her own words back to her, as I came from the kitchen, where I was paring apples.

"I don't know," she said, laughing. "Nothing at all, I presume, but when any one else has the fidgets I always get them."

So, presently, mother sent me up to see if all was right. I found the mamma giving a good many extra kisses to her darling, and the stove covers were still sissing and smoking with some greasy substance, explained by the puddle of soup that slowly dripped from the hearth to the oil-cloth. The little housekeeper still kept her seat in the rocking-chair by the window.

"You ought to have seen her," said the mamma, rising from before her with a flushed face. There she sat in her little chair, with one fore-finger pointing solemnly to the wasted soup. 'There's your soup, mamma,' she said, with great

gravity. 'There's your soup on the floor. I could have saved it, only you got me to promise not to stir.' Only think! if she had attempted to lift out that great heavy kettle she would have been scalded as sure as the world. I believe I will *never* leave her alone again." And she shuddered at the dreadful thought.

Such a puzzled, troubled look was on Minie's face that it almost made me laugh, and she spoke with the slowness and the dignity of an old lady :

"But, mamma, how *could* I have been scalded away over here? It couldn't reach me here, and I couldn't go any nearer to it, because, don't you 'member, I promised not to stir the least little mite?"

"The chicken hasn't the least idea that there *is* such a thing as breaking a promise," I said, laughing.

She looked at me with troubled eyes.

"Auntie Belle, *do* they break them?" she said, earnestly.

"Yes, my dear little mousie, they *do*; dreadfully."

"But that is telling a wicked story," she said, in a horrified tone. "Isn't it, Auntie Belle?"

"Yes," I said, sobered into a quiet answer, for a long line of carelessly made and too often carelessly broken promises seemed to come rushing past me as I looked at the solemn little face — it *was* a sober thought to realize that they were "wicked stories."

"I wish every one could realize it," said grandpa, when we told him the day's adventures. "There's Mr. Cass been promising to bring me a load of wood every day for a week, and we are really in present need of it. Do you suppose that he has any idea that he has told five 'wicked stories' about it? I hope Minie will grow up with just such a sense of the sacredness of a promise as she now has."

"She won't," said grandma, with a little sigh. "She has got to be among people who think

promises are not worth much ; and she will learn, I'm afraid, to be like everybody else."

I thought of that the other day. We were in the church preparing to have a rehearsal for our concert. One, two, three—six girls present, three to wait for, one of them Minie; five minutes, ten minutes, twenty minutes, then they came.

"Why, Minie!" I said, in dismay, "here you have made us lose twenty minutes. Don't you know you *promised* to be here at four o'clock?"

She turned her beaming face, full of brightness, on me, and said, merrily :

"Why, Auntie Belle, don't you think, we forgot all about it!"

And I am afraid that she has grown wonderfully like other people, and hasn't the least remembrance that breaking promises is telling "wicked stories."



CHAPTER IX.

CHURCH GOING.

I SHALL have to go back a little and tell you about some of her church-goings. When she was two years old she began to go to church regularly ; and when she was a wee bit of a girl she would try to remember the texts "for grandpa." Sometimes she made very queer work of it. If the minister had always preached from the text that she said he did we should have had some funny sermons. Her papa and mamma attended one church, and grandpa and his family another ; so she had a good chance to tell us what "her" minister said. It was a bright June Sunday that she came, in all the glory of bronze boots and

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blue silk parasol, to spend Sunday afternoon "with grandpa." Of course she had on a dress and hat, but those were of small importance compared with the boots and parasol.

"Grandpa," said she, "I have been to church to-day, and I know the text, every word in it. It hasn't got but three words to it, anyhow. I wish verses never had but three words. I think they would be a 'great much' more interesting, don't you, grandpa?"

Grandpa agreed that at least they would be easier to remember; then he said:

"Now give us your three words."

"Oh, grandpa!" she said, "you must guess them. Such little bits of words, I'm sure you can."

So grandpa tried; and having been told that they were cunning little words, he very soon thought of the precious little verse, "Feed my lambs," and was rather surprised to be told with a triumphant face that "that wasn't it at all."

"What in the world can it be?" said puzzled

grandpa, after he had repeated every verse and part of a verse with three words in it that he could think of. Minie was radiant with delight. She had puzzled grandpa, about a Bible verse, too; that was splendid. Grandpa tried again, and broke verses into bits, in a manner that would have horrified the minister, in order to get three "cunning little words out of them," but he had no success. "This is a mystery," he said, in a perplexed tone, that set Minie into fits of laughter. At last he gave it up. I wish I could make a picture for you of the triumphant face she wore.

"Why," she said, drawing in her breath; "why, isn't it splendid? I didn't ever expect to know more than grandpa. My! I'm *so* delighted. Shall I tell you, grandpa, what it is?"

"Yes," said grandpa, "right away. I'm all tired out trying to find out."

"Well," she said, with a patronizing air, "I'll tell you. It was 'Feed my kitties.'"

How we shouted! Sunday though it was. I

can seem to see grandpa get out his handkerchief and wipe his eyes after laughing until the tears came, and Minie looked at us with wondering eyes.

“What makes you laugh?” she said, earnestly. “Don’t you think it was a nice text, grandpa?”

“Very nice,” he said, laughing again. “The only trouble is, I’m afraid the minister made it up.”

“Grandpa,” she said, eagerly, “he read it out of the Bible. I saw him.”

There was no use in talking to her. She was a positive little thing, and what she *thought* was so was insisted upon.

“What in the world does the child mean?” we said to her mother, who came after her in the evening.

“Why,” she said, “I think it must be this way. Mr. Priest preached to the children this morning, and Minie was very much engaged, just at the moment when he announced his text, in fastening her fur collar around the church pillar,

that you know is in our seat, so she missed the text, and one of his illustrations was about a little girl feeding her kitty, that is, he told a story about his little Maude and her kitten. Minie was very much interested in that, and somehow she managed to connect that story with the text, and now she seems to feel entirely certain that the minister read just those words in the Bible. I tried hard to talk her out of it ; but, dear me ! you can't talk *her* out of things ; she has a mind of her own."

We all tried very hard to " talk her out of it ;" and at last I said, half impatiently :

" Why, Minie, there isn't such a verse in the Bible. How *could* the minister preach on it ?"

Such a surprised, grieved face as she turned toward me.

" Auntie Belle," she said, " do you mean it doesn't say in the Bible that you must feed kitties ?" I shook my head. " Not a single word ?" she said, in great dismay. " Doesn't it say a single word about them ?"

"Not a *single* word," I said, emphatically.

She slipped down from grandpa's knee where she had taken a seat, and went over to her little stool beside grandma's chair. Down she sat, and buried her head in grandma's lap. Then there came from her lips a long, low wail, such as went to the heart of each one of us.

"Poor child," said grandma, "she isn't used to being laughed at. You have broken her heart."

"It can't be she is crying about that," said grandpa, with perplexed face. "She is too much of a woman for that."

"It isn't *that*," she said, lifting a tear-stained face, "it isn't that. But it makes me feel so awful bad to think that Jesus forgot all about kitties."

I can not describe to you the pitiful face she wore. There was no doubt about it's being a real grief to her.

Then we all set to work trying to comfort her. It wasn't an easy thing to do. Minie's kitten lay very near her heart, and the thought that the

Bible remembered the lambs and was entirely silent as to kittens hurt her very much. Grand-ma was very eloquent, and "Auntie Dule" and I did our best, but to very little purpose. She cried on, not loudly, but with softly little sobs that made me feel like crying too. Her papa looked sober.

"She will have a hard life of it, I'm afraid," he said, "if she has so much trouble about a kitten."

"Oh, I don't know about that," grandpa said. "Her trials come to her in the shape of kittens just now. I suppose they bring her just as much trouble as your greater trials do you. By and by her trials will be about greater things; that is all the difference." Then he called the weeping maiden to him and took her on his lap. "Tell me the whole story," he said, in a sympathizing tone; and she poured out her grief.

"Auntie Belle said the Bible didn't say a word about her kitty, nor *any* kitty, not a single word;

and of course Jesus didn't care anything about them, and it seemed too dreadful."

"Well, now," said grandpa, "listen to me. Auntie Belle was mistaken."

Now you may imagine that Auntie Belle, sitting over on the sofa, pricked up her ears at this, and listened in great astonishment. Minie immediately got out her speck of a handkerchief and dried her eyes and looked hopeful.

"Does your kitty eat?" said grandpa.

"Why, yes," Minie answered. "Why, grandpa, you *know* she does. I have to buy milk for her in my little tin pail every day; and I give her meat, and ever so many things."

"And where do you get the milk that you feed her?"

"Why, papa buys it for me of Mr. Seymour, and I go after it every morning."

"But where does Mr. Seymour get it?"

"Oh, he has a brown cow with white feet, and every night and morning she gives a great big pail of milk."

"Now, I wonder where Mr. Seymour got his cow?"

"Why, I don't know, grandpa; but I suppose he bought her of a man, just as Auntie Hosmer did hers."

"But where do you suppose the man got her?"

Light began to dawn on Minie's mind.

"Oh," she said, slowly and reverently, "God made her in the first place."

"Indeed!" said grandpa, "then it seems that God furnishes the milk for your kitty to drink."

"So he does," said happy Minie. "And he makes the meat, too, that I feed her with, and the cake that I give her once in a while. Of *course* he does, grandpa, because he makes every-thing."

"He made kitty, too," said grandpa, in gentle tone.

"Why, so he did!" echoed Minie. "I wouldn't ever have had my kitty if God hadn't made her, would I? It doesn't make any matter,

does it, whether he tells us in the Bible to feed them or not? He knows we will, *don't* he? and so he made the things for us to use. But, grandpa, wouldn't it have been nice if he had said just a little word about them, as he did about the lambs?"

"He did," said grandpa, confidently. Whereupon I looked astonished again. "He doesn't put there *name* in; but he tells us that he made everything, and takes care of everything, and that we must be kind to all the creatures that he has made; and, of course, he means kitties too."

Minie thought a little.

"Grandpa," she said, at last, "if he makes the kitties and takes care of them, isn't it a sign that he loves them some?"

"Perhaps it is," said unsuspecting grandpa, walking into the net that was being spread for his feet as heedlessly as the fly walked into the spider's house.

Another little silence, then Minie spoke very slowly and with great earnestness: "Well,

grandpa, if Jesus loves the kitties some, and takes care of them all the time, don't you suppose that *you* ought to love them just a *little speck?*"

"That's the application," said I from my sofa corner. Then we laughed again. It seemed *so* funny that poor grandpa should have his little sermon that he was getting ready, all finished up for him.

During that next week we had a strawberry festival at our church, and among other side entertainments was that of the "old woman who lived in her shoe." You remember that she "had so many children" that "she didn't know what to do." Well, we had a great pasteboard slipper made and covered with black paper, and bowed and buckled all in style; and inside of it we sat a little old woman, one of our tiniest girls, dressed in a drab dress, with a white handkerchief crossed on the shoulders, a white cap with a deep border on her head, and on her funny

little nose a pair of spectacles with the glass part of them knocked out.

Over this trim-looking old lady dolls of every size and description were tumbling. They were pinned to her shoulders, on her back, and some wee ones were fastened to her cap border, while her arms were running over with them. Whenever any one stopped at the table she said in a soft little voice: "I have so many children I don't know what to do;" and as the price of each doll was sewed to its skirt, one after another was sold away from the troubled little old lady. I took Minie with me to the festival, and "Auntie Dule" bought one of the old lady's dolls for her. She was perfectly delighted, and hovered around the great black shoe all the evening.

The next Sabbath, as we were starting for church, in bounded Minie, arrayed in her whitest and prettiest, and announced that she was going to "grandpa's church." She was in a perfect bubble of delight, and could hardly keep her feet from dancing as she walked beside us. No

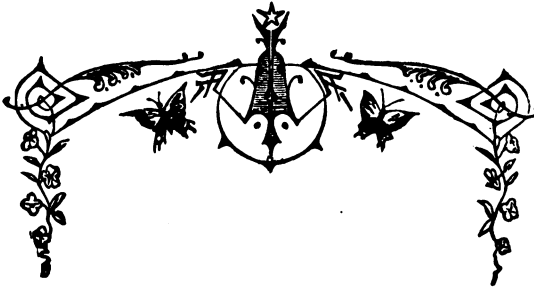
sooner was she seated, however, in the great solemn church, with the sound of the organ pealing down its aisles, than her face gathered in a frown. She gave one or two eager, expectant looks up and down the aisles, than she settled into a disgusted quiet, pouting little lips, and sad, almost tearful eyes. What could be the matter with Minie?

As soon as we were out on the steps again her little tongue was busy. "She would never go to grandpa's church again; it was a still old church, and grandpa's minister was a cross-looking man, not half so nice as Mr. Priest. She didn't love him a *bit at all, so*; and she would never, *never* go there again. And the old woman that lived in the shoe wasn't there at all."

Ah ha! the secret was out. The silly baby had really supposed that the little "old woman who lived in her shoe" was to be a fixture in the church from that time forth; and she went to church to see her!

"I wonder how many were in the same state

of mind?" said grandpa, when we told him about it. "I don't know that anybody expected to see the old lady in her shoe, but I heard some of the young men talking about being disappointed in the singing. One of them said he came to church on purpose to hear the leading soprano, and he might just as well have staid at home, for *she* was not there. And a certain young lady said, 'I would have gone to the Episcopal Church this morning, only I expected that Fanny Holmes would be out in her new Paris hat, and I'm just dying to see it; and there she wore her old spring one. I think it's real mean!' So there seemed to be several disappointed ones," said grandpa, with a sigh; "and on the whole I don't see that their motives for coming to the house of God were much better than Minie's."



CHAPTER X.

SECRETS.

I WAS lying on the lounge, coaxing a sick head ache, when the door opened softly, and Minie, in pretty summer freshness, entered.

“Why!” I said, “how the little woman is dressed up! What is *that* all about at this time of day?”

“Oh,” said she, “I have been away. I’ve been taking a walk with papa. There’s a secret about it. I’m not going to tell anybody. Why, yes, I can tell grandma, and Auntie Julia, and grandpa; but I can’t tell *you*, ’cause it’s something you mustn’t know. But, Auntie Belle,
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don't feel bad, for you *are* to be told all about it — only you mustn't know it yet."

"But where have you been?" I asked. "Can you tell me *that*, or is that a secret too?"

"No," she said, slowly, with a thoughtful air, "I *guess* that isn't a secret. I don't think it is; mamma didn't say anything about it. I've been to Mr. Scidmore's. I had to stay a good while, but I got something real pretty. Papa said it was first-rate, but he said I mustn't tell you, because we must surprise you; and I haven't told you, have I? I wouldn't for anything, because papa trusts me, you know. I haven't told you, have I?"

Now when I explain to you that "Mr. Scidmore's" was the only photograph gallery in town, you will see how natural it was to suppose that when a person had been there for a good while, and had got something nice, which every one but myself was to know about, and especially on being told that pretty soon I was to know all about it, that "that" something nice was a

picture of the little lady herself, which, when finished, was to be presented to me. Yet, after all, she hadn't told me; at least she thought she hadn't. How was I to answer her?

"Why," I said, "I don't see how I'm supposed to know what you were about all the time you were gone."

She laughed gleefully.

"Of course you don't," she said, "and I don't mean to tell you. But it is something real nice."

I didn't doubt it. But what an idea the child had about keeping a secret, to be sure. After she was gone I thought about it a good deal. I have thought about it more or less ever since. It surprises me very much to see how many people there are in the world who are telling secrets that they don't mean to tell—not nice, pleasant little secrets like Minie's, but sour, snarly ones, or ill-natured ones of some sort or other.

The other day Miss Jenny Swift came in to see me. There were three wrinkles on her forehead and a sort of down look to her eyes. She

flung herself down on my couch with a forlorn sigh, and turned the leaves of a book as if she had no sort of interest in that or anything else.

“Have you a headache?” I asked her.

“No, ma’am,” she said, drearily.

“What have you been doing to-day?”

“Not much of anything, ma’am. That is we studied, of course, and did all those things just as usual.”

“Did the lessons go right?”

Jenny’s cheeks grew red.

“They didn’t go as well as they do sometimes,” she said, and she spoke a little more quickly.

I seemed to be getting at it.

“You all failed a little, did you?” I said, cheerily. “Well, accidents of that kind *will* happen once in a while, I suppose.”

Jenny is a very truthful girl.

“They didn’t all fail,” she said, the blush growing deeper. “That Lucy Jenkins always has her lessons. She would have them if she had to sit up all night and steal a book to learn them out

of. She is the meanest girl in school. Nobody likes her."

Aha! Miss Jenny had told me a secret that she meant to heep to herself. It didn't need a prophet to tell me that she was jealous of Lucy Jenkins. It was that very evening that Paul Wheeler came to bring a message from his father to the minister, and hung around my chair while the answer was being written. Paul always had something to tell me.

"We chose seats to-day," he said, and his gleeful tone made me think there was something particularly nice about it all.

"What, for next year?" I asked. "Well, how did that go?"

"It went real nice," he said, laughing over the recollection. "Anyhow it did for some of us. I guess some of the fellows didn't like it so well." Paul has just arrived at that age when he thinks it is more manly to say "fellows" than boys. "You know that seat by the window, auntie? Well, all the fellows want that seat because you

can see out of the window, and it's real fun to see what is going on outside. Mr. Wheatly said we might vote which of the fellows in the senior class should have the seat.

“ I wanted it awfully, but I did not expect to get it because I had it last year. But I didn't mean to give it up without some work, so I went around among some of the boys, and I told them all about my sugar party that I am going to have. I painted it off in glowing colors, I tell you. Then I worked it so that one of them would ask me how large a party I was going to have, and I said ‘ that would depend on how large a vote I got ; that, of course, I would invite everybody who voted for me.’ They asked me how I could tell who voted for me, and I looked awful wise and said I had ways of telling. And, auntie, don't you think that more than two-thirds of them voted for me, and I got the seat. Wasn't that rich ? ”

Think of that ! And he didn't seem to have the least idea how many secrets he had told me.

Just count them. First he was selfish, that was as plain as day ; had the best seat in school for a year, and wanted it again ; so to bring about his selfish plans he did one of the meanest things that a boy *can do*, went about *buying votes* ! Just ask your father if there is a meaner thing in all politics than that. Next he *acted* a lie to gain his point. The idea of pretending that he could tell how the boys voted ! I felt ashamed of him ; I wished that he had no right to call me auntie. I have to be ashamed of a good many people in just that way. They tell me things, without knowing it, that they wouldn't have me know for anything if they only thought of it.

“ But to go back to Minie. I want to tell you about another secret of hers. There came a day which was rather important to me ; the fact is, I expected her uncle, and he wasn't her uncle yet, either ; some important words had to be said first. The day chosen for the saying of these words was the one on which Minie would be four years old.

“You will have to arrange matters with Minie,” said her mother. “Three months ago she was promised a party on her birthday; that was before I knew about your plans, and Minie has a good memory, you know.”

So I engaged to make it right with the little lady. She came down to see me one morning, and I thought I would talk with her about it.

“Minie,” I said, “when is your birthday?”

“Next Wednesday afternoon at two o’clock,” she said, confidently. That, you see, was the time when the party was to “begin,” and she counted time by the important things that were to happen.

“I hear you are going to have a party,” I said. “Are you going to invite me?”

“Course,” she said, lovingly. “I wouldn’t have a party without my Auntie Belle, would I?”

“Well, now, it so happens that I can’t come;” I said. She looked doleful.

“Why not, auntie Belle?”

“The trouble is I want to have a party myself;

and I have chosen the very day that you did."

"Can't you 'pone yours?" she said, looking gravely at me.

"Not very well, because some of my company are invited, and I can't send them word not to come."

"Is my mamma invited?" she asked, gravely.

"Yes."

"And did she promise to come?"

"Why, no, she couldn't do that, because she said she had promised to give you a party, and of course she wouldn't break her word, so unless you postpone yours I suppose they will both have to come on the same day. But it will be a great disappointment to me not to have your mamma and you."

"Am I invited to yours?" she asked, and the sober face brightened a little.

"Why, of course; and I expected you to take a ride with me after the party."

"Are you going to take them all a ride, Auntie Belle?"

“ No, only part of them. But I meant to take you. I was going to have you with me in the big barouche, and we were going down to see the cars come in.”

Her sad face had been gradually growing clearer during this story, and now she said in a satisfied voice :

“ Auntie Belle, I'll 'pone' mine. I don't know but yours is to be the nicest. Anyhow I want to come to it.” So that question was settled to the satisfaction of us both.

We went on talking about the details, as to who were expected, and what I was going to have on the party table, and whether I was going to give each of the guests an orange to carry home in their pockets, as she had planned to do. I was very much pleased with my unexpected success, for this party had lain very near Minie's heart, and I hadn't expected it to be given up without some tears ; and, instead, she was in a real flutter of satisfaction.

Presently the door-bell rang, and Miss Susie

Weeks came in to make a social call. She wasn't an intimate friend of mine, though I liked her well enough. The worst fault she had was a desire to know about everything that was going on. We had a very pleasant talk together. She was telling me something that I remember interested me very much, though I'm sure I don't know now what it was. I had forgotten all about Minie. She wasn't apt to let herself be forgotten, but she was unusually quiet, busy it seemed with her own thoughts. Suddenly she spoke in a clear ringing voice :

“ I'm going to my Auntie Belle's party next Wednesday afternoon, and she is going to have a good many peoples, and I'm going to a ride with her after the party in the big barouche, and we are going down to see the cars come in, and there's a gentleman coming to her party from away off.”

Just imagine, if you can, how much I felt like shaking the little sprite! What was I to say to Miss Susie, who by this time knew as well what

was going to happen next Wednesday as I did? And she was just the last person I would have chosen to tell the story to. Didn't I know just how she would enjoy telling this whole affair over just as often as she found a person to tell? It seemed to me I could hear her going over it and describing every little thing. "I know it is true," she would say, "for Belle blushed as red as a peony, and looked as though she didn't know which way to turn."

The consciousness that there would be a great deal of truth in this story of hers made my face turn redder still; and I am sure I could have given the innocent little maiden by my side a hearty shaking just as well as not. Dear me! what foolish people we are. I don't know why I should have cared so much about this, seeing it was all true. I certainly wasn't ashamed about being married, but somehow I wanted all the telling about it to be done by myself. I dare say you will feel very much the same when you come to that time. Minnie told grandma the whole

story about the big barouche and the ride to the cars — told it at the dinner table, I listening with very blushing face.

“I shouldn't have thought that you would have told the child about it, since it disturbs you so much to have her tell it over.” This grandma said, and I hurried to explain.

“She never tells things if you tell her not to; but I forgot that part.”

“I've known worse troubles than that to come because people neglected a little sentence that ought to have come in at the end.” Grandpa's face was grave as he said this, and we knew he was thinking of something that had happened.

“It reminds me of something,” he said, at last. “I was talking with Mr. Smith last night, about our neighbor Mr. Stuart. I said I was always pleased with his remarks in prayer-meeting. ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘he talks well. I was wondering the other night how many people remembered old times. He happened to be surrounded by several who have reason to remember him.’ ‘In

what way?' I asked. 'Why, they lost by him very heavily. He failed, you know.' I said I didn't know it. 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'it was before you came here. It made great excitement. I guess some of them will never forget it. What made the matter worse was, that so many who lost by him were poor people, and members of the same church with himself.'

"This story made me feel badly. I had always thought so much of Mr. Stuart. I couldn't keep it out of my mind, and this morning I spoke of it to Deacon Holmes. I knew he could tell me something pleasant about it if there was anything to tell. 'Who told you about it?' he asked me; and when I told him he said: 'Did he tell you that he paid up every cent after he got rich again?' 'No,' said I; 'of course he didn't. Why, that makes a different story of it entirely. It can't be that Mr. Smith knows that part of it.' He must know it,' he said, 'for he was one of the creditors, and one of the first to be paid up.' 'Then why in the name of wonder didn't he tell

me?' I asked. 'Oh, I suppose he forgot that part,' he said."

There is another reason why that story belongs in this chapter of secrets. I think Mr. Smith must have had a habit of speaking ill of his neighbor. I don't suppose he meant to tell Minie's grandpa of it, but, you see, he did for all that.





CHAPTER XI.

QUIET TALKS.

THE next day was Sunday. After church she sat in the back door, looking up and down the quiet street — sat very quiet for her, for if there was anything that Minie thought was wicked to do it was to keep still. I'm sorry to say that she didn't like Sunday much, either. She thought it very hard that dolly had to be laid in her cradle, and the cradle set away in the clothes-press when Saturday night came. Sometimes she would talk to it in this way :

“ You poor dolly baby ! Minie sorry, *so* sorry, that you have to be shut up in the dark all day to-morrow. Aunty says it's naughty to let you

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out. I think auntie wouldn't want her little baby Lottie put up on that high shelf in the cold. Lottie wouldn't stay there; she would cry, and roll over and over, and roll off. You don't cry; you lie still; you're good. Some day, when Minie is a big woman, as big as auntie — *bigger* than auntie — Minie won't put you on the shelf any more. No, indeed, not at all. I'll lay you in the bed, and I'll lay your head on a big pillow. I won't play with you, because that would be naughty. I'll pat you and love you." And then Minie would sigh, and shut the clothes-press door and trot away.

But about that Sunday in which she sat in the door. She had been rather a noisy girl for an hour or so. Every few minutes either mamma, or aunty, or uncle had to say, "No, no, Minie;" or, "Minie mustn't do so to-day — this is Sunday." And at last she really began to feel that this was different from other days, or ought to be; so she sat down on the door-step and was still as a mouse for as much as five minutes.

Pretty soon the cows began to walk by, going home from their long, sunny day in the pasture, making a good deal of noise, as cows will, you know. Minie watched them, with the sober look on her face growing deeper and deeper; and at last she shook her little head at them.

“Cows,” she said, “you must not moo on Sunday. It is very naughty.”

And at this we all had to laugh, she spoke in such a funny, wise way. But uncle did more than laugh; he believes in helping little bits of girls, so he laid down his book and said:

“Minie, come here, uncle wants to talk with you.”

So Minie went across the floor with a great many glad little hops, and perched herself upon his knee. This is what they said:

“Do you really think, little Minie, that cows ought not to moo on Sunday?”

“Why, yes, uncle; they run and shake their bells and moo just as they do every day.”

“Well, does mamma ever take her little Bible and go out in the yard and read to them?”

And at this Minie laughed even louder than usual, and shook her head a great many times.

“One more question, Minie. Do you think that before cows go to sleep they kneel down and ask God to take care of them?”

Minie looked sober now.

“No, *poor* cows, they can't speak.”

“Well, now, what do you suppose makes them different from Minie? They can see and hear; they can eat, and drink, and sleep and play. But they can't read; they can't pray; they don't know anything about Sabbath; they don't even know there is any God. I'll tell you what is the matter. They have not any little, precious soul, as Minie has, that is going to live forever up in heaven if she will let it. Now, there is a verse in the Bible that the cows never heard. Do you want to learn it?”

Minie nodded, and uncle said, very slowly :

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’”

“Uncle,” she asked, after she had said over the verse a great many times, “does ‘holy’ mean keep *still*?”

“No, Minie, it means don’t do anything to-day that the little heart which goes pit-a-pat inside here tells you is wrong. If you listen, you will hear it say: ‘Mamma told me it was wrong to do so on God’s day.’”

In the evening, before any lamps except those in heaven were lighted, she came and climbed into my lap as I sat by the window, and, wonderful to tell, sat quite still in silence for several minutes, her little brain full of busy thoughts. At last she said:

“Aunty, what is up there?”

“Up where, darling?”

“Why, up there, in the blue?”

“The stars,” I said; “don’t you see them?”

“Yes, but what more. Does God live up there?”

"Yes," I answered, "and Jesus."

"And who more?"

"All good people who have died have gone there to be with Jesus. Dear little babies who die go up there, too."

"Is my little sister, baby Belle, there?"

"Yes, darling."

She was still then, with the thoughtful look on her sweet face; by and by she said, earnestly:

"Auntie, will Minie go there, too, some day?"

"Yes, darling, if she is a good girl, and one of Jesus' lambs."

"And will my mamma, and papa, and you go?"

"We hope so, dear."

"And my grandpa and grandma?"

Before I could answer she heard grandma's voice in the next room, and hopping down, said, as she ran away:

"I'll go and ask her."

Patter, patter, went the little feet, and I heard her sweet voice say:

“Grandma, will you go up in the blue with Minie, and live with Jesus, some day?”

“I hope so,” grandma answered, in sober tone, for truly it was a solemn question, though coming from baby lips.

Back came the little girl, her face all bright with joy, that her dear grandma was going too, when she stopped before the sofa, on which lay a favorite auntie, tossing and groaning with the toothache.

“Auntie Dule,” she said, pronouncing her name as well as she could, “will *you* go, too?”

“Go *where*?” asked auntie, speaking shortly, as people will who have the toothache.

“Why, up in the blue with Jesus; mamma, and papa, and grandpa, and grandma, and *all* of us, are going — will *you*?”

“Oh!” auntie said, wearily, holding her cheek to still the pain, “I’m sure I don’t know.”

I shall never forget the trembling tone, and the quivering of little Minie’s lip, as she came quickly back to me, saying, over and over again,

"Auntie Dule *don't know!* Auntie Dule *don't know!*"

Dear little children, boys and girls who read this — do *you* know? Are you sure that when you die God will send an angel to take you to himself?

Jesus says he will "gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom." Will you kneel down to-night, and every night after this, while you live, and ask him to make you one of his lambs, and take you when you die up to his dear home in heaven, to be with him forever?





CHAPTER XII.

PRESENTS.

THESE Christmas times, and the giving and receiving of presents, remind me of the troubles that Minie used to have in that line. I must tell you about them. She always had a long list of things that she wanted to buy, and she was troubled in the same way that a good many people are nowadays — her heart was larger than her purse. I was nearly always her confidant in all Christmas matters, and as she commenced her preparations two months, at least, before they were needed it was no small matter to keep so many secrets. One afternoon we devoted to

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doll hunting. A certain dolly was to be bought for a certain little cousin—a dolly who could open and shut her eyes, and whose dress could be taken off and put on again at the sweet will of her owner. Now, when I tell you that, added to this, she wanted to buy a big organ for her Auntie Dule, a pair of fur gloves for papa, a picture dictionary for grandpa, a furnished work-box for grandma, and a diamond necklace for mamma, and that to make all these fine presents she had seventy-seven cents, I hope you understand the embarrassment of my position.

On the particular afternoon that we started in search of a doll the sun was shining brightly on the snow, and the air was crisp and fresh with winter brightness. Minie, with her new white furs, cape and muff, cuffs reaching to her elbows, rubber boots reaching to her knees, fur hat tied over her ears, looked like a cunning little bit of a Santa Claus; and I am sure she felt quite as important as that person ever did.

“I’ve picked out my dolly, Auntie Belle,” she

said, as she trudged along by my side. "I saw it the other day, when I went to the office with papa. She is just lovely. She has a pink silk dress, and blue eyes, and her hair curls, and I should think maybe there was a trunk full of clothes for her in the store. Anyway, we could make some for her, couldn't we? and a night-gown, too?"

To all this I agreed, and then I bethought me to inquire the price.

"I found out," she said, triumphantly. "Don't you 'member, Auntie Belle, you told me I must always ask the price when I went to buy things? And I did. We didn't have to ask, though. Papa read it on a card that she had in her hand. I know just what it was. I 'membered all the words. It was two dollars and a half."

These words were pronounced very slowly and very gravely, as if the small lady had a realizing sense of their importance.

"Two dollars and a half!" I said, in dismay.

"Dear me! isn't that more money than you have to spare?"

She knew as much about the value of money as a mousie does, and no more; but I wanted to see what she would say.

"Yes," she said, with a little sigh, "papa said it was a good deal more than I had for all my presents. But, Auntie Belle, I mean to try to strike her down to a shilling. Don't you think I can?"

There was no use in trying to keep from laughing then, though there was a sober little face looking at me very earnestly.

"What do you mean, little pussie?" I said. "Where did you get that idea?"

"Why, that is the way. Don't you know? Papa said a man tried to strike him down to two dollars on his paper yesterday."

"Now, little Minie," I said, when I had sobered my face, "auntie wants to tell you something that you must try to remember all your life. It isn't polite to try to strike people down, and real

ladies and gentlemen never do it. People are supposed not to charge more for things than they are worth, and if you try to get them for less than they are worth, you are not being honest; don't you see?"

"Yes, ma'am," the little woman said, with a troubled face. "But, Auntie Belle, how can I get the dolly, if I can't strike her down?"

"You can't, as I see," I said. "You will have to find a cheaper one. That is no reason why you should try to get a thing for less than it is worth."

Her first lesson in economy and in shopping. She looked rather sober over it, but I hope Minie will be kept from joining that large class of coarse women who go around the world in search of "bargains."

I may as well say, just here, that we took a cheaper dolly, whose eyes staid open day and night; and I had to make her two little white night-gowns to console her little owner. But we paid the fair market price for her, with no strike-

ing down about it. The organ also had to be given up, and the diamond necklace. We made a fat pincushion instead, in the place of the necklace, and a mouse pen-wiper instead of the organ. The workbox we *made* in grandpa's shop. It was a beauty—a little white house, with two stories and an attic. It had chimneys and windows and doors, everything complete. It was made of pasteboard. We covered it with white satin paper and lined it with green satin. The windows had lace curtains, the doors were covered with bronze paper, to look as much like mahogany as possible. Then we made little chairs and sofas and tables, all out of pasteboard. The sofas and chairs we covered with green velvet, for pincushions. The arms of the sofas had little flannel tidies on them, on purpose to stick needles into, and the table had a little velvet-lined hole in the middle just large enough to drop a thimble in. Then in the corner we set a lovely doll cushion. It was made by taking a little china doll, about three inches long, and

standing it in a little round box; then we filled the box with cotton and covered the whole with pink silk, gathering it at the waist, around Miss Dolly, and adding a waist and sleeves of white lace. Then we put on a bridal veil of white lace, and our young lady was complete.

How we *did* enjoy making that house and the furniture. I think I was as wild over it as Minie was. Only while I am on that subject I may as well advise you, if ever you make such a box, not to stuff the cushions with cotton. I shall have to confess that I have heard my mother say :

“As for sticking a pin in that thing, I would rather stick them into the pasteboard itself, and be done with it.”

The picture dictionary we took up a subscription for, and every one of the sons and daughters contributed. We got a beauty. Minie was to make a little speech when she presented it. So we had a great time getting that speech written and learned. I was to write it. It had to do with grandpa's birthday, as well as Christmas,

and it must be something not too long for Minie to learn.

Finally it was done, and the great day came, and Minie, in a blue dress and white frilled apron, stood up by grandpa's chair and said it very nicely. I will copy it for you :

“ Dear grandpa, we feel very happy to-day,
To come hear and visit you on your birthday ;
And your big sons and daughters, at home and away,
Are all in the secret ; they want me to say
That this big book beside me they ask you to take,
And *keep* it and *love* it, and all for the sake
Of the children who love you so much, and who pray
That the dear Lord will give you a happy birthday.” .

You can see for yourselves that this wasn't remarkable poetry by any means, but by the smile on grandpa's face and the tears in his dear blue eyes we knew that he was just as pleased with it as though some real poet had written it.

After the thanks and the talking and laughing were over, he took out his pencil and a bit of paper, and in a few minutes he gave us this nice little note of thanks :

“ I thank the dear children, at home and away,
Who kindly remembered me on my birthday ;
And I thank the dear grandchild who gladly consented
To make a nice speech when the book she presented.”

There are reasons why there will never be a dearer piece of poetry than that is.

The most troublesome things were the fur gloves, Minie's heart was set on them. In vain I explained to her that fur glove would cost almost, if not quite, ten times the money that she had to spend. She shook her wise little head, and wanted to go and see just how much they cost.

“ Besides, Auntie Belle,” she said, “ you don't know how much I've got. It don't belong to my seventy-seven cent money. I've been saving up for it most a hundred years, I guess. It's ever since I can remember, anyway.”

We finally decided to ask grandpa's advice. So we went to him, bank in hand, and he counted the money. There were ever and ever so many pennies, and some three-cent pieces that kept slipping out of sight under the pennies so

as not to be counted. The counting took a long time. At its close he said :

“Well, I think we shall have to see about this right away. Get the furs and boots all on, and we will call on Mr. Judson and see what he has to say to us.”

Grandpa told us afterward all about it. They went to the great room, where many men and women were at work, and where everybody was just as busy as could be. The owner of all the busy machines was there, and as he knew grandpa he waited on them himself. Minie was a long time trying to decide what she wanted, but at last she found just the pair. The price was quite a good deal more than she had in her bank, but grandpa poured it out on the desk and said :

“There is your money — count it.”

So the gentleman went to work, and the three-cent pieces hid just as they did before. And first one man and then another came to ask him questions, and he lost his place and had to begin over again, until finally, having succeeded in

counting out two dollars just as one of the workmen came for orders, he swept the little heap of pennies and wicked three-cent pieces that were left into the little bank.

“There that will do,” he said. “I haven’t time to count any more, and I’m not sure that I should promise to do it if I should lose twenty dollars by declining. The gloves are paid for, my little woman. Keep the rest of the money as a start on next year.”

What a delighted little mousie she was to find that the gloves were paid for, and she had a whole heap of pennies left. She came privately to me to know if I didn’t think that she could almost get the organ for “Auntie Dule” now that she had so much money. We counted it, and there were just sixty-three cents.



CHAPTER XIII.

GRACIE'S LETTER.

DEAR COUSIN MINIE :

I guess you didn't ever know me, 'cause I didn't ever get any letter from you. I'm Gracie — that's one of my names — that is the way it looks on paper, but I pronounce it "Dacie." I'm a big tall girl. I can stand up all alone — can you? and I can hold the fork myself; only some times it tips, and lets the tatoes all down in my neck; but that is the fault of the fork; it isn't my fault — oh, no, not at all. Once my mamma had society. Did you ever go to society? Some of it is fun, and some of it is a great deal of trouble. For one thing you have to be dressed up. I do

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think that such a bother. The worst is having your hair combed. Do the mouses get in your hair, and make little nots all through it? And then they kiss you so much, and they say, "Come here, little darling," and you don't want to go a bit; but your mamma says you must, because it isn't pretty not to go when you are called. Perhaps they don't do so to you, because you are not a minister's daughter. I think it is a great deal of trouble to be a minister's daughter. And so mamma had society. The getting ready was real fun. I helped. I tipped over the pitcher full of water on the chamber carpet. I didn't mean to do that. I was going to lift it up to help mamma, and it slipped; but I took a tidy right off the big chair and wiped it all up nice, so it didn't do a bit of harm; then I took the towels all off the rack and put them in the bath-tub, and set the water running, so they would be nice and clean. After that mamma sent me down stairs to help Anna. After dinner mamma wanted me to go to sleep, but I didn't want to, and I made

up my mind I wouldn't. Mamma rocked and sang, and rocked and sang, and I put my thumb in my mouth and my head over her shoulder, just as if I was going to sleep; but the more she sang the wider awake I got. When papa came in mamma said: "I'm sure I don't know what is the matter with this baby; she *will not* go to sleep, and it is long past her sleepy time." Then I said: "Ah! ga! ga! ah!" They didn't know what that meant, but it meant I was so tickled because they thought I was going to sleep. Then papa said: "Let me try her." So I was dumped over his shoulder, and he sang, "Peep, peep, go to sleep," and "Twinkle, twinkle," and everything else he could think of; and every once in a while he would move me softly around to see if I was asleep, and then I would laugh. At last they gave it up, and I was almost sorry that I hadn't gone to sleep after all, because I had to be dressed. Then the ladies began to come. They all kissed me, and were so glad that I was awake, and so was I. Mamma told them

how hard she had tried to get me to sleep. She said she didn't know what was the matter with me, that I had never acted so before. She said she believed that I knew they were going to have company — a little bird must have told me. Just then I was drinking a glass of milk, and this tickled me so that I began to laugh, and then began to choke and we had a great time, and the milk got spilled right in Mrs. Snow's lap. The reason why I was so tickled was because it seemed so funny to hear mamma say that a little bird must have told me about the company, when she told me herself. Didn't they know I had ears? and didn't I hear the talking and planning about it all the week? It is so funny that folks should think that we don't hear because we don't talk all the time. At tea time I had a great deal of fun. I sat up in my high chair beside papa, and he told mamma that he would take care of me; but papa always talks and forgets all about me; so I took the spoon out of his tea and put it in his sauce, and put some of the sauce in my

mouth, but it was dreadful sour, not half so good as milk, so I didn't take any more; but I spread some of it on my dress, and it made a lovely color. Pretty soon papa found it out, and he looked so sober that I was sorry I did it, and Anna came and took me away. I cried some and wanted to go back, but she wouldn't let me, and she took off my pretty dress, and said I had spoiled it; but I don't know what she meant by that, because it was a great deal prettier since I had painted it. While I was thinking about it I went to sleep, and when I woke up don't you think the people had all gone home, and it was morning.

I am coming to see you. Papa and mamma and I are going to get in the cars and come. The cars go "choo! choo!" Did you ever hear them? That is every word they can say. In the night they talk too, and don't go to sleep. We are going to have a nice time. Are you *so* glad that we are coming? I am glad. I can't write any more, because I must help mamma get all

- ready. There is a great heap of clothes on the table. I am going right over there to pull them on to the floor.

Good-by,

COUSIN GRACIE.

This was the letter that threw Minie into a perfect flutter of glee. She had each one in the house read it to her, until very soon it appeared she could read it herself without missing a word. The best of it was true. Cousin Gracie was coming to see us, and Cousin Gracie's mamma and papa were coming with her, or she with them I don't quite know which it was. I was the only one of the family who had ever seen Gracie, and the last time I had the honor she was a wee mousiè, only three weeks old. So we all shared Minie's curiosity to know just how she looked. There came a day when we were all very busy, doing those last things that always leave themselves to be done at the last minute before company comes. Quite the busiest one in the house,

to judge by her hurried and important air, was Minie. All day long she trotted up and down the hill leading from her father's house to "grandpa's," bringing her treasures with which to adorn the little comer's room. Her best dolly, the one with "real" eyes and a blue muslin dress, was laid on the small white bed that was to be Miss Gracie's resting-place.

"Why, Minie!" we said, knowing how dear that dolly was to her heart, "Gracie is only a baby, you know. I'm afraid she will break this doll. Why don't you bring one of the others for her?"

"Why," said Minie, with grave and earnest face, "Emmeline Sarah has but one arm, and Susan Amelia's eyes have both come out. You know they were made of beads, and one day they lost out, so I guess I will have to leave this and run the risk of her breaking it. I guess maybe she won't hurt it, at all, because I asked Jesus to take care of it. and watch her all the time she had hold of it."

Wondering much just what the little girl's idea of prayer was, I said :

“ But, darling, what if, after all, Gracie should throw dolly on the floor and break her? You know she is only a little baby, and would not know any better.”

Will my faithless heart ever forget the look of the sweet earnest eyes that were raised to mine as she said gravely, not without the least bit of a sigh :

“ Well, then you know, Auntie Belle, it will have to be just right, the best way, because Jesus wouldn't let it happen unless it was, because I asked him to take care of her, you know. And, anyhow, we must give the best things to people, mustn't we? or else we wouldn't love them so much as we do ourselves.”

I am so glad to tell you that Gracie handled the sweet blue-eyed dolly with as much tenderness as though it had been a real true baby and she had been its mother. There is another thing I ought to tell you, and that is, that Minie was by no

means in this angelic mood all the time. She could cry with all her might, and make herself and all the rest of us miserable over a broken-nosed darling, sometimes without regard to the fact that of course it was the "best thing" or it would not have happened. In fact, the little woman was very much like the rest of us. She knew all about how she ought to feel about her little troubles; but she could feel right about them *before* they happened a great deal better than she could afterward. I wish you could see the little white bed that grandma made ready for my lady Gracie — so sweet and white and puffy, with a white spread quilted by her own hands in wreaths and shells, and all manner of pretty things. It wasn't a cradle, for Gracie had never been rocked to sleep in her life; nor yet was it a crib, being not the right shape to be called by that name. It just answered to the name that Minie gave it and no other, and that "a dear little baby bed."

After all I was not at home when the much-

watched for people arrived, or, rather, I was not within hearing, if the truth must be told. The very day before this, Minie's uncle, who was not yet her uncle at all, had come, and was claiming a good share of my attention; so it happened that I came down stairs after something that was needed, and came plump upon a small morsel, with very large eyes and rosy lips, whose little body was dressed in blue and white, and whose little mouth said, with great earnestness and decision, "No! no! No! no!" when I attempted to kiss her; and that was my niece Gracie, grandpa's other darling. You are to hear a good deal about her after this; for though I did not have her near me so often nor so long as I had Minie, yet she was a lady about whom one could learn a great deal in a short time, as you will see when I tell you some of her sayings and doings. I may as well say just here that we had that party very soon after Gracie arrived. Indeed we had been waiting for her, as they had been somewhat delayed. Minie carried out her programme ex-

actly, even to the ride in the big barouche, and cried with all her might when she found that I was not going to ride back with her, but was going off with the "new uncle gentleman." I think I should have cried a little too if I had known that it would be a whole year or more before I should see my little darling again. In fact, if you will never tell the "new uncle," nor anybody else, I will just whisper to you that when it grew dark in the cars I hid my eyes in the corner of the seat and put a few tears in my handkerchief, just to remember the day by. As for Gracie, she did some very loud screaming that afternoon; not on my account. Bless you, she didn't care then whether she ever saw me again or not. On the whole, I think she would a little rather *not* have seen me any more. But it was such a thing as never happened to her in all her life before, to be left in the house with a strange cousin while her mamma went off to church. What did she care if her Auntie Belle *was* going to be married! One day last winter

I told her just how she acted, and she said: Auntie Belle, did I *really?*" Then after a little: "Auntie Belle, I don't see how babies can bear it to stay babies so long, they know so little, and they *are* so silly."





CHAPTER XIV.

THE PARTY.

SUCH a bustle of preparation as we were in at our house. "Our house" means the new uncle's and mine. We had been keeping it for nearly a year when Minie came to see us. Mamma and she came together, and papa was coming after them. Well, on this particular day we were getting ready for a party. On one unlucky day I had said in Minie's presence that I had half a mind to invite my Sunday-school class to spend the afternoon and take tea with us while Minie was there. After that she gave me no peace until I promised; and mamma and Nora and I had been for two days getting ready. You see

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it was no small matter to invite my class to tea. It was not made up of half a dozen or so nice little girls, or manly boys. I had the infant class. Forty infants! Some of them just old enough to cry and want to go home to mamma right in the midst of the lesson. "The very little ones will not come, I suppose," I said, when we talked the plans over. "They will be afraid to." When you grow up and have an infant class, and are going to invite them to tea, you needn't plan in any such way. Every single one of them came. We called it coming to tea, but coming to milk would have been the truer name. They didn't drink tea, and they *did* drink milk. The long table looked very pretty when we had it all arranged. There was a large bouquet of beautiful bright flowers in the center, and at each end a smaller one. There was a cup at each plate filled with rich milk. Some of our guests we knew were too small to be trusted with goblets, and of course we had to treat them all alike; so we used cups. There were nice light biscuits, all

spread, and with a slice of tender chicken tucked away between each one. There were little puffy patty cakes, brimful of raisins, and frosted so thick that they looked like snowballs. This last piece of folly Minie is responsible for; she begged for it. "Such nonsense!" said Minie's mamma; but she beat the eggs with all her might and looked on well pleased. We hadn't a great deal of cake. We had just sense enough left to remember that the mothers would thank us to be very sparing of that; but we had great pound sweetings, baked to just the right shade of brown; and the crowning beauty, at least in Minie's eyes, was a glass dish full of bright yellow oranges, one for each. At precisely three o'clock they came. Not one at a time, ringing the door-bell and walking in properly as there elders do; they didn't even come by twos and threes. Somewhere on the road they had gathered, and been waiting the exact moment that they had been invited, for as the clock struck the gate clicked, and in they rushed, the whole forty.

You needn't expect me to give you any idea of the din there was. I couldn't do it. They all wanted their hats and sacks taken off at once; and then they wanted them on again to go outdoors, and we managers almost lost our senses trying to keep them straight. Such an afternoon as that was! We couldn't leave the little mortals alone for two minutes without having an accident or a quarrel; and they were every one of them trying to be perfect, too. The only trouble was that, like the most of us, they didn't succeed. Minie had brought out her treasures with which to entertain them. Among other things was Albertina Seraphina, a new doll, with real hair, and a silk dress with lace puffings. It was before the days of overskirts, or she certainly would have had one. That doll which we had meant to be such a joy to them was a source of trouble all the time. Before the afternoon was over I heartily wished that the pink-checked darling was three hundred miles away, safely shut up in her grandmother's bureau drawer. First one

child cried to hold her and then another, and little Minie's face was red, and the tears stood on the edges of her eyes half the time lest her precious child should be dropped or bruised. Finally the trouble reached its height. Susy Phelps and Carrie Stone, two of the more quiet children, had been allowed to take Miss Abbie, which was the short for Albertina, over into a corner to look at her, while I showed the great album full of pictures to the smaller ones; but Susy and Carrie quarreled, and this was the way of it.

"She is bigger than any doll you ever had," said Susy, in a superior tone, and with a disagreeable emphasis on the "you."

"I guess I've had as big dolls as *you* have, any day," Carrie said, quickly.

Then Susy: "Oh, Carrie Stone! what a story! I've had the biggest doll ever was in this town."

"You haven't, either."

"I have, too!"

"I say you haven't! You are an old story-

teller. I'll tell my mother, and she won't let me play with you any more."

"I don't care; I don't want to play with you. And I shan't ask you to my party, either."

"You needn't. I won't come if you do. But my doll is bigger than yours for all that."

"She isn't, either. Mine is bigger than this."

"Oh, that is a story! She isn't near as big."

"She is!"

"She isn't!"

"She is!"

And then they talked so loud and so fast that we couldn't tell what either of them said, and they were too angry to even attend to me when I put down the album and came over to talk to them; and finally Susy Phelps burst into a perfect storm of tears, and ran screaming down the yard out at the gate, and so home, without hat or cloak or sack. After that we locked Miss Albertina Seraphina into my clothes-press and wouldn't let her come out again while the party lasted, though she was much the best behaved

person there: and Minie's mamma said if we would send some of the guests into the other clothes-press and lock them in we should have a much better time. Pretty soon we all went to tea, all but Susy Phelps. I am glad to say that her mother wouldn't let her come back, so she ate her supper at home if she had any. We had great trouble in getting our company seated; at least a dozen of them wanted to sit at the head of the table. As we had called this Minie's birthday party, I had arranged to seat her at the head, and put the basket of puffy cake in front of her plate. I think it was that cake that made the mischief, and very troublesome mischief there was. I didn't know how naughty a party of little people could act when they tried.

"If I can't sit there, I don't want to sit anywhere," one of them said.

And another: "I ought to sit there. I'm the oldest."

"No, you ain't," said a pet little mousie of

about five, "I'm sure I am the oldest; I had a birthday last week."

I hadn't the least idea what to do with any of them. It was new business to me. I had never had any but grown-up company before, who sat where I told them to, and waited until they got home before they made any remarks.

"Minie," I said, "suppose you take this seat, and we will let Trudy sit there, as she is older than the rest.

And you can imagine the wicked state of mind into which we had all got when I tell you that our little Minie, who had had the most careful teaching not only as to what was polite but what was *right*, actually puckered her lips and said she "wanted to sit there where Auntie Belle had said she could, and she wasn't going to sit anywhere else. Then indeed I was at my wits' end. I thought if the minister were only here—did I tell you that the new uncle was a minister?—he would be sure to do something; but he had been sent for just a little while before. It began to

look to me very much as though we should none of us get any supper; but suddenly Minie's mamma, who had managed young parties before, came to the rescue.

“Now,” said she, briskly, “I'll tell you what we are all going to do. You are each of you going to take a seat just exactly where I put you and we are not going to say another word about it, only if there is any one who would rather not have any supper than to sit where I put her, she needn't eat a single bit; we will excuse her, and let her go and sit on that lounge until the rest are through. Now, Minie, I'll seat you first; you are to sit here,” pointing to a seat half way down the table; “and that little girl in a pink dress may come and take this seat at the head.”

Wise mamma! The little girl in the pink dress was the smallest and quietest and poorest of all the company, and was perfectly astonished at the notice taken of her. What a queer way to treat company, I couldn't help thinking; but it had the effect that we wanted. Each one slipped

quietly into her seat. There was that in the lady's face that said I mean what I say, and no one, it seemed, had the least idea of going without her supper. After that we had a peaceful time. To be sure, there were rivers of milk spilled, and some of the very little ones would take more cake than we dared let them eat, but those things we expected. The minister came home before we were through supper, and after it was over he carried them all off to the parlor, and they had a happy time. "If you had kept him at home to play with the children this afternoon I don't believe we should have had a bit of trouble." This was what Minie's mamma said as she heard the gleeful laughs that came to us from the parlor. The next thing that happened was a hard shower. It came up so suddenly that we all started in amazement, as the rain rushed in at us from the open doors and windows. Then what a hurrying to and fro we had, closing windows all over the house. As we met each on the stairs we would say, "I hope it is only a shower;"

or, "How will those children ever get home?" But if it was a shower, it meant to last until we would call it by a more dignified name. It rained and rained, and the more we tried to comfort the children with the thought that it would soon be over the harder the rain seemed to come. Some of the younger ones added to the shower with many tears lest they would never get home again. At last we began to change the tone of our comfort and say, "Oh, they will send for you don't be afraid." But "they" didn't. They evidently thought that people who had gotten themselves into such a scrape as that might get out the best way they could. It grew to be a serious question how the little mortals were to be got home. We held many counsels over the kitchen table; we talked by twos, the third one going in to keep guard over the little prisoners while the others discussed ways and means. It ended in the minister getting out rubbers and umbrella, and going across lots to a great-hearted neighbor's; from whence he presently came in a

long hay wagon, with big brown horses harnessed before it. Into this wagon, after much struggling with hats, shawls and gloves, we rolled and tumbled the little sprites, and it was with a sigh of great relief and satisfaction that we saw the brown horses move slowly away. What an afternoon we had *had!* We told each other with much laughing that we should never forget it, *never*—and I don't believe we ever will. The minister did his sighing somewhat later in the evening, and I don't think there is any danger of his forgetting the first party that we ever gave. The next day we lived the funny part of it over again in a letter to grandpa and grandma, and after a few days there came back this answer:

“Grandpa says, ‘Tell Minie I am very glad that she shut Albertina Seraphina into the clothes-press. I should hardly have liked her to be influenced by all the little people who were around her; and tell Auntie Belle that I recommend her before she gives another party to read

the story in the Bible of the man who, before he built his house, sat down and counted the cost. Perhaps she did, though, and if she had interest on her money, all right."

I studied a little over this message before I decided just what it meant. I wonder if you can all tell?





CHAPTER XV.

PRAYERS.

THE next time I saw the two little girls they were at grandma's house. We were all there spending a vacation, and having such a good time as was to be had nowhere else in the world, Gracie was a little three-year-old darling, as full of fun and frolic as a mortal child could be. Oh, the mischief that that morsel could get through in a day! It seemed to me that the little feet and hands and tongue must ache at night; but they were never quite ready to have night come — in fact as it drew toward bedtime she seemed to have more to do than before, and many a nice

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plan was spoiled right in the best of it by the call to bed. I don't suppose there ever was a child who had queerer ideas about things than our Gracie had. The most unluckly thing that could happen was to have her waken in the morning with the announcement, "Gracie is a naughty baby this day." She seemed to think that this made everything straight, and nobody had a right to complain as long as she took the pains to explain to them what she meant to do. Sure enough, from morning until night everything went wrong. If she had planned everything that was to happen, with the direct aim of helping her to be a naughty girl, she could not have done it better; so that we grew to dread the days that were begun with that sentence, "Gracie is a naughty baby!" The worst thing about it was her serene unconsciousness of having done anything wrong. Hadn't she told us that she meant to be naughty? Very pleasant days those were in which she announced with bright eyes and smiling face, "Gracie is a good girl to

day!" And a good girl she would be. Troubles that in her bad days would have caused a perfect tempest would roll off and leave not a shadow behind them.

"Why can't you always be such a sweet, pleasant little girl?" I would ask her after one of these sunshiny days. I can see now the astonished look in her great gray eyes as she said:

"Why, Auntie Belle, this is my *good* day. I'm not a naughty baby to-day at all. But I can't always be good, you know."

It is about the close of one of the naughty days that I want to tell you. A great deal of mischief had been done, the last being to burn her little fat finger in taking hold of a certain stick that she was not to touch. The finger was done up in cotton, after a vain attempt on grand-ma's part to put a "cluster" on it. She seemed to think that a "cluster" was something a great deal harder to endure than a burn, and screamed as hard again over the prospect of having one on as she did at the accident. At last she settled

down, and we said good-by to the people down stairs, and mamma and she and I went up to get ready for sleepy time. Sober talk was going on all the time the chubby cheeks and hands were being washed, and when at last the white night-gown was on, and buttoned from throat to toes, her face was grave and thoughtful.

“Well,” she said, looking into her mother’s face, and speaking slowly and solemnly, “I’ve got a good deal to say to-night, haven’t I? I wish I had come that last time when you called me, I shouldn’t have felt *quite* so bad then. It was so near night I should have thought I could have remembered. Mamma, which do you think is the baddest thing that I did to-day?”

“I don’t think I can tell,” mamma said, with a sober, troubled face; “and that isn’t the thing that you are to think about, anyway. It makes no difference which is the worst thing; everything that you knew was wrong to do has made Jesus feel badly, and you want to ask him to forgive you for them all; besides, you want to ask

for a new heart, so that you will be willing to try not to be so naughty."

There was never a time in her little life that Gracie wasn't ready for an argument. She tried to get one up now.

"But, mamma, if I could find out which was the very baddest thing that I did I could make up my mind that I certainly true would never do that again, and then I would be sure not to be so bad next time. Don't you see?"

I shall have to confess that I felt very much like laughing. She was such a little bit of a mouse, and she was trying so hard to be wise. But her poor troubled mamma did not smile.

"I see that you don't know what you are talking about," she said. "I can only hope that when you are older you will be a great deal wiser."

This was certainly hard for a little girl who thought she made a very sensible remark. She gave a little bit of a sigh, and then knelt down beside her mamma. Very slowly and reverently

she went through the prayer that I think every little girl in the world must know, "Now I lay me down to sleep." After the "Amen" she always added a little prayer that she said came right out of her own heart; and to-night it was, "Dear Jesus, please bless Gracie; make my heart not feel so bad; make me feel just as though I was a very good girl, and take away my naughty sins and give me some good sins." That was really the most that Gracie knew about it. There seemed to be no use in trying to make her understand that everything that wasn't right was wrong, and that God thought so. It troubled the mamma a great deal to see that her little girl was getting the idea that because there were some things that she didn't do, and that other little girls *did* do, therefore she was a much better girl than they after all.

"Do you think that is so very strange?" grandpa said, as she talked it over with him after we went down stairs. "Why there are older people than she who reason in just that way. It

isn't an hour ago that I was talking with John about not speaking in a very respectful manner and he said, 'I never swear, anyway. Jim White used to swear every time you told him anything that he didn't want to do. I knew you didn't hear him very often, but that was the way he used to do. *I never swore in my life.*' And the poor fellow looked as though he thought I ought to call him a remarkably good boy, because he had reminded me of a sin that he never was guilty of."

"That is the very feeling that Gracie seems often to have," mamma said. "Don't you think it strange? I don't know how to deal with it."

"I don't think it is an unusual feeling by any means," said grandpa. "In fact, I don't know but every one has more or less of it. Don't you remember how the man in the Bible prayed, 'Lord I thank thee that I am not as other men?'"

Now I wonder if you can think why I am telling you this talk, which sounds very sober to

you perhaps? The reason is that those words of my dear father set me to thinking. I have thought of them a great many times since, and I have been very much surprised to see how *many* times I have had just the same thought; how many times I have found pleasure in thinking. "Well, I wouldn't do as *that* girl did for anything," as if God cared anything about that. I wonder if you ever have any such thoughts?

I must tell you about another of Gracie's prayers. It was at the close of a long summer day. She and Minie had been playing from early morning away into the evening, and a more weary little being than the one who slowly clambered up the long stairs, yawning at every step, could hardly be imagined. She was very independent though, as usual. She wouldn't be helped; she would take every single step herself on her weary little feet; she would unbutton the brown boots, and unfasten the blue sash, and unstrap the white stockings, just as usual. At

last every pretty little garment was laid carefully away, and mamma said:

“Now my little girl is all ready for her evening prayer.”

“No,” Gracie said; and I can seem to see the little determined face that she gravely turned toward her mother, and hear the decided ring to her voice as she said it—“No, mamma, no prayers to-night.”

“Oh, yes,” said mamma, gently and coaxingly, “my little girl don’t want to go to bed without asking Jesus to take care of her to-night, and thanking him for giving her such a happy day.”

“Yes she did,” she said, “want just that. She was tired of saying a prayer every single night of her life; she had done it for ever and ever so many years, ever since she was born, and there was no use of always doing it; she couldn’t say a single prayer to-night.” And she laid herself down in her little white bed as though the matter was settled, and to all mamma’s coaxings

she answered just that one sentence, "No prayers to-night."

Mamma looked very much puzzled. She wasn't in the habit of allowing her little girl to do just as she liked: in fact, Miss Gracie had been very carefully taught to do just as mamma said, which made it seem all the more strange that she should suddenly take the control of herself in this way. I felt very badly. I was sure that mamma would think that she must make her little girl do as she told her, and the poor little thing was so tired and so determined to have her own way that I felt sure there would be trouble. There we stood, mamma with the little boots in her hand, I with the lamp in my hand on the way to the hall, and Gracie in her crib looking solemnly up at us. In a few minutes the troubled look cleared from mamma's face, and she said in a quiet, grave voice:

"Very well, if my little girl wants to go to sleep and lie through the long dark night without asking Jesus to keep her, why she will have to

do it. If it were something that you were to do for me I should have to *make* you do it ; but Jesus doesn't care anything about prayers that people say because they are obliged to. He will not *make* you pray ; he does not care for your prayer if you don't want to say it. Come, Auntie Belle, you and I must go down stairs."

Little Gracie was astonished. She had never been deserted in that way before. She turned her great wide open eyes full on her mother, but she hadn't the least idea of giving up her own way for all that.

"Don't you mean to kiss me?" she asked, in a very sober tone.

"No, I think not," said mamma, in an equally sober way. "I can't think you care anything about my kisses when you don't care that you make me feel badly. Besides, if you don't care for Jesus' love I'm sure you can't want mine."

And still Gracie kept her grave face. Down stairs we went, although it almost broke mamma's heart to go away without a good-night kiss

from her darling. For about ten minutes she fidgeted around down stairs, near enough to the door to hear any sound that might be made in the room above. Then we heard a little body roll out of bed, and two small feet rushed across the room to the stair door, and a trembling little voice called out, "Mamma!" It took only about a second for mamma to answer that call, and by the time she reached the room above Gracie was ready to rush into her arms, and with a burst of tears she said, "Gracie wants to say her prayers. She *docs* want Jesus to take care of her; she does want your kisses." And a perfect shower of them she got. Through a great many tears the evening prayer was said, and in five minutes more the little girl was in a happy sleep.

"How much better it was to manage her that way than it would have been to whip her into saying her prayer," Auntie Julia said in a burst of admiration over the mamma's management.

Grandpa had been walking the floor, wearing a sober face, during this time. When either of his

darlings were in trouble it always sobered grandpa's face. I wondered just what he was thinking, and pretty soon he told us.

"I can't help wishing," he said, "that every one's heart was so tender, so willing to melt when Jesus has been grieved. I wonder how long it is before we call to him after we have hurt his feelings by having our own way?"

Grandpa had such a strange way of talking about these things, just as if Jesus were right here with us.





CHAPTER XVI.

QUEER IDEAS.

MY RAY said something this morning that made me think of some of Minie's sayings of which I had forgotton to tell you. We had company. Ray in his high chair, sat looking steadily at the stranger's face, his mind busy with wondering thoughts. I think I can guess what some of them were. Only a few days ago he discovered that each person in the world had a name that was his or her own property. Up to that time he had imagined that the general name "lady" or "gentleman" was all that anybody owned. This new thought was evidently troubling him. He only waited until I had taken my
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seat beside him to say with earnest face and a ringing voice, "Mamma, what is that man's name?" The question took me back ten years and more, to the time when Minie was bent on asking questions, and I mean to go back and tell you about it.

She was very much given to asking just that question that my Ray did, and she always pointed her wee finger right at the person about whom she was talking. Now if you have never tried it, you haven't the least idea how awkward it is to be sitting among a room full of people, some of them strangers, and have a shrill little voice shout out just in a pause in the conversation, so that everybody is attending, "Auntie Belle, who is that man?" This was the uncomfortable thing that Minie of three years was very apt to do. We tried very hard to break her of it, but she was always in such solemn earnest, and was so sure that she was asking in just the right time, that it was hard to scold her.

One day there was a great meeting in our

church, and the town was full of strangers, ministers and teachers, and all those good people who are apt to go to great meetings. Almost every house in town was turned into a willing hotel to entertain the guests. You may be sure that Minie's grandpa was not behind in this pleasant duty, and our house was full. Minie had been very much interested in the strangers, and had asked the usual number of questions; so I thought I would be wiser than she for once, and get rid of some of them. It chanced that on the second day of the meeting we were to have two more guests at dinner. I was combing Minie's hair and putting on her third clean apron to get her ready for dinner, when it occurred to me to give her a lesson at the same time.

"Minie," I said, "there are to be two gentlemen to dinner to-day whom you have not seen before. They are to sit right opposite you, at grandpa's right, and auntie wants to tell you about them. They are ministers, one is an old gentleman and one is young. Their names are

Mr. Eastman and Mr. Briggs. They live a great way off. I have forgotten the name of the place. Now you must say those names over a good many times, so you will remember; and you won't ask me at the table what they are, will you? because it isn't polite, you know. If you forget you will wait until after dinner to ask, won't you?"

"I won't forget," said Minie, very gravely. "I don't ever forget, Auntie Belle. I shall know their names always."

This was true. She had a wonderful little memory, especially about things that were not worth remembering.

"Very well," I said, quite satisfied with my teaching, and feeling glad that I should be able to eat my dinner without the fear of being asked that embarrassing question.

Half an hour afterward Minie, in ruffle apron, hair combed smoothly and tied back by the pinkest of ribbons, sat in her high chair, and with grave face and folded hands waited while the

white-haired minister asked a blessing. She was very busy studying the faces of the two strangers, so busy that her little tongue was very quiet. So perfect was she in her behavior that the younger of the two gentlemen finally said :

“Your little one is remarkably well behaved for one so young.”

It was just at that important moment, when the attention of every one was called to her, that she suddenly spoke in the clearest, most ringing voice imaginable :

“Auntie Belle, which is Mr. Briggs, and which is Mr. Eastman?” And she pointed her two little forefingers, one at each, as if she meant to shoot them. Of course they were a good deal astonished, and of course a long explanation had to be made as to her way of getting acquainted with people; and then I had to tell about my attempt to teach her beforehand. The way I had succeeded they could see for themselves. They seemed wonderfully amused, and laughed until they brought a red glow all over Minie's

cheeks, and she hardly knew whether to laugh or cry.

“It was all right,” grandpa said, as later in the day he held the little girl in his arms, and patted the brown head and kissed the quivering lips and flushing cheeks, for by this time Minie thought we had laughed enough, and had almost made up her mind to cry. “Tell Auntie Belle that next time she must teach the *whole* of the lesson instead of stopping half way. You kept your promise, and didn’t ask what their names were.”

“I ’membered,” said Minie, with a little sob. “I know their names now.”

“Of course you do, and if you couldn’t tell which was which that can hardly be called your fault.”

“Half-way teaching,” said grandpa again, after the little girl had been comforted and gone happily to her play. “There is a world of mischief done by that kind of teaching. If you are going to be a teacher you want to take this for a

lesson, and be careful that you don't forget *half* of the lesson."

Grandma was rather afraid that I would feel hurt. She was a grandma who all her life was looking out for and being careful of other people's feelings, so now she said :

"But, after all, father, this was only fun, not real genuine teaching. It really doesn't make much difference how many of her funny little questions Minie asks as long as she is such a little bit of a mouse. Don't you think we may take things too soberly in this world?"

And then grandpa turned his dear loving eyes on me to see whether I was taking it too soberly, as he said :

"I don't think there is any harm in getting an earnest lesson for the future even out of our little Minie's queer sayings and doings, I suppose that is one reason why the sunny days of babyhood are given to us, instead of our having a grown-up young lady all at once."

Years after that I had two little girls who

came to recite arithmetic lessons. One day they had to be kept to get their lesson. It was a line in the multiplication table. They whispered together a minute, and then they set about their work with energy. When they came to recite Laura went through with the first half of the line very perfectly, then she stopped. "Go, on," I said, and I have to smile yet to think of the absurd little voice that said, "Sister Ann learned the other half!" It brought back in a minute my half lesson to Minie and my fathers' words. I told the little girls the story right away, and tried to make them want to do things with all their hearts, and not half way.

Minie had some other queer ideas. Once when I was dressing her for a walk she was very anxious to wear a wide blue sash with a bright pink merino dress that she had on.

"Why Minie," I said, "that would be dressing in very bad taste. Don't you know that pink and blue don't look nicely together?"

"Why don't they?" she said, not inclined to

be convinced. It was a question not easy to answer to a three-year-old child, so I said:

"Never mind why they don't. You can't always have the reason explained. You must be content to know that it is so because Auntie Belle says so."

I had my little bit of a lesson out of that. We were in grandma's room putting the finishing touches to the dressing. Grandpa was at the table shaving.

"It is a pretty heavy responsibility that 'Auntie Belle' is taking," he said, looking around at us just then. "After that sentence you must be very careful indeed that what you say is '*just so.*'"

How many times I have thought of that since when I have been tempted to say "I haven't time," when I meant "I don't want to;" or to say "In a few minutes," when I meant as many hours.

But I started out to tell you how Minie applied her new idea. The next morning I was up at

the other house, waiting for Minie's mamma to go out with me. She stood at the glass arranging her hat, and Minie at her side was looking up soberly and thoughtfully into the glass.

"Somebody feels rather grave over the prospect of a walk being taken without her," mamma said, in a low tone, calling my attention to the sober face. But it seemed that she was mistaken as to the cause of the gravity. Just then Minie spoke ;

"Mamma, I don't think your face is in good taste at all."

"Not in good taste !" said mamma, very much astonished. "What in the world can the child mean ?"

"It is so, mamma. Your eyes are blue like the sky, and your lips and cheeks are *just as red* ; and Auntie Belle said that red and blue were very bad taste, and that I was never to wear them together, and you have to wear yours all the time. I am so sorry for you, mamma."

Mamma left off trying to tie her bonnet strings into a nice bow, and sat down in the nearest chair to laugh.

“I don't know what will come next,” she said, as soon as she could speak. “If my little girl has got so that she objects to my cheeks and eyes because they are not in good taste, I must be prepared for anything. Is Auntie Belle's teaching all going to be as inconvenient as that?”

We heard a good deal about it after that; and I am not sure even to this day whether they laughed most at Minie for her queer idea, or at Auntie Belle for her queer teaching.

Grandpa had a different way of teaching. Let me give you one other little story that will show you how he did it. Among the many wedding presents that my friends gave me was a butter-knife. That I think I thought more of than of most all the others, because my dear little Minie was the giver. I brought it home with me when

I came on a visit, and we used it on grandma's table to please Minie. One day she watched her papa very anxiously as he helped himself to butter, and seemed relieved when he set down the dish.

"What now?" he said, with a little laugh, as he noticed her thoughtful face. "Have I done anything to hurt your little bits of feelings?"

"Why," said Minie, with a little sigh, "I was most afraid. You scraped it so hard, papa, I was most afraid you would lose the name off in the butter, and somebody would eat it up, and we couldn't find it any more."

"What name?" papa said, in great amazement, while the rest of us burst into merry laughter.

"Why, the name, papa," she said, struggling with her embarrassment. "Don't you know we had the man put words on it, 'Auntie Belle, from Minie,' and I was afraid you would scrape them off."

At this point the laugh became so loud that Minie slipped down from her chair and ran to her

refuge, grandma's lap, hiding her face in grand-
ma's neck. It was on the evening of the same
day that grandpa took his darling in his arms,
and I, passing back and forth at my work, heard
bits of the sweet talk that they were having.

"The man engraved the name on the knife,"
grandpa said, "and after that no one could get it
off, no matter how hard they might try." Then
followed a very plain talk about engraving, how
it was done, and why it couldn't be got off.
When I went that way again they had gone to
another part of the subject.

"There is a verse in the Bible about it,"
grandpa was saying. "It says he will engrave
our names on his hand, Jesus' hand, you know.
That means that if we love him he will be just as
sure not to forget us as you would be not to
forget the name of a dear friend if it were
engraved right on the palm of your hand here,
where you could read it every time you looked
down. Wouldn't you like to have Jesus think as
much of you as that?"

And I, as I passed out of hearing, thought, "That is grandpa's way of teaching. It is a lesson better worth learning than the one about pink and blue ribbons; and it hasn't been 'half taught.'"





CHAPTER XV.

GRACIE'S APPLICATIONS.

“WHAT is that?” she said to me, as she leaned over my chair and watched me tugging at the strings of her shoe. “What is the matter with Gracie’s shoe?”

“It is in a hard knot,” I said: ‘and I am afraid Auntie Belle will have to cut the string, I can’t pick it out.’”

Nevertheless I worked at it industriously until my patience gave way, and then I took the scissors. Only an hour or two afterward I heard her ringing little voice calling through the hall:

“Auntie Belle! oh, Auntie Belle! come quick

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and bring the scissors, Gracie's hand is all in a hard knot."

I went in haste; she was trying to get her little blue dress off, working with much tugging, and inside of the sleeve her chubby little hands was caught.

"It is in a hard knot," she explained as I came in; "bring the scissors quick." And to all my explanations she could only answer, with a wise little shake of her head, "It is in a hard knot."

This is only a specimen of her queer ideas.

Once we all went to Cleveland, Ohio, to spend our vacation — her papa and mamma, and herself of course, and my minister and I. Some time I will tell you about the funny times we all had there together. Enough queer things happened to us to make a big book of, but about this one day: It was very warm, the warmest day we had yet; we said so of every single day that came. We sat at the dinner table, dinner was over, and Gracie had left us and was standing in the dining-room door, while we elders sat over

our dessert and visited as hard as if we had not been doing that same thing and not much else for three weeks. There was a strong lake wind, and Gracie's blue dress and white apron fluttered back and forth like little flags. She was a little bit of a mousie, she had been sick all summer, and her cheeks did not puff out like peaches any more. As we sat looking at her there came an unusually strong wind, the door against which she stood blew suddenly shut, and away went Gracie out and down the three steps to the ground. We all sprang up, with little shrieks and exclamations, and ran to the door. Uncle Ross was first, was there indeed before I could get my chair pushed from the table, and as we reached the door we met him coming with the fallen maiden in his arms. She was not shrieking as I expected, neither was she speechless from injury and fright as I had half feared. I wish you could have seen her face. Her eyes were as bright as two stars, her cheeks were

glowing, and her face was all in a sparkle of delight.

“I flew!” she said, as she came toward us. “Did you see me, Anntie Belle? Oh, mamma, did you see me fly? I went just as nice, just like the robins; and uncle Ross caught me before I came down!”

Now did any one ever hear such a description of a fall before? She was the most perfectly delighted little darling that you ever saw. She could talk of nothing else all day. Every one who came in she told the story of her wonderful journey up in the air, “just like the robins,” and how Uncle Ross caught her before she fell.

“Don’t let us tell her anything about it,” her mamma said. “It is really a pity to undeceive her; it is such a pretty idea. Let her think so for a little while.”

We need not have been afraid of undeceiving her; it wasn’t an easy thing to do. It soon became apparent that it was very important to try. She was never given to being afraid of

things, not half so much afraid as would have been convenient; and we found that after her flight into the air she grew to thinking that she was certainly different from other little girls—perhaps she had wings hidden away somewhere so that she could fly again. When we told her to be careful about going to the end of the high piazza for fear she might fall, she would look up at us with an air half wistful, half roguish, and say:

“Perhaps I might fly instead of falling. I did once, you know;” and this she thought was an argument that was perfectly unanswerable.

“We must certainly explain that to her,” mamma said one day, “or she will be trying to climb out on the roof and fly off to the ground.” So I engaged to attempt an explanation.

“You mustn’t think, Gracie, that you really *flew* that day when the wind blew you out of the door. Uncle Ross was beside you so quickly, and picked you up before you had time to know that you had fallen, almost before you touched

the ground, that is what makes you think that you flew; but the truth is, if the ground had not been soft and grassy, and you hadn't been picked up so quickly, you might have been badly hurt; and you must never try to fly, because you have no wings and were not intended to travel in that way."

She had been so sure of her trip that I was very sorry to spoil the pretty idea, and I expected her to feel very badly, perhaps to shed a few tears. I prepared to comfort her. She did not say a word for several minutes, and her face was so grave, so almost offended in its look, that I decided to wait and find out what was passing in her queer little mind.

"Auntie Belle," she said, speaking at last in a slow, grave tone—"Auntie Belle, did you ever fly?"

"Why, of course not, darling. Don't you see, I have no wings either. No one can fly—one but birds, and hens, and such creatures; people can not, and that is what makes it very

foolish in you to say that *you* can, because you were not *made* to fly." I gained a great deal by that explanation, as you will see.

"Then you don't know at all how it feels to fly?"

"Not at all. The nearest I expect to come to it is to go up in a balloon. I mean to try that way of traveling some day, and I think very likely I may take you with me—that is, if you would like to go. I should think it might be almost as good as flying."

"Well," she said, still speaking in that grave, wise tone of hers, and treating my last sentence exactly as if I had not spoken it, "if you never flew in your life, of course you can't know how it feels to fly, and you can't know as much about it as I do, because I *have flown* away up in the sky. I think I went out of sight, but it didn't take but a little minute, for flying is done *just as quick*—oh! quicker than you can think; and I came back just as Uncle Ross and all of you got to the

door ; but of course you think it isn't so, for you never tried it, and I did."

Talk of trying to explain things to *her*, when she didn't hesitate to say that she knew more about it than I did ! To all our explanations and advice she gave this unanswerable reply.

"But, mamma, I have tried it, you know ; and how can I help knowing that I didn't fly, when I did?"

"What is to be done with the ridiculous little morsel?" her mamma asked, half in amusement and half in despair. "I am really afraid she will get a serious fall. I have to watch her all the time. I know she thinks us all a set of skeptics, and she means to prove to us that we are mistaken the first chance she gets."

"I don't know but we will have to select the place and let her try it, just to prove to her that there are people in the world who know more than she does." This her papa said, but mamma shivered as she answered :

"I am afraid of that way. We can never be sure how little a fall may be a serious one."

We were not in Cleveland when we had this talk, but at grandpa's, whither we had come to finish our vacation. He sat at the round table, reading the *Tribune*, and, as we thought, not hearing a word we were saying; but in the twilight of the next evening, just before it was time for Gracie to go to bed, he took her on his knee, and they had a little talk together, part of which I heard.

"So you really think you can fly, little lady?"

"Why, I *know* I *did* fly, grandpa, and I can't see why I couldn't do it again."

Grandpa said not a single word in answer, at which the little mousie seemed to be a good deal astonished. She took shy looks at him from under her lashes, until presently she said:

"Don't *you* think I flew, grandpa?"

"No," said grandpa, shaking his head, "*I* don't think you did. Shall I tell you the reason? It

is because I can't find anything about it in the Bible."

Then his little granddaughter had an astonished face.

"Why, grandpa!" she said, and her voice was full of exclamation points, "what *can* you mean? Of course it isn't in the Bible, for it happened thousands of years afterward; but I *did* fly."

"That is, you think you did. But I can't think it, because I have been looking it up in the Bible to-day, and I find a great deal about people like you and me walking. It tells us to 'walk in love,' to 'walk honestly;' it says, 'This is the way, walk ye in it,' and 'walk humbly;' it says, 'Walk in the light,' and ever so many other directions. Then I looked for some directions about flying. There are a good many of them, but the trouble is they are all about the angels, not a word to you and me, or people like us. It tells about one good man, one whom God loved very much, and to whom he used to give great blessings. He wished one day that he had wings

like a dove, but God didn't give him any; and only once did I find anything about our flying. It speaks of one time when we shall fly away, but even then I find we have to leave our bodies behind. You know when your little friend Clara died, don't you remember that her body lay there where you could look at it, but that part of her that used to talk and laugh was gone—Clara had flown away; and I am hoping that the time will come when my little Gracie will fly right up to heaven to be with Jesus; but I feel certain that when that time comes she will leave her body here, because God has nowhere said that she could fly with it.”

It was just at this point that mamma called her little girl to go to bed. She kissed grandpa good-night, and went up stairs with a very thoughtful face; and it was not until she was almost ready for bed that she said, gravely :

“ Well, mamma, I must have been mistaken after all, because grandpa has read the Bible through about it, and he says there is no such

thing. I have got to leave my body down here with you when I go flying, and I don't want to go that way yet, so I won't ask Him to let me. Of course if He wouldn't let the very good man who wanted them so much have some wings, of course He wouldn't let me, for I *do* suppose I do some wrong things once in a while; so, mamma, I mean to give up trying to fly, and I must have *blew* out that day — only I didn't fall, and it *felt* ever so much like flying." And she gave a troubled little sigh, as though it was very hard to give up her lovely belief that she had been up in the air.

"It is the very first time I ever knew her to be convinced by arguments," her mother said, with great satisfaction, as we went down stairs after wingless Gracie had fallen asleep. "She is the most positive child I ever saw, and you know how absurdly she can argue. But think of going to the Bible for arguments with which to convince her that she didn't fly! I shouldn't have thought of it in a lifetime."

“Do you suppose there is any lesson that father can not find a way of teaching from that same book?” I asked, as we stopped on the lower stairs to finish this bit of a talk.

“I don't believe there is,” she said; and then “Oh! wouldn't you give a great deal to be able to bring the Bible into every little thing as father can?”

And then we both said for the hundredth time what a blessed thing it was to have such a father, and for Gracie to have such a grandfather.





CHAPTER XVIII.

GRACIE'S BIBLE STORIES.

WE were at Gracie's home making a visit ; the summer Sunday afternoon was drawing to a close. We had been to church and Sabbath-school, and then the heat seemed to have overcome every one of us except Gracie. I wonder why the weather has no power over little bits of people? They seem to be just as fresh and bright as robins, without any regard to the little drops of mercury, shut up in glass cases, that seem to know so much about the weather.

Gracie's mamma was asleep in the bedroom ; grandma was asleep up-stairs ; Uncle Ross was

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in the study, yawning over the sermome that he was to preach that evening if he got awake enough; I was asleep on the lounge, and Gracie, the last I had known anything about her, was hovering from one room to another like a lonely bird in search of a mate.

“Why can't that child be warm and tired, and want to rest, instead of being as full of plans and energy as she was when she first opened her eyes this morning!” This her mamma had said with a yawn before she went to sleep. I was waking up, rubbing my eyes and yawning frightfully, and trying to fancy myself a reasonable being, who cared anything about anything. The parlor door stood open, and the sound of voices floated into my sleepy senses. I roused a little; Gracie and her papa were having a talk. “What a shame!” I said, raising myself on my elbow and looking around for a listener, “what a shame that we should all have gone to sleep and left the management and amusement of that child to her father, just as if he wasn't as tired and warm as

any of us. But there was nobody to listen to me, and the father didn't seem to need my pity ; his voice sounded fresh and bright as though he was having a real nice time.

“ He is telling her a Bible story,” I said, as I caught a sentence. “ There is no harm in listening to that ; I want a new story for my infant class ; perhaps this will be a new one to me.” So I lay back on the lounge and gave myself up to the pleasure of listening. This was what I heard :

“ Why, daughter, do you suppose there will be any Frenchmen there like that man down at the corner of Clinton street, who can not speak a word of English ? ”

“ Oh, yes, papa, there will be *some* Frenchmen there, of course.”

“ But what makes you think so ? ”

“ Why, papa, didn't you just this minute read it yourself ? It said ‘ of all nations. ’ ”

“ Ah, so it did : well, do you think there will be many people there ? ”

“Why, I *know* there will, ever and ever so many; it said ‘a great multitude;’ doesn’t that mean a great many people?”

“Well, yes, I think it does, but about how many do you think? As many as there were in church this morning?”

“Oh, papa, ever and ever so many more.”

“More than were in church? almost as many as there are in this whole city, should you think?”

Gracie’s head, which I could just see through the crack of the open door, was tipped a little on one side, a habit she had when she was very busy thinking; pretty soon she said: “Don’t know, papa, but I think—yes, I am almost sure that there will be more people there than ever lived in the biggest city in the world.”

“What! more people than there are in New York? Don’t you remember when you were there last winter, how you stood at the window hour after hour and watched the people go by, and there were so many of them that you told me

it seemed as if all the folks there were in this world had gone by the window?"

"I know, papa, but still I think, I am quite sure that there will be more people in heaven than that; I'll tell you why; don't you know you told me just how many people lived in the city of New York, and somebody must have counted them or you wouldn't have known; and it says in the Bible so many people that no man could number them."

"Ah," said papa, again, "so it does: that seems to settle the question that there will be a great many, doesn't it? But do you really think there will be any Irish people in heaven?"

'Why, papa, yes! You forgot that it says 'all nations.' Of *course* the Irish people will be there."

"All of them, daughter?"

There was a moment of silence.

"No, I suppose not," she said at last, speaking very slowly. "I suppose some will be left out. Papa I wonder which they will be?"

“Do you suppose some will be left out of all the different nations?”

The silence this time was longer than before; then she said with very great gravity:

“I suppose there will.

“Then there is just one other thing that I want my little girl to think about— is she going to be one of the ‘left out ones?’ Papa is very anxious that she should decide that question.”

That was all he said, every word. He turned to his own reading after that, leaving Gracie to think, which she did for as much as ten minutes. Nobody knows how much that ten minutes of thought may have done for her. But I know what the story did for me. I had a new Bible story, and I had learned how to tell it; not only that one, but a great many others. It is wonderful how many stories there are in the Bible when one learns to make the words into pictures.

Telling you about that reminds me of another story that her papa told her. It was about the Prodigal Son. Do you know that story? If

you don't you must look it up. You will find it in the 15th chapter of Luke, from the 11th verse to the end of the chapter. We were at grandpa's when that story was told. It was Gracie's after-dinner talk with her papa; she sat on his knee and listened with great eagerness, asking questions when she didn't understand, and commenting on the foolish acting son with great freedom.

"She takes it in remarkably well," papa said, with a gratified air. "I hope she will be as fond of Bible stories when she grows older."

As for Gracie she retired to a corner just back of her father's chair, and began an eager talk with Minie. Papa turned to grandpa and gave himself up to politics. In the midst of an animated discussion they were interrupted by a curious noise coming from the corner behind them, something between a groan and growl, accompanied with a strange shuffling noise not unlike the sound which proceeds from a pig-pen.

"Gracie! Gracie!" papa said, in astonished reproof; "why, what in the world is the mean-

ing of such strange noises? What *can* you be trying to do?"

Gracie, very much astonished that her performance had been noticed by others than those for whom it was intended, said with a shy sweet way she had when she was a little embarrassed;

"Why, papa, I didn't think I was making a *loud* noise. I was only showing Minie the way Prodigal acted when he ate with the pigs!"

Just imagine how we shouted! Her busy little brain had been engaged in getting up a scene in which poor Prodigal was the principal character, and acting it out for Minie's benefit.

"It isn't a bad idea," grandpa said, laughing as hard as any of us, but finding something besides laughter in it. "She is making the story just as vivid as she can; no matter if she has to act out some of it, I ventured to say that Minie will get a more impressive idea of the whole story from that very acting."

But the queerest experience we had with the

funny little mortal was the time when she applied a sermon. It had been a sermon preached to the children, and although she was considered too young to understand sermons very well she was allowed to go and hear it, her first evening sermon. She sat like a very mouse, listening with eyes as well as ears, to judge by the way she fixed them on the speaker. By the way, I happen to know that the minister felt very much encouraged and helped by the way in which that one little girl looked at him and seemed to listen. The text, or rather the subject, was the two men who were invited to the vineyard to work. One of them, you remember, said, "I will not go," but afterward he was sorry and went. The other said, "I go, sir," but he didn't go after all. And the minister explained that there were boys and girls now who made a great many promises as to what they would do, but forgot them almost as soon as made. It was late — for Gracie — when we reached home, and we went directly to our rooms without any talk

about the sermon. It chanced that the next morning Gracie's mamma, always remarkable for enjoying a morning's nap, had an uncommonly sleepy fit. Papa called as he passed the door on the way from his dressing-room :

"Come, mamma, you'll need all your time to get ready for breakfast."

"Yes," mamma said, in the sleepest of half-awake tones, and the next second was sounder asleep than before. Pretty soon papa came that way again, stopped as before, and said :

"Why, mamma! you will be late."

Mamma rolled over and muttered :

"I'm going to get up right a—" And the rest of the word was put into the dream that she was busy on. Ten minutes, and papa came to the door, saying :

"Mamma! mamma! come, you really *must* wake up; the breakfast bell will ring in twenty minutes."

"Will it?" drawled mamma from under the blanket. "I must get up; I meant to."

And the next sound was a snore. Just at this moment up popped a little head from off the pillow that lay on the crib at the side of the large bed, and Gracie's wondering eyes that we supposed were still shut with sleep were fixed on her mother: and presently Gracie's voice said in the gravest and most astonished tones:

"Well! I should say that you belonged to the 'I go, sirs.'"

The tone, and above all the words, coming from that baby tongue, at last succeeded in making mamma very wide awake; and we all shouted together over this queer sermon coming from such a young preacher.

"It is the best kind of preaching," wrote grandpa, when we wrote a letter telling the family out there the funny story. "It has an illustration and an application. But there is a verse in the Bible that I want Gracie to learn, and when she has learned it I want her to go to her father and get him to explain what it means: then I want her to dictate a letter to me, to tell

me whether the verse applies to her. Look in the 2d chapter of Romans, the last half of the first verse, to find what I want learned.”

As this chapter is already too long you will have to find the verse for yourselves ; and if any of you really want to know what her grandpa meant, or if any of you guess what he meant, and would like to know whether you guess right or not, you will have to write and ask me. P. O. address, Box 694, Utica, N. Y.





CHAPTER XIX.

ARGUMENT.

WE sat in mamma's room, Gracie and I. Gracie was sewing, making a basque for her dolly out of crimson velvet, and trimming it with gold-colored satin. That is, the crimson velvet was a bit of bright red calico, and the gold-colored satin was some yellow thread. I was making a basque for myself; the material being not quite so nice as Gracie's, it was nothing but simple grenadine. Occasionally Gracie paused in her sewing to take long looks out of the window, and say :

“ Wouldn't it be *so* nice, Auntie Belle, to see

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papa coming down the walk this minute? I think he will come to-morrow."

I was foolish enough to imagine that she really understood when "to-morrow" was, and would be disappointed at his not coming, so I said :

"Papa will not come to-morrow, darling. The very first that we can hope to see him will be on Thursday, two days more."

"No," she said, with great positiveness, "he will come to-morrow."

I felt like arguing, and so continued :

"No, Gracie, there will have to be two more days and two more nights, and then he will come."

"Two days is one," she said, with all the dignity of a judge, and as if that settled the question for all future time.

How grandpa laughed when I told it to him several weeks after, as we sat together in the twilight, and I tried to call together all the pretty and funny things that I had heard Gracie say, on purpose to feed his hungry, loving heart.

It seems to me I can here his laugh this minute. Then he said :

“I’ve heard people argue in that way precisely, people who were more than three years old, too. Why, we were talking about going to heaven, Mr. Stuart and I, and on such an important subject as that he talked in just about that way.”

But I was going to tell you what Gracie said. I gave over trying to convince her that papa would not come to-morrow, and said ;

“Why do you want him to come so badly? Is it because you want to see him?”

“Why, of course,” she said, “that is one reason ; but I don’t know but I *could* wait one more day for that ; but I do so need my new parasol. The sun is so very hot, and I have to take so many walks, and it seems to me that I shall faint away to-morrow if I don’t have it. If he knew that I suppose he would come to-night. Don’t you think so?”

“He might,” I said, trying to look properly

sober. "But I thought you had a parasol to go down street with?"

"Do you mean that old green cambric thing?" she said, looking at me with utter contempt. I nodded my head.

"Why, Auntie Belle!" she said, "why! that looks *dreadful*."

"That may be; but, after all, it keeps the sun off. I thought it was because you were afraid you would faint?"

Now, thought I, my little lady, I do believe you are caught. Not a bit of it. She looked thoughtful for a minute, then she said:

"Well, don't you think that silk is a good deal cooler than cambric? It *feels* ever so much cooler, so soft and nice. The new one is to be of silk, you know—blue silk, lined with gold color, and with a beautiful red tassel right on the top. And I know that it will keep me cooler."

This was such a funny argument that I didn't undertake to answer it, except with a laugh. After a little she said:

“ If he *shouldn't* come to-morrow, I most *know* he will ; but if he *shouldn't*, then I think he may send it to me.”

“ How could he send it ?” I asked. “ There is no one to bring it.”

“ Why, Auntie Belle, he could send it on the cars — put it on, you know, and let it come. Don't you know the cars come here ever so many times a day ?”

“ But your parasol isn't going to have feet, is it? How can it get up and get off the cars when they stop here ?”

She looked at me in great astonishment.

“ Why, Auntie Belle! *don't* you know about the conductor? There is a conductor on every car, and papa could just put the parasol in his hand and tell him to bring it to me.”

“ But how in the world would the conductor know who you were or *where* you were? He couldn't leave his cars to hunt you up.”

She gave me a look of almost contempt as she said :

“I don't see how a big lady can know such a little bit about things. Don't you know that papa could write my name on the parasol? He would roll it all up, you know, and tie a paper all around it, and then the conductor would leave it down there at the depot, and I would go down and say, 'Is there a parasol here for me done up in a roll? and then the man would hand it out.'”

“Well, what if the conductor should never leave it at the depot, but should carry it away off home with him, and you should never hear of it again?”

She looked indignant, and spoke sharply.

“My papa would never give my parasol to a naughty, wicked conductor. He would pick out a good one.”

I was trying to have the last word, so I said :

“But he might think it was a good man, and, after all, he might be bad. He might be very much tempted, you know. Suppose he should say to himself, 'Now I presume this little girl has ever so many nice things—her papa looked

like a man who would be apt to get her all she wanted—and there is my little Jane away out there in our house who can't have nice dresses and books, and who never had a parasol in her life. How delighted she would be to have this. I shouldn't wonder, if that little Gracie knew how few things my little girl has, she would say, "Mr. Conductor, take this parasol right along to her; I have so many things that I never shall miss it in the world.'"

She was still for several minutes, and I could see that little Jane's sad condition had worked upon her tender little heart. At last she said in a low voice :

"I don't think my papa would give it to a man with a little girl named Jane that hadn't any parasol at all, and never had one in her life. I think — I'm most sure he would pick out a man who had no little girl."

"But what if there isn't any such man?"

"Oh, but I'm sure there must be. They haven't all got little girls; of course not."

"But don't you hope they have? Just think how dreadful it must be not to have any little girl to love and to bring things. How very, very lonesome the poor man would be!"

"He might have a woman to live with him — a mamma, you know — and then he wouldn't be lonesome."

"Let us see about that. Your papa has a mamma to live with him, but can you imagine how lonely he would feel if he should come home some evening and find you gone away, and that you were never to come back again?"

That was a troublesome question. She sat perfectly still and sewed away on her basque in silence. I laughed softly. It was the first time I had ever worsted her in an argument, but she really seemed to have nothing to say. I was mistaken. Half a dozen long stitches, and she returned to the charge.

"But, Auntie Belle, don't you know that people who have never had any little girls don't like them a bit? They think they make a noise

and are in the way, and they look cross at them. I would have a man who had never had any little girls in his life, and then he wouldn't want any, and he wouldn't want the parasol at all. I do hope papa will find him and send it to-morrow."

I put down my sewing and laughed loud and long, much to Gracie's surprise.

"There is one person that I have decided never to try to have an argument with," I said to mamma, who came in just then. "I am sure to get the worst of it, or at least I never get the last of it, and you know that is what arguers are always after. She is sure to get up an answer to anything."

However, I did try it again a great many times. It used to amuse me so much to hear her explain things. Once when we were at the water-cure we spent a long three months there, her mamma and I, and some funny things happened that I will tell you at some other time. This talk that I am going to give you we had the evening before we left there. We had been packing

the afternoon and were tired. I think I was a little bit cross. Gracie lay on the bed pretending to study the railway guide. She had been flying back and forth to the room of one of her particular friends for the last half hour, and had come for the guide for them to study.

"Auntie Belle," she said, "do you know the way we are to go on the cars to-morrow? I can show you all about it. Miss Clifton and I found it all out in the guide. See, we go so to Binghamton, and then we go to Corning, and we stop there twenty minutes."

I was just in the mood to be contradictory, so I said:

"Not a bit of it, ma'am. You and Miss Clifton will have to study your lessous over again. We don't even go through Corning."

"Why, she said so," Gracie answered, fixing her great blue eyes on me in surprise.

"Can't help that, it is a mistake. We go the other way, not anywhere near Corning." Then I said in undertone to the mamma: "I do wonder

how she will get over that ; she will never own herself to be mistaken."

I wasn't left long in doubt. After a few minutes of earnest thought she said, gravely :

"I see how it is. I wonder that I didn't think of it before. Auntie Belle, see here, I can explain it to you. Miss Clifton is what people call 'far-sighted ;' and this little road down here that we go on she didn't see at all, because it was so near to her. I saw at once that we were more than twenty minutes away from Corning, but she didn't see it at all, and it is just because she is so far-sighted."

Now I want to know if you ever heard of any one who could give a queerer reason than that for having her own way ?

"She is a genius," said grandpa, when we told it over to him. "A perfect genius for getting out of small places, and making herself out to be right. It is a dangerous talent. There is a crazy man who has been around the streets this summer giving lectures. He says over a great

many Bible verses. He seems to know the Bible by heart, and he repeats these verses that are about a great many different things, and says they are all about ladies wearing hoops. He says all these verses say they ought not to do so. I asked him once how he connected all those verses so that they meant the same thing, and he said he did it by drawing his pencil down one side, and making a mark all around them! After all, he makes as good use of his Bible verses as a great many people do who are not crazy. His reasoning reminded me of Gracie's."

"Dear me!" I said, "I must certainly tell Gracie that the way she reasons reminds you of a crazy man. She will not be so proud of it after that."

Grandpa looked searchingly at me.

"The reasoning of a great many people reminds me of him," he said, at last. "The other day I heard somebody say that if it was right for Mary Holmes to get angry and make such a talk as she had, it was right for *her*, and she shouldn't

try to keep from talking about it any more. What do you think of that reasoning?"

Now as that "somebody" of whom he spoke was myself, you can imagine that my cheeks were a bit red; but after a minute, like Gracie, I tried hard to take my own part.

"Well," I said, "she is a church-member, and what is right for her is right for me."

"Is that verse in the Bible?" asked grandpa, and I laughed a little and had no answer to make. I have often wondered what Gracie would have found to say if she had been there. I am certain that she would have made *some* answer.





CHAPTER XX.

CHEESE.

TAP, tap, came a knock at our door. Mamma raised her head from the pillow of her bed across the room, and I from my bed in the corner did the same, and we both drowsily said, "Come." We were taking our "half packs." I don't suppose you have ever been to a water-cure to find out what delightful things *they* are. But I haven't time to tell you about them. The door opened softly, and Miss Clifford peeped her head in.

"May I have Grace?" she said, and every note of her fresh, crisp voice said to us that she was

fresh from the tonic of a "sponge" bath and ready for a walk.

Might she have Grace! Why, would anything be more delightful than to let *somebody* have her for the next half hour? Wasn't she trying with all the power that her little will possessed to keep "still as a mouse," that we might have our rest; and hadn't she dropped the scissors three times, and caught her finger in the window once, and spilled a glassful of water into her neck, and all in the space of the last five minutes?

"Yes, indeed," said mamma, with more energy than she had shown for some time. "I'm sure if you will take her with you we shall be very grateful. Where are you going—to walk? Won't that be nice? Gracie, make haste and get ready, so as not to keep her waiting."

If *we* were glad we were nothing compared with the little maiden herself. She slid from her chair with a squeal of delight, and rushed herself into sack and hat with such haste that she left us

exhausted, but thankful, when the door finally closed upon us both. To feel that she was to be safe and happy for the next half hour or so, and not only that, but that the room was to be *still*, was a delight.

We were up and dressed when the small whirlwind rushed in from her walk, flushed, and dusty, and disordered generally, and with by no means so happy a face as we had expected. She flung herself into a chair and swung her hat disconsolately as she said, in rapid, excited tones :

“I just *know* you won't let me eat it. I told the man so, and I told Miss Clifford so, but she said perhaps you would ; but I told her you never had any perhapses ; and I think it is too bad when I like it so much. The man said it wouldn't hurt me a bit ; but I told him it wasn't any use at all ; and I know it isn't ; and I like it so very much I don't know what to do.”

By this time we were both laughing.

“What a very remarkable story,” mamma said, at last. “Where have you been, and what has

happened to you? I'm sure we can't imagine what it is all about."

Then, with many bewildering explanations, the story was told. It was so lovely and warm that they had walked on until they came to the cheese factory; and there were some lovely flowers in the window of the cheese-factory-man's house, and she went just as close to the window as she could, to get a smell of them; and the man at the long table was shaving cheeses, and he saw her through the window, and he asked her if the flowers smelled nice, and said that *he* didn't think they smelled as nice as his cheese; and she told him she thought flowers *smelled* nicer than cheeses, but she thought that cheeses *tasted* better than flowers. At that he laughed, and said that she was the girl for him: and he cut off a long, thin, lovely slice of cheese, and gave it to her. She wanted to eat it so much that she could hardly stand up; and they all told her to, Miss Clifford and all; but she told them her mamma wouldn't allow her. Then

they said it wouldn't hurt her the least bit in the world; but she didn't eat a speak of it, not a single speck, and the man wrapped it up in a paper for her, and here it was; and now she certainly *must* eat it; she couldn't do without it another minute.

We couldn't help laughing over this story. Poor Gracie had evidently had such a hard struggle to keep from eating her treasure, and was evidently so vexed because she could not enjoy it. She had just enough strength to keep her from doing what she had been forbidden, but not enough to keep her from being sadly vexed because she *had* been forbidden. I felt sorry for her. The little mousie was ridiculously fond of cheese. It was to her what candy is to most children, and the very fact that it made her sick to eat it seemed to make her more perversely fond of it.

I can seem to see the dusty, tired little girl as she sat kicking her feet against the chair and looking the very picture of defiance. Hadn't

that wise woman, Miss Clifford, said that she didn't believe it would hurt her in the least? Was it to be supposed that it could harm her after that? Altogether there were symptoms of a very stormy time. It was seldom that the little girl wore such a sullen face. Mamma was very grave and very decided.

"I am sorry that you went to the cheese factory," she said. "I don't think the walk has helped you. You may take off your sack and put on your slippers, then brush your hair and try to get rested."

"What shall I do with my cheese?" Gracie said, and there was a deepening of the troubled look in her eyes.

Mamma was provokingly calm.

"You may throw it away, I suppose," she said, gravely. "At least that is all *I* can think of to do with it; you know you can not eat it."

"Miss Clifford said it wouldn't hurt me a bit, and the man said so, too; and he makes cheese

all the time, and I should think he ought to know."

I can't begin to tell you how crossly she said this. Still mamma was very quiet and positive.

"The trouble is," she said, soberly, "that you are not the man's little girl, nor Miss Clifford's, either. You seem to forget that you are mine, and that you are to do as *I* say, without regard to what other people say. You may put away your things."

I can't help thinking that if her mamma had ever been a little girl she would have been just a little bit more tender to the poor mouse whose teeth fairly ached to gnaw the cheese. I think she, in company with a great many other mothers, must have been born grown-up ladies, and so know nothing of how small people feel. That is, I thought so just then. She wasn't apt to make one think that; she was a very loving mother. Just at this point Gracie set up a wail that might have been heard in the farthest hall. If we had but realized it, her brain had been having

a heavy strain. She had safely withstood a great temptation, but Satan had gotten the better of her just then, and she needed a little help. She didn't get it from me, I am sorry to say. I meant to be helpful, I felt sorry for her, and I went to work to show it in the most bungling manner possible.

"I wouldn't be so silly as to cry for a little bit of cheese," I said, in a very contemptuous tone. "That would be enough if you were a *mouse* — when it makes you sick, too. I didn't know you were such a baby!"

Now, reasonably enough, this didn't help her at all. You may just imagine yourself tired and warm, and having a ill-used feeling, and see if you think that sort of talk would help you to get good-humored. I am almost sure if I had known enough to say, in a gentle tone, "You were a good girl not to eat the cheese after your mother had told you not to; I think she must be proud of you," that Gracie would have tried to smile at me through her tears. But as it was, she kicked

her feet stormily against the chair and cried louder and louder. There was no use in trying to talk with her, her voice drowned every attempt.

Mamma looked perplexed and sad and annoyed, all in one; she was not used to such scenes. Meantime the crying grew terrific, and something must be done.

“Gracie!” said her mother, and I am sure the little girl had never heard her name spoken in such stern tones before, “if you do not stop crying this instant and obey me, I shall—”

Just what she would have done, I don't think we will ever know, for the next thing was a knock, a peculiar, light running knock, that stopped our voices and sent dismay into our hearts; we knew the knock. In a moment more Miss Greene opened the door and glided softly in upon us. You don't know Miss Greene? Well, how shall I ever describe her? She was the life and power and heart and soul of that great water-cure—a doctor of wonderful skill, a woman

whom everybody respected and loved and obeyed.

“Why! why!” she said, in a brisk fresh tone, “what is the matter here? We were afraid that Gracie had fallen down stairs, or that her dolly had a broken nose; something dreadful has surely happened.”

No sooner had her face appeared inside the door than the small lady's cries suddenly ceased, showing plainly that she could stop whenever she thought it quite necessary. There seemed no way to do but to tell Miss Greene what was the matter, as she stood looking at us in a way that showed she plainly expected to be told. So mamma, with a face almost as flushed as Gracie's, gave an account of the trouble; she was very much ashamed of her little girl. No sooner was it told than the doctor went over to the small unhappy morsel who crouched behind her mother's chair. She was not very penitent: in fact, her face was still working nervously, and she looked as though she might cry again any moment. I fully expected that she would the very moment

that Miss Greene asked her if she was not sorry for being such a naughty girl. Of course she would say that, it was the right and proper thing to say, the thing that people always did say. I thought if Gracie succeeded in keeping her little tongue still, instead of saying that she "was *not* sorry a bit, not at all," I should be very thankful. This is what she said :

"Do you suppose you are a selfish little girl?"

Gracie turned her great wondering eyes around so that she could see the lady's face. She was astonished at the question ; she couldn't see what it had to do with her crying, neither could I.

"I don't know," she said, slowly, somewhat doubtfully. "I don't think I am *very*."

"When you have nice things that you think a great deal of, do you like to share them with other people?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Gracie, decidedly : and this was true, she was always ready to share her treasures. In fact, she wasn't quite happy unless she had some one to enjoy them with her.

“Very well, then,” said Miss Greene; “that was exactly what I had supposed about you. So you have a piece of cheese?”

“Yes, ma’am,” in a low voice and with a very red face.

“Do you know how many people there are in my family?”

“No, ma’am, not quite.”

“Well, there are just forty-one. Now, do you think you would like to have a plate and knife, and cut your cheese into forty-one pieces, and when the dessert is served pass it around so that every one may have a piece? — and there will be a piece left for you, because you belong to my family, and are one of the forty-one.”

I wish you could have seen Gracie’s face; it was in a perfect glow of delight.

“Oh, yes, *ma’am!*” she said, catching her breath; “that would be so very splendid.”

“Very well, I am on my way to the kitchen now; I will have a plate and knife sent up to you at once. It is half-past eleven; I think you will

have just about time to get the cheese ready for dinner. You must count the pieces very carefully, because you know if there shouldn't be enough to go around it wouldn't be pleasant."

If you should cut a slip of paper into forty-one pieces, each about as large as your thumb nail, you would have an idea of the size of Gracie's slice of cheese. It was a very little thicker than paper. But I can give you no sort of idea what a nice time she had over it. She was as happy as a bird; she seemed to have forgotten that she ever was naughty or tearful; she had to cut the slices over several times before she could get them the proper size, and the entire hour was taken up. Then the dinner bell rang and we went down. When the dessert bell rang, the small triumphant maiden who sat between us slipped down from her chair, and went softly up and down the long dining-room distributing her treasure. Everybody took a piece of cheese, even to Miss Greene herself, and Gracie ate her tiny morsel with a face of perfect delight.

“After all,” mamma said, when Gracie was snug in bed, “I want to ask you, Miss Greene—I am very thankful that you came to the rescue this morning, for the child was very tired and so was I; but I want to know, for the sake of future days, do you think I ought often to give her some amusement in the place of what I do not want her to have? Ought I not rather to require perfect obedience?”

“I do not know,” Miss Greene said, in slow, thoughtful voice, with the sweetness in it that we all loved. “I would not presume to dictate to a good mother. I would rather send her to Jesus for teaching; but don’t you think that sometimes when we are very eager after something and are a little inclined to be naughty, if we think we are not to have it, that the dear Father in heaven pats us on the head very lovingly, and says, ‘Here, dear child, take this instead?’”

It seemed such a queer thing to say, it sur-

prised us so much. We talked about it a great deal after we came back to our room.

“I'll tell you what *I* think,” said mamma, after thinking over it for some time. “Miss Greene felt that there were plenty of times to teach little girls lessons, and I believe she thought, instead of trying to teach Gracie one, she would give her mother a lesson in gentleness and patience, and I am sure I am very glad that she did. I will remember it.”





CHAPTER XXI.

PRAYING.

SHE wasn't three years old ; indeed, she couldn't have been more than two and a half, when one day she came to mamma with a long face, and said :

“ Gracie's nose is very sore ; can't mamma cure it ? ”

Mamma examined the nose very carefully, and found that a little bit of a boil had settled itself in a snug corner almost out of sight. She tried to explain to Grace what was the matter, but the small lady asked so many questions that it would have taken at least a doctor to answer, that at last she said in despair :

“ Oh, dear me! I really can't explain it to you: but in a little while your nose will be well again. You must try to be a good, patient little girl until then.”

It is a good deal easier to tell people to be patient than it is for them to follow your advice, especially when it is a little two-year-old baby, and she has a boil in her nose. She didn't feel patient a bit. She poked at her nose a great deal, and often made it ache harder than it would have done. I have seen older girls a great many times since then who made their troubles worse by poking at them and thinking about them. At last Gracie came to her place for comfort.

“ Mamma, I want you,” she said, speaking in a grave, earnest tone—“ I want you to kneel right down and ask God to give me a new nose. He made this one, papa said, and of course he can make another. Don't you think maybe he has some already made? Anyhow, it won't take him long, and I do need a new one; this aches dreadfully, and I am so tired of being patient to

it. I don't think I ought to be patient any more. Will you tell him about it, mamma?"

"Darling," said mamma, trying not to laugh, "I will ask him to make your nose well again, and help you to be patient until it is well. That is the best thing that I can ask for my little girl."

She was not quite satisfied with this, but as it seemed to be the best that she could do she submitted, and ran away to her play. Three or four times during the day she asked her mother if she had asked God to cure her nose, and on being told that she had, would walk away with a rather sober face. Toward evening the nose grew sorer and sorer, and Gracie, who was tired out with a long warm day of trotting up and down the world, was feeling very much out of sorts. I wish I could make a picture of her as she stood in the middle of that bright little room, her dolly at her feet, her little pail under her arm, dolly's bonnet in her hand, and with the spare hand

feeling of the poor despised nose. It was swollen badly now, and looked red and angry.

"Don't touch it, darling," I said; "you will only make it ache the harder."

She made no answer, but marching across the room, with an indignant face and angry voice, she said to her mother:

"Mamma, I want you to kneel right down here where I can hear you, and tell 'Our Father' that I must have another nose this minute: I can't wait another *second*. I have stood this nose just as long as I will."

Dear, dear! how many times I have thought of what grandpa said about it when we told him. It was impossible not to laugh at it, she was such a little mousie, and knew so little about what she was saying; but almost as soon as grandpa had laughed his face grew grave.

"It is funny in her," he said, "because she is such a little one; but what a sad thing it is to hear people all the world over praying in just that way! They have forgotten that the prayer

that Jesus gave for our copy has 'Thy will be done' in it, and they say, 'I *will* have it anyway.'"

I've heard a great many prayers myself like that. I always think of it when I see people determined to have their own way. Speaking of this reminds me of the water-cure again, and of the strange time that we had with Gracie one day. She was very much given to making calls on the ladies who boarded in the house. It seemed 'so funny,' she said, 'to call on ever so many people without going out in the street,' that she could hardly resist the temptation; the less so, because little girls were rather scarce in the family, and everybody was glad to see her bright young face; so, after awhile, she grew to thinking that the only important thing to do in the world was to make calls. She wanted to flit like a butterfly from room to room, only taking care to keep away from the room where she herself belonged. Mamma did not like this kind of education for her little daughter, and had made a

law that Gracie should only call on her friends at a certain hour of the day. This rule was very hard to follow. She constantly forgot it, and was beguiled into making several visits that were against the law, until at last mamma felt that she couldn't accept the excuse of "I forgot" any longer. And on this particular day poor Gracie sat on the foot of the bed in tears, because as a punishment for her forgetfulness she had been told that she could not go down to dinner at the long table, but must stay in her room and have the dinner brought to her. Oh, dear! how she cried. It was a terrible punishment to her. She was very fond of being perched in her high chair between us, and carrying on a conversation with all the ladies around us. Suddenly she slid down from the bed and ran into the clothes-press, shutting the door after her. In a minute she whisked out again, and began to coax her mother to forgive her this once and let her go.

"I forgive you, of course," said mamma. "You know I am always ready to forgive you when you

are sorry ; but I must keep you in your room, as I said, to help you to remember. You know you have forgotten what I told you several times ; now I want to help you."

Before this sentence was finished Gracie was crying again, and to our surprise she rushed back into the clothes-press. Pretty soon she appeared again, and said :

"Oh, mamma, do *please* let me go this time. I truly will remember after this. I will *make* myself remember."

Mamma looked astonished.

"Why, Gracie!" she said," "I thought my little girl knew better than to coax after I had said 'no.'"

It seems to me that I can hear even now the astonished little squeal that Gracie gave ; she seemed so surprised as well as grieved. I think, too, that she was a little bit angry ; at least, she went back to the clothes-press with such a banging of doors that the last one swung open again, and showed the queer little girl kneeling before

her mother's big trunk, and in her excitement we heard her say, "Oh, dear Jesus, do please *make* my mamma let me go down to dinner; make her so hard that she can't help letting me; I want to go *so* much; and I know she won't let me unless you make her; and if you will, I'll try very hard not to forget again." Now did you ever hear such a strange way of praying as that? I thought then that I never had; but I have decided that a great many of our grown-up prayers are made after the same pattern; not perhaps so plainly spoken as Gracie's was, but, after all, they mean about the same thing. "Give me just what I want, and then I will try to be good." That would be a queer sounding prayer, too; but did you never hear any one pray to God to give them something that they wanted very much, and promise him if he would they would try to serve him? That was just Gracie's idea, spoken a little more plainly; but then she, you must remember, was a very little girl. I am sure you will want to know what her mother did

about the dinner, and I assure you it was hard to decide what to do, for she saw that Gracie was trying to prove the truth of the teaching that God hears and answers our prayers. It was plain to be seen that Gracie thought her mother would *have* to yield and let her go because she had asked God to help her. We talked it over.

“What would you do?” said mamma.

“Dear me!” said I, “don’t ask me. I don’t know. I shouldn’t know what to do with her half the time. I’m glad I don’t have to manage her.”

“Well,” said mamma, “I wouldn’t, for the sake of keeping *my* word, have her get wrong ideas as to prayer; but I think she needs as much as anything the teaching that is in those words, ‘Thy will be done.’ I don’t think her prayer is in the spirit of submission.”

So Gracie ate her dinner between the sobs, sitting on the foot of the bed.

Once she went with us to a ladies’ prayer-meeting. She was too young, we thought, to

notice much about it, and the only reason we took her was because we had no one with whom to leave her. One of the ladies asked us to pray for her little boy. Gracie was fidgeting from one end of the sofa to the other. I hadn't the least idea that she heard a word that was said; but when we reached home she was very sober and thoughtful. She called for a pencil and a piece of paper, and sat down by her mother's side. She was just learning to make the large letters with a pencil. She worked at them, much as a scholar would at a picture that she was sketching with a good deal of care. It took her a long time to make one letter. She had a large sheet of paper, and I think it was nearly an hour that she worked at it without speaking, except to get a whispered word of advice from mamma once in awhile about the shape of a letter. At last her work was done. She did not show it to me; she was very grave over it, and seemed to think it something that must be kept secret between her mother and herself.

“Mamma, will you send it by telegraph?” she asked, with a sober face, as she folded it.

“By telegraph!” said mamma, trying not to laugh. “Isn’t it to be sent to the post-office, as my letters are?”

“Oh, no, mamma, I shouldn’t feel safe about it being sent in that way; I would rather have it go on the telegraph.”

Mamma promised that if it was left to her judgment she would see that it was sent in the very best way; and that satisfied Gracie, for she had that trust in mamma which made her think that what *she* attended to was sure to be done in the best way. She gave the letter into her keeping and went to the kitchen for a drink of water.

“It must be to a minister,” said mamma to me, when we were alone. “Her papa had occasion to telegraph to a minister last week, and I think she must have concluded that letters addressed to them must go by telegraph. I am glad that she did not make me promise not to show it, for I am sure your curiosity must be aroused.”

So unfolding the paper she bent over it, gave a little exclamation of surprise, laughed a little, and then actually put her hand to her eyes to brush away a tear! And when I came and looked over her shoulder I did not wonder. This is what was on one side, printed in very large letters: "Dear God, make him good." These letters were so large they filled nearly the whole side of the sheet, and on the other side the first word was a very large O! with an exclamation point carefully made near to it; she had learned only the day before to make them. It read: "O! I mean Charlie." This was the name of the little boy for whom we had been asked to pray. So Gracie had heard enough of what we said to feel anxious for Charlie, and to want to do something for him.

You will be glad to know that her mamma sent the letter, not by telegraph, nor yet by mail, but in a quicker, better way than either of these. She got down on her knees and said, "Our Father in heaven, hear the prayer that my little

girl has made to thee for her playmate Charlie. Make him a good boy, for Jesus' sake."

It was only the next week that Grace told her mother that it was wonderful what a change there had been in Charlie since she wrote that letter.

"Why," said she, "he is really a pretty good boy now, and he used to be naughty sometimes. I know the letter went, because Charlie began to be better right away; and he is trying real hard, for he told me so himself."

When we told this story to grandpa he had another verse. This time it was for Gracie's mamma, and you will find it in the 11th chapter of Matthew, the 25th verse. I hope you will all learn it.





CHAPTER XXII.

SONGS AND SERMONS.

GRACIE was very fond of music ; when she was a wee baby she would lie still as much as ten minutes at a time if somebody would sing to her. Papa used often to spend the twilight with her, after she was tucked into her crib for the night, singing cradle hymns.

But papa was a very busy man, having prayer-meetings, and teachers' meetings, and meetings of all sorts, to look after, so, often and often, it came to pass that the little maiden had to go to sleep without a song.

One teachers' meeting evening, after papa had

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departed, Gracie tossed in her crib, and asked for a drink of water, and turned over her pillows and tried in vain to go to sleep.

“If somebody would only sing,” she said, at last, with a meek little sigh, “I think I could get asleep.”

Mamma had company, a lady who boarded in the room across the hall and often stopped in on her way from the dining-room to spend an hour. Mamma pitied the restless little girl in the crib, and knew very well that her friend’s tongue was not helping to bring sleep.

“Suppose we sing to you,” she said, suddenly, “Mrs. Harris and I.” Now, “Mrs. Harris and I” could sing just about as much as two June bugs, but Gracie caught eagerly at the idea, so the singing began. Their voices were sweet enough, soft and gentle, but the trouble was they didn’t know the tune they were trying to sing, nor any other tune, and they didn’t know enough about music to know that they didn’t know it.

They pitched it low in the first place, and kept

falling lower and lower with every word. Gracie, with her correct ear, and the taste acquired by listening evening after evening to the rich, full voice of her father, endured the song as long as she could, until patience ceased to be a virtue, and just as the singers were nodding to each other with self-satisfied air, feeling that their task was nearly done, she popped her little head above the side of the crib, and, eyeing the musicians with a solemn air, said, slowly and gravely, "Aren't you afraid that song will drop down your throats?" It dropped into laughter at once, and I don't think "Mrs. Harris and I" ever tried to sing her to sleep again. "My pride had a sudden fall," wrote mamma, after giving a merry picture of the scene to grandpa, and he replied: "There are two ways of looking at most things. The time may come when Gracie will look back upon that song of 'mother's' as the sweetest music her ear ever heard; it is not sō much what we did as why we tried to do that is pleasant to remember."

Speaking of pride reminds me of Gracie's verse one morning at prayer: "Charity is not puffed up:" she said it over the second time, looking puzzled. In the afternoon, when she sat at her mother's side, making dolly a basque, she inquired into it:

"Mamma, what does 'puffed up' mean? Does it mean to puff up just as the gems do when you put them in the oven?"

"Not quite," said mamma, laughing. "Let me explain it to you, my daughter. Yesterday, when you were dressed in your new blue dress, and your broad sash, and your buttoned boots, you remember you went out to play in the yard, and Susie Miller came along, and don't you know how you tossed your head and told her your dress was fifty cents a yard, and your boots had eleven buttons on them, and you asked her what made her wear such awful looking old shoes? I am afraid my little daughter was all puffed up with pride then; she was vain of her clothes, and she thought herself better than Susie Miller."

Gracie bent her head lower over her work and twitched dolly's basque this way and that, but didn't speak. Mamma began again: "And then this morning when you went to the office you put on your kid gloves because—" Here Gracie suddenly raised her head and spoke nervously: "Mamma, I understand all about it now, just how it is; would you please tell me about one of *your* puffed ups now?"

"Do you know what it made me think of?" wrote mamma in her letter to us at home. "There flashed into my mind the verse: 'And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?' Gracie often preaches unconscious sermons to me."

Sometimes she commented on other people's sermons.

"Daughter," said her papa to her one summer morning when I was there on a visit, "to-morrow a strange minister is going to preach in our church. I am going to-day on the cars to his

house, and he is to come here—an exchange, you know. I want you to take notes of his sermon, so you can tell me all about it.”

The next morning I came very near not getting to church at all, the reason being that I had to make a book, a tiny thing, two inches wide and three inches long, with four leaves. It was sewed through the middle, and had a cover of yellow paper. This was to write the sermon on. Her mamma says I broke the Sabbath in making it; and I think myself that it might better have been done on Saturday. I have that little book in my hand this minute, and I am going to copy it here for you, letters and capitals just as she made them :

“paGe 1. HyM 2 hundred and 64. 5 cHap-
Ter 5 jaMes. tHen He MaDe A prAeR.

PAGE 2. Hym 16. TEX jAmEs 11 veRSE.

PAGE 3. TeX beHold we cAnt Hapy wicH
ARe Door.”

paGe 4. o o O HoW He yEls!!!”

How much do you suppose the papa knew

about that sermon? More than you would think, after all. When we told grandpa about it he said :

“Tell the minister of that ; and if he is a wise man it will help to cure him of an unpleasant habit of speaking too loud.”

But I don't think papa took his advice, because he knew that people are so silly in this world that they do not like to be told of their faults ; at least there is only now and then one who is so wise as to be grateful.

Soon after this we all went to grandpa's to spend vacation. Those were fine times for Minie and Gracie. I wish I could tell you all about their plays ; but it would take a large book to do that, for they were playing all the time from morning till night, and they didn't like to stop to go to bed. One of their favorite plays was to “keep house.” Minie would have a house in one corner and Gracie in the other ; then they would “go visiting” and have tea. One evening they were in the midst of this play

when I came in very quietly and took a seat at one side. Tea was just ready, spread out on a chair, little bits of shells for dishes. Minie was the lady of the house, and she said to her guest:

“Will you ask a blessing?”

Gracie looked shocked.

“Why, Minie,” she said, in a dignified voice, “that isn’t the way to play. You mustn’t ask me to ask a blessing. We are ladies, you know, and ladies don’t pray.”

“What an idea!” said Minie, shocked in her turn; just as if ladies didn’t pray just as well as gentlemen.”

“I tell you they don’t,” Gracie said, positively; “or, yes, they pray, of course, when they are all alone, and sometimes with their little girls, but they don’t ask blessings at the table. I know better than that.”

And of this she was so sure that when Minie insisted that it was the right way to play she left her in disgust, and wouldn’t play at all for as much as ten minutes. Finally they agreed to

- leave the matter to me, and both talked at once.

"Auntie Belle, *don't* all good ladies ask a blessing when the papa is away from home?"

"Auntie Belle, *do* ladies pray before folks?"

"Some do," I said, a little in doubt how to settle this question. The next one was more troublesome, coming from Minie's earnest lips:

"It is the right way to do, isn't it, Auntie Belle?"

"Yes," I said, gravely, I thought it was.

Then came the last question, with Gracie's great eyes fixed on me as though she were going to look me through and through:

"Auntie Belle, do you ever do it? Because if you do I never heard you, and papa has been away lots of times when we had supper."

To that there was simply nothing to be said, and grandpa, walking up and down the room, did not help my side much by saying just then: "'Out of thine own mouth do I condemn thee.'" What *do* you suppose he meant?

By the way, some of the little girls who may

have read about "Mrs. Delexity and Mrs. Felter-spell" in the *Pansy* will think that these two little girls acted very much like them; and I may as well confess that the real names of those two ladies are Minie and Gracie.





CHAPTER XXIII.

MINIE'S WISDOM.

THE two children together were almost too much for mortals to manage. What one couldn't think of the other could, and endless were the plans that they got up that had to be nipped in the bud by some cruel mamma or auntie. In general they agreed very well, but there was occasionally a storm that would last for several minutes. I can seem to see Minie now as she came from the yard one morning, and curled herself in a desolate little heap in the great rocking-chair. She looked forlorn enough to have lost all her friends, and she rocked to and fro in a dismal way, saying not a word to anybody.

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“What is the matter?” I asked her at last, struck with the woe-begone expression on her wise little face. “What has happened to trouble you?”

“Oh, nothing very much, I suppose,” she said, with a heavy sigh. “Only, Auntie Belle, Gracie thinks this whole world was made on purpose for her and nobody else.”

It was a real trouble, but I could not keep from laughing. It was a good description of the positive little cousin, with her emphatic voice and determined views of things. Minie had been used to being a very queen among her friends; hardly anybody disputed her right to rule; but she did it with a graceful prettiness, winning her way by kisses and caresses, where anything more positive would have barred the door. This was not by any means Gracie's way; she ruled because it was *right* to do so and so, or *wrong* to say this and that, and many a discussion they had.

“The difference between them is just this,”

grandpa said one day when we had been talking about them. "Minie kisses her auntie into giving her just what she wants, and Gracie will not take it as a gift unless she can make you understand that it is her right."

Still Minie was very wise in her own eyes, too. She thought that she understood everything that she saw going on, and often took occasion to explain what other people did when they were in straits. One day her auntie had occasion to write a hurried note, and, as was a usual thing when they were wanted, no pencil could be found in our house; they have a very provoking way, you know, of going and hiding themselves just when they are needed.

"What in the world shall I do?" she said, glancing nervously at the clock. "I wanted to have this note reach him before he left the office."

"Why don't you take pen and ink?" I suggested.

"Because every bit of ink in the house is in

the study, and that is locked. This afternoon the papa had some papers that he didn't want the children to meddle with, and so he turned the key before he went out."

Minie had been in her auntie's company for only a few days, and was rather afraid of her, but the desire to give information, as well as a desire to help, overcame her timidity, and she came with soft speech to the table.

"Auntie, I have often seen papa write with a feather when he hadn't a pencil. If you like, I can go to the barnyard and get you a feather. I know where there is a white one."

Dear me! how we laughed, and how her little sweet lips puckered and a surprised tear stood in her eye! She had made such an effort to give help. Still she was perfectly certain that her words were true, and even after we had explained the mystery of writing with a feather she looked doubtful, and was found slyly trying it with a piece of the tail of the old yellow rooster before she could feel perfectly certain that we were

right and she was wrong. It reminded me of a day when we took her to ride, and having gone a new road, part of it through the woods, she began to fear that we did not know the way home. Her uncle explained to her that, although he had never been that way, he knew by the way the sun was setting, and by the way he turned his horse when he started, that the road would surely lead into the main one by which we were to go home. She couldn't see what the sun had to do with the matter, and she evidently thought it absurd to suppose that he knew anything about roads, when all he did was to shine with all his might away up in the sky; so she only looked as sober as a judge, and said in a low, dismal tone every once in a while: "I *hope* Uncle Ross is right; but I don't know."

"And that child never *will* succeed in knowing much that she doesn't see right before her," her papa said. "I hope I am mistaken, but I am afraid it is going to be very hard for her to trust."

Sometimes her reasoning led her into very funny places, and sometimes she succeeded in making things very embarrassing for us.

They had a nice old lady at grandma's to wash for them. The first time Minie ever saw her the old lady will not soon forget what she said. I had the care of the little lady that morning, and feeling afraid that the sight for the first time of a colored person might frighten her, I tried while I was dressing her to explain about the washer-woman. When we came from the bedroom she went at once to the kitchen to see the strange sight that she had been hearing about. There was Mrs. Leggins, rubbing away with all her might, her white eyes and her white teeth both seeming to smile on the astonished little girl, who stood and looked at her. From the crown of her woolly head, neatly arranged under a turban, to the trim boots on her feet, Minie gazed, letting her eyes wander up and down the tall form as if they couldn't take in the whole of her at once. Then they began to turn from her

to some object near the stove, then back to her face again; at last she went to the stove and took up the poker; very slowly and gravely she passed her hand down its length; the result was a black hand. By this time Mrs. Leggins had stopped her tune on the washboard, and was watching the little girl with laughing eyes. She put down the poker, and went with shy steps to the old lady's side. She was very timid, and a soft little pink flush spread over her face; but she seemed to have decided that there was an important fact to be proved, and she mustn't shrink from the work; so she touched with three very soft and gentle fingers the fat black arm, bared to the elbow, then looked long and steadily at them. Surprise seemed at last to get the better of her fears, for she spoke in a clear, ringing voice:

“The poker is black and so are you; but the black rubs off the poker, and it doesn't off of you. What makes the difference?”

Now wasn't that a lovely thing to say to a nice

old colored lady! I didn't know what to say. I was almost afraid to look up for fear the old lady's face would show me that she felt very much hurt. I might have known better than that; she had too much good sense. Her face and eyes and teeth all seemed to laugh at once; she shook and bent forward, and rolled her eyes, and it was several minutes before she could speak at all. Minie meantime looked at her with a grave, astonished face, and the next thing she said showed the direction of her thoughts.

“Will you be all white in heaven?”

This almost made the rest of us laugh again. Not so the old lady, she was sobered at once.

“Bless your heart, honey,” she said “that is a thing to think of, sure enough; and I don't know as I ever thought about it before; but as sure as I am a living woman I shouldn't wonder if we would. It is worth while to try for it anyhow. Bless her innocent little heart! Her old auntie will try to have a white soul.”

And as we went back to the sitting-room Gracie's auntie whispered to me :

“ If her grandpa were here he would say, ‘ Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has ordained strength.’ ”





CHAPTER XXIV.

MINIE'S CONFLICT.

ONE Sunday evening our great church was filled so full that the sexton had to bring in aisle seats, and chairs were put all around the pulpit, and people even sat on the pulpit steps. We had a missionary from some Western town. I have forgotten now just where he came from. But he had been on the field and worked hard, and he knew all about the missionaries, and what they had done, and what they had done *without*. This last surprised some of us very much. We had not known that men were willing to give up so much for the sake of preaching about Jesus. A hard winter was coming, and the missionary

who had been sent out to tell the story of work and suffering feared that a great deal of suffering was in store for the workers of the Far West. He told some sad stories of what he had seen. I wish I had time to tell you about them. They brought tears to the eyes of a great many people, and we took up a large collection for the missionaries that evening in grandpa's church. Among the people who listened was Minie. She hardly stirred during the entire evening. Her eyes looked almost as large again as usual, and a good many times she wiped away the tears. But when the collection was taken she shook her head. This surprised me very much, for I knew she had some money of her "very own," as she used to say, and I knew she had her little portmonnaie in her pocket. She was always ready to give her pennies in the collection; even anxious to share with the grown-up people in the pleasure of giving. I wondered what was the matter with her. On the way home she said not a word to me about the meeting, nor indeed

about anything else, though she held my hand. When we were fairly in the house and the rooms were lighted, I noticed that she had a sort of discontented look on her face.

“Did you enjoy the meeting?” I asked her. About this time she had grown to be such a womanly little girl, at least about some things, that I used to find myself talking with her very much as if she were a grown-up woman; therefore I asked her, “Did you enjoy the meeting?”

“No, ma’am,” she said, gravely.

“You didn’t!” I answered, feeling very much surprised, as she had listened so attentively. “Why, I thought you would be just the one to enjoy it very much.”

The air with which she looked up in my face and made her next remark would have fitted her grandmother.

“Auntie Belle, do you enjoy hearing about how badly people are living, how little they have to eat and wear, and all those things?”

“Why, yes,” I said, laughing a little. Her

face was so grave that I couldn't help it. "I like to be told about what is going on in this world, especially if I have some money to help them to get some more things with."

"A few pennies won't do them much good," she said, in a forlorn tone. "I never had pennies enough in all my life to get one-half of the things that they need, not one-quarter. Oh, my! I guess I haven't! Why, they wouldn't *begin* to do it."

Someway this thought seemed to give her great pleasure.

"Don't you know about your piece that grandma loves so much?" I said.

" 'Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.' "

Every little helps, you know; and your pennies, put with ever so many other pennies, would make a great deal of money."

She shook herself impatiently.

"I don't want to hear any more about it at all. The man told dreadful stories. I wish I hadn't heard him. If I had known it was going to be such a bad meeting I wouldn't have gone."

I was very much puzzled. "The child is nervous," I said to myself. "It is queer, I never thought she was — about such things."

The family came in one by one, and we talked the matter over; but Minie kept perfectly still until she suddenly surprised us all by bursting into a perfect storm of tears.

"What in the world is the matter?" said grandma, in alarm; and mamma said, anxiously: "Do you feel sick, darling?"

It was several minutes before she could make any answer; then her words were all choked up with tears, but they amounted to this: "She thought it was too bad. Here she had been wanting a pink and white fan, with feathers on the end of it, and a glass to see your face in on one side, and she had been saving her money for most a year, a long time, anyway; and every

single time that she got most enough some man came along in the church, or the school-house, or the hall, and told dreadful stories, and made people give him money. She had just exactly enough now to buy the fan, and she had meant to go in the morning and get Auntie Belle to help her pick it out. Mrs. Burlingame had beautiful ones, and she had been saving them up for her for a long, long time; and now this old missionary man had to come along and spoil it all. It was just too bad!" And at this point the sobs burst forth so that it was impossible to tell what she was trying to add to the sorrowful story.

I wish I could give you an idea of how forlorn the poor child looked. She was sitting flat on the floor, one little slippered foot curled under her, and her ruffled brown head leaning on the crimson cushion of grandpa's rocking-chair. She looked so pitiful, and yet it was all so funny that we could not keep from laughing; only grandpa

and Minie's papa were very sober. Papa even looked sad.

"It is a real struggle between the world and the cross," he said, in a low tone, looking just a little reproachfully at us laughers.

"It is just a baby struggle," her mamma said, and we could see that she thought papa was taking too grave a view of it.

But grandpa seemed to be of the same mind.

"It is a baby struggle only because she is a baby," he said, very soberly. "When she grows up, that same heart will have 'grown-up' struggles about this same matter, unless it is conquered now."

Mamma tried to look sober.

"What shall I do with her?" she said, as the heart-broken little maiden cried on.

"Put her to bed," the papa said. "It is too late and she is too nervous to decide anything to-night. Teach her that the whole matter must be left until morning."

I went to sleep very soon after that; and the

next thing I heard was a ringing little voice saying :

“ But, grandpa, can't you advise me ? ”

Then grandpa :

“ Why, yes, I can advise you. I can give you the very best of advice. You must do exactly what you think is the right thing to do.”

“ But maybe I don't know what is right,” said this grave little woman.

“ You know what you think,” grandpa said.

And then there was silence for a few minutes. Pretty soon she said in a timid voice :

“ Grandpa, Mrs. Burlingame has been saving the fan for me this ever so long. I might disappoint her if I shouldn't buy it. Would that be right ? ”

“ Have you *promised* to buy it ? ”

“ Why, no, not promised exactly ; but then she knows I want to do it, and that I meant to just as soon as I got money enough.”

“ Very well. Then if you shouldn't have

money enough this time it would have to wait until next time, wouldn't it?"

"But, grandpa, the summer days are almost gone. I should have to wait until next year, and I'm afraid it would get out of fashion."

"Then you wouldn't want it, would you?" grandpa said, gravely. "I shouldn't think it would be well to buy a thing that was likely to go out of fashion so soon."

Minie shifted her ground.

"Oh, I could use it, you know, even if it wasn't *just* the fashion."

"Well, you know I told you that it wasn't a thing that anybody could decide for you. It must be done by yourself."

By this time I was up, and I could see Minie from my window, following grandpa as he hoed the corn. She stood first on one foot and then on the other, and looked as unhappy and uneasy as ever a mortal could. At last she said:

"Grandpa, it is going to be very warm all the rest of August. Don't you think it is?"

"I don't know, I am sure," said grandpa, and he coughed a little as if he might be wanting to laugh, but thought he would better not.

"Oh, well," she said, "the sky looks like it I think. It looks real red, anyhow. I feel almost certain I shall need my fan very much!"

"As to that," said grandpa, quickly; "I heard your grandma say that a very good palm-leaf fan could be bought for ten cents, and they give a great deal of wind. You might buy one of them, and give the rest of your money to the missionary, I suppose, if you wanted to."

"I shouldn't wonder if grandma wanted me to set the chairs to the table," Minie said; and she ran in as fast as her little feet could take her. She had had advice enough from the corn-patch. After breakfast she hung around her mother.

"Mamma," I heard her say as I came down the stairs, "do you think I ought to give my fan-money to that man?"

"I think my little girl ought to do just what she thinks is right to do," said mamma, with a

sober enough face. She began to see that this was really an important lesson in Minie's education.

"It is very queer," said Minie, almost crying, "that no one will give me any advice."

"Won't Jesus?" mamma said softly. "Have you asked him what it would be best to do?"

And then Minie ran away. All that day her face was long and sad. She came to each one of us for our opinion, but the papa had asked that we would none of us try to influence her, so we had to be quiet. I shall never forget how sorry I was for her. I can't describe to you how much her heart had been set on that fan. The fact that it would have been an absurd one for a little girl to have did not help the matter a bit. She had been given the most perfect control over her monthly allowance of pocket money; if she didn't buy anything positively wrong, it might be as foolish as it well could, no one would find any fault with her. They were very anxious to have her learn to have judgement for herself.

So the fan had long been a settled thing, over which mamma had laughed but found no fault; and to give it up for the sake of sending shoes and stockings to some people whom she had never seen was a hard thing to think of. I shall always remember what an anxious face her papa carried during the long hours of what was to us a funny struggle.

“It will have to do with her whole life,” he said to me, with an anxious face. “If she decides for *self* now, it will not be nearly so hard to do it next time.”

“Why don't you help her?” I said. But he shook his head.

“She doesn't need any help,” he said. “It is just a struggle with her conscience. I believe she knows what she ought to do.”

“Do you really think that child ought to give up her fan that she has been saving and working to get for nearly a year, and send her money out West?” I asked him; and I was a little bit disgusted with the idea.

“I think that *she* thinks she ought to,” he said, very soberly. “And what I want to know is, who told her so? None of us have. Unless it is her conscience speaking to her, who or what is it?”





CHAPTER XXV.

THE QUESTION SETTLED.

It was just as we were going to sit down to tea that Minie came, with a very resolute look on her face and a box in her hand, and stopped before her papa.

“I have decided it,” she said, quietly. “Papa, will you please send this to the missionary *right away*? I want it to go to-night. I wish I had sent it yesterday. Maybe somebody has starved because I didn’t. Oh, dear me! you don’t think so, do you? You don’t believe God would have let anybody starve when he must have known all the time that I would decide to send it?”

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“No, darling,” papa said, gently, “I think he has taken care of the one that you want to help.” Papa seemed to think that his little girl had suffered enough.

She opened the little paste-board box and emptied the contents into her father’s lap. They rolled about in every direction, pennies, and five-cent pieces, and three-cent pieces. We had a great time picking it up.

“How much is there here?” papa asked her.

“One dollar and twenty-five cents, papa; just exactly the price, you know.”

“Are you going to send it all?” said mamma, a little startled. “Wouldn’t it be better to divide, and have half of it left for the next time that you want to give?”

“If you please, mamma,” Minie said, looking earnestly at her mother, “I want to send it all, every cent of it. I have had such a dreadful time that I think it all ought to go; and I think Jesus thinks so too.”

“Don’t hinder the child,” said grandpa, and

his voice was a little husky. "She has had a better teacher than any of us, I guess."

So the money was put up securely in a package. It was Minie's fancy that the very pennies that she had saved were to go to the missionaries, so, though it took more trouble, her father was determined that she should have her own way. Gracie, who was visiting at grandpa's at this time, had been very much interested in the whole matter, and she wrote a letter to her papa about that and some other things. As I liked the letter very much I will copy it for you :

"DEAR PAPA :— Grandpa says you must come too. Minie gave ten whole shillings. I liked the man, but she didn't at first; but when she got willing to give her ten shillings then she did. I went to see the pigs yesterday. I am fat. I go to Sunday-school here. I gave three pennies myself, that is all I have got. Grandma made apple turnovers, one for me and one for Minie; they were good. Can I have a little kitten? I

could bring it home in the trunk, and then it couldn't mew. Minie gave all the money she had, too. They had to go barefooted, and they don't sometimes have much to eat. We had a big turkey for dinner. Grandma fed it with a spoon. It was good. Now Minie will have to do without a fan. I am sorry for her. I drink fresh milk every day. I eat two apples for my dinner. It is nice milk. Can't I take my quarter of a dollar and get her a pink fan?

"Your loving daughter.

"Grace."

A few days after this we had another letter to read. It came from the Far West, where the precious ten shillings had been sent. This is the way it read:

"DEAR LITTLE MINIE:—I want to write to you and tell you how much my heart thanks you for those ten shillings. What do you think they

bought? A pair of shoes for my little girl, who has not been to Sabbath-school for three months, because her father could not afford to buy shoes for her, and because the road that she has to walk is so long and rough that when she tries to go without shoes she cuts her poor little feet so that they bleed. Her mother had decided that she must not go any more until the dear Father in heaven had sent her a pair of shoes. Can you think how glad she was that He whispered to you and told you that she was in such need, and that your unselfish heart was willing to give up the beautiful fan for her sake? I wish you could have seen her this morning when she went joyfully on her way to Sabbath-school. Think how hard it would be for you to stay away from yours for so long a time, then you will understand how happy she was. Dear Minie, her father and mother thank you, and they pray for you that you may never need even a fan; that your life may be a sweet, unselfish, happy one; that your

heart may be given very early to Jesus, even if it is not already his. God bless you, dear child.

“Your friend,

“JAMES L. WALKER.”

That letter gave us all a great deal of pleasure, I think the thing which pleased Minie's father most was what she said when it was read to her. She was very sober for a few minutes, then she said :

“Papa, he is mistaken in me. He ought to be told that I am not an unselfish little girl. I wanted to keep that money awfully, and he ought to know about it. He thinks I am a good girl, and, papa, you know I am not.”

Papa promised to write and tell him all that it was necessary for him to know ; and we all thought that the fan story was ended ; but a few days after, behold, there was another chapter added to it. There came a young lady to make us a visit ; she was a great pet of mine, and really she was one of the dearest girls I ever

knew. Some day I shouldn't wonder if I should tell you a pleasant story about her ; at least I am going to tell the little *Pansy* people, and perhaps you will read it there. Her name is Ella. To her I told the story of the fan, which was a very foolish thing for me to do, as I soon came to see. But I had been so interested in it myself, and I knew that Ella loved Minie so much that it would be very nice for her to hear it, and I never once thought of the next thing that might happen. She went down town soon after I finished my story, rather slipped away from me in a way that surprised me ; but I understood it soon after when there came a package about three inches wide and ten long, done up in brown paper, and addressed to Minie. She was in a great flutter over it, but I began to guess even before I saw the shape of the box. Sure enough, there was the very fan!—pink, feathered, mirrored, all complete.

“What a dunce I was,” I said, “not to think of that! I might have known that you would go

and do it, and yet I never thought of such a thing for a moment. If I had I should have positively forbidden it."

"I'm glad you didn't, I am sure," laughed Ella, "because you would have made me a great deal of trouble; but I don't see how a person of any sense or any heart could help doing it. Upon my word I don't."

"Especially if they had as much money to waste as you have," I said, speaking in a half-vexed tone, for I knew that Minie's father wouldn't quite like it, and I was afraid he would blame me for bringing all this to pass.

Oh, but wasn't Minie delighted! She danced from room to room with her treasure; she kissed it a dozen times, and we were just beginning to understand what a great sacrifice she had really made.

"I declare," a certain cousin said, as she watched her, "I am ashamed of what I gave. I believe I will go right home and add another ten to it. Talk about sacrifice! Why, that child is

the only one among us who knows anything about it."

When her papa came it was just as I expected. Some one had called Minie, and she laid her treasure down on my lap and ran ; so I showed it to her father, and gave him its history. He looked as sober as if the poor little pink fan had been an enemy.

"I am a little sorry," he said, hesitatingly. "I know it was done out of pure love, but I am afraid to have her get the idea that she is to be paid for being charitable. She only did what was her duty."

"Now don't you go and be as solemn as an old owl," began Ella, merrily ; but grandpa, much to our surprise, came to her aid.

"I don't know about that doctrine," he said, looking at the papa. "Did you ever do your duty in your life that the Lord didn't pay you for doing it? In fact, hasn't he *promised* to do this very thing? 'Give, and it shall be given unto

you. Good measure, pressed down, running over.'”

“There! there!” Ella said, clapping her hands in great delight; “your own Book condemns you!”

Just then Minie came running in, her face all aglow with joy. She seized her fan and ran to her father’s side, and her glad whisper was so loud that we all heard it:

“Papa! oh, papa, look! see what Jesus sent me! Didn’t he send it *quick*? I prayed for it, you know; but I didn’t think it would come so *very* quick.”

And I think the papa’s heart was satisfied.





CHAPTER XXVI.

HOME.

THE happy days went by until there came a summer when Minie was eight years old and Gracie was four. We spent the most of that summer together, the aunties and uncles and cousins, all at the dear old home—grandpa's house. It was a summer which we never will forget, any of us. It was a very sad summer, and yet a pleasant one. The dear grandpa was sick, very sick; we knew that he could not get well. I can not tell you how this made our hearts ache when we thought of ourselves, and yet, as I told you, it was a pleasant time. I think that sick room was the pleasantest place I

was ever in. When I was a little girl I used to hope that I should never have to be with anybody who was very sick. I thought it would be so dreadful to look at anybody knowing that he was soon going to die. I found out that it made a great difference who it was, and how he felt himself. Grandpa was willing to die; he was not one bit afraid of it. He used to say to me: "It is nice to have my children all about me, and it seems sad sometimes that I must go and leave them — sad for them I mean; but what a blessed thing it will be when we all get up there where none of us will have to go away any more. It will be vacation there all the time, won't it?" This he said, because for many years some of us had only been at the old home when there was vacation. Much of the time that summer Minie spent with me in grandpa's room. It was her delight to fan him, to arrange the pillows for him, to read to him in her soft, gentle voice; to sing to him when he was restless and feverish. Many a time he would say to me: "Where is

Minie? Doesn't she want to come and say her little piece for me?" A short time before that she had commenced going to school, and there she learned to recite many little pieces. One that grandpa used to love to hear I will copy here for you :

" Jesus bids us shine
With a clear, pure light,
Like a little candle
Burning in the night ;
In the world is darkness,
So we must shine,
You, in your little corner,
And I, in mine.

" Jesus bids us shine
First of all for him ;
Well he sees and knows it
If our light is dim.
He looks down from heaven
To see us shine,
You, in your little corner,
And I, in mine.

" Jesus bids us shine
Then for all around.

Many kinds of darkness
In the world are found ;
There's sin, there's want, there's sorrow,
So we must shine,
You, in your little corner,
And I, in mine."

Her voice was low and sweet, especially when she was reciting for grandpa ; and many a time have I seen his dear hand go up to wipe away the tears as she said these earnest words.

"I hope she will shine," he said to me one day when she had said her little piece and gone. "I hope she will be a true light, showing the way to others, helping them to get through the dangerous places in the world, and land safely in heaven."

He was very fond of hearing her sing, and perhaps the piece that he loved the best and called for the oftenest was "Rest for the weary."

One summer afternoon the shades in grandpa's room were partly dropped to keep out the glare of light ; the birds outside were singing, and the soft

summer wind brought the breath of flowers in at the open window ; grandma had gone to lie down for a few minutes of much-needed rest ; each one of the large family was busy doing something for the future comfort of the dear grandpa, and Minie and I were on guard in his room charged by grandma to call her the minute he seemed tired or asked where she was, for often and often during the long weary days there came times when only grandma could do things to rest and help him ; we children, try as we might, were as nothing to the dear wife who had taken such a long journey with him ever since the early morning of life. Minie had a long branch from off the elm-tree, which she gently waved to and fro to keep the flies from troubling grandpa, and as she waved it she talked in her low, gentle voice about the school and the lessons and the plays, for grandpa, in all his weakness and his pain, never lost his interest in everything that had to do with this darling grandchild. Pretty soon he said : “ Now you may read a few verses for me

from the book, and then you and Minie will sing." I knew very well what "the book" was. It was a long time since he had cared for any but the one book that had been his friend for so many years, so I got his own large-print Bible, all full of leaves turned down and verses marked; no need to ask which was his favorite; he had left marks of his love all through the book. On this afternoon I read verses here and there as my eye caught a mark. "And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." "And there shall be no night there." "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads." Isn't that the way it reads? I am trying to recall these verses from memory. I have thought of them so many times it is not likely I shall make many mistakes.

This was one: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine." I knew that it was almost the dearest

verse to my father in the whole Bible. "Ah!" he would say, "isn't that a triumph? What can Satan do after that? 'Thou art mine.' Yes, indeed, I am his; he has called me by my name." After the verses were read, as many of them as I thought his tired head could bear, he said: "Now the hymn, I am getting tired. You may sing, 'Rest for the weary.' I shall soon know what kind of a rest that is." Minie came and stood by my side. Her voice trembled a little. If she had not tried very hard to keep it steady she would have cried. She seemed to feel that grandpa was slipping away from her, but she knew he wanted to hear her sing; so she choked back the tears, like a strong-hearted little girl as she was, and sang low and clear his favorite verse:

"He is fitting up my mansion
Which eternally shall remain
For my stay."

But in that celestial center
I a crown of life shall wear."

Then the chorus, with its oft-repeated sentence: "There is rest for the weary."

"That is it," he said, when we finished it. I had not sung much, just a softly little tone to let Minie feel that I was helping her, partly because somehow I could not trust my voice, and partly because I knew that grandpa wanted to hear his little darling sing it once more. "That is it, thank you. I don't know, but it seems to me that the angels can not sing much sweeter than that. I shall think of it when I hear them sing, I know I shall. How soon it will be now—a few days more at the longest and I shall go to my crown of life, and then in a little while you will all come; my little singer must be sure to come to sing for me there." He was still for a moment, then he said: "I guess I will rest me for a while. You may call your mother now." He went out softly and left him. That was

the last song and the last talk that Minie and I had with the dear, dear grandpa. In the gray light of the early summer morning the Jesus whom he loved sent an angel to bring him home to the rest that he had prepared for the weary. I can not tell you much about that morning, about how beautiful the dear face looked with the peace of God upon it, with the weary, painful look that had lasted through so many days gone out. Looking at him we could not doubt that the rest had surely come; but, oh! how desolate it was to think that he had gone from us, that perhaps it would be so long, *so long* before we could see him again! My sad heart felt like repeating Minie's desolate wail: "Oh, Auntie Belle, if he could *only* have taken us all right up to heaven with him how sweet it would have been." We had many anxious thoughts about Gracie during that long morning. She was sleeping peacefully when her grandpa went away, and we dreaded the awakening. She had

seemed too young to understand about the coming death ; she had been the only one in the house who had gone brightly, merrily through the days while we were stepping softly and waiting ; but now that the dear face had changed and the dear voice would speak to her no more we feared that when she realized it her little heart would break with grief, for she *loved* her grandpa. Very gently mamma tried to explain it to her when at last she opened her eyes ; very carefully the loving mother tried to choke back her own grief and speak cheerfully to the little girl. It was a strange story, that in the night Jesus had made up his mind that he wanted grandpa in heaven. Grandpa had been sick and suffering for a long, long time, and Jesus had said to an angel, " I don't want Gracie's dear, good grandpa to have any more pain or trouble. You may go down and bring him up to me."

Shall we ever forget the brightness that glowed on that sweet baby face as she said,

clasping her hands together and speaking earnestly :

“Well, I can be happy if he has gone to *heaven* can not you ?”

Dear little boys and girls, my story is ended. Both Minie and Gracie are living now ; they are a good deal older. Grandpa has been four years in heaven. I might tell you much about them, but someway the brightness has gone out of my story ; I should miss the constant presence and love and care of the dear grandpa, so would you. I think you have learned to love him during these talks that we have had together about him. I want you to remember that this is not a story in a book about some people who never lived. We are just as much alive to-day as you are, and grandpa is just as much in heaven as you are on earth. What I want of you is to be sure to get acquainted with him. There is no telling how many of you may meet Minie and Gracie and talk with them here on earth ; it will be strange

if some of you don't. But as many of you as want to see the dear grandpa must get ready to go over the river where he lives. Isn't it nice to think that we are all invited to the same beautiful city? Be sure that none of you are too late to get in.

Lovingly,

PANSY.

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summer wind brought the breath of flowers in at the open window ; grandma had gone to lie down for a few minutes of much-needed rest ; each one of the large family was busy doing something for the future comfort of the dear grandpa, and Minie and I were on guard in his room charged by grandma to call her the minute he seemed tired or asked where she was, for often and often during the long weary days there came times when only grandma could do things to rest and help him ; we children, try as we might, were as nothing to the dear wife who had taken such a long journey with him ever since the early morning of life. Minie had a long branch from off the elm-tree, which she gently waved to and fro to keep the flies from troubling grandpa, and as she waved it she talked in her low, gentle voice about the school and the lessons and the plays, for grandpa, in all his weakness and his pain, never lost his interest in everything that had to do with this darling grandchild. Pretty soon he said : " Now you may read a few verses for me

from the book, and then you and Minie will sing." I knew very well what "the book" was. It was a long time since he had cared for any but the one book that had been his friend for so many years, so I got his own large-print Bible, all full of leaves turned down and verses marked; no need to ask which was his favorite; he had left marks of his love all through the book. On this afternoon I read verses here and there as my eye caught a mark. "And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." "And there shall be no night there." "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads." Isn't that the way it reads? I am trying to recall these verses from memory. I have thought of them so many times it is not likely I shall make many mistakes.

This was one: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine." I knew that it was almost the dearest

verse to my father in the whole Bible. "Ah!" he would say, "isn't that a triumph? What can Satan do after that? 'Thou art mine.' Yes, indeed, I am his; he has called me by my name." After the verses were read, as many of them as I thought his tired head could bear, he said: "Now the hymn, I am getting tired. You may sing, 'Rest for the weary.' I shall soon know what kind of a rest that is." Minie came and stood by my side. Her voice trembled a little. If she had not tried very hard to keep it steady she would have cried. She seemed to feel that grandpa was slipping away from her, but she knew he wanted to hear her sing; so she choked back the tears, like a strong-hearted little girl as she was, and sang low and clear his favorite verse:

"He is fitting up my mansion,
Which eternally shall stand,
For my stay shall not be transient
In that holy, happy land;
Pain nor sickness there shall enter,
Grief nor woe my heart shall share,

But in that celestial center
I a crown of life shall wear."

Then the chorus, with its oft-repeated sentence: "There is rest for the weary."

"That is it," he said, when we finished it. I had not sung much, just a softly little tone to let Minie feel that I was helping her, partly because somehow I could not trust my voice, and partly because I knew that grandpa wanted to hear his little darling sing it once more. "That is it, thank you. I don't know, but it seems to me that the angels can not sing much sweeter than that. I shall think of it when I hear them sing, I know I shall. How soon it will be now—a few days more at the longest and I shall go to my crown of life, and then in a little while you will all come; my little singer must be sure to come to sing for me there." He was still for a minute, then he said: "I guess I will rest me for a little. You may call your mother now."

So we went out softly and left him. That was

the last song and the last talk that Minie and I had with the dear, dear grandpa. In the gray light of the early summer morning the Jesus whom he loved sent an angel to bring him home to the rest that he had prepared for the weary. I can not tell you much about that morning, about how beautiful the dear face looked with the peace of God upon it, with the weary, painful look that had lasted through so many days gone out. Looking at him we could not doubt that the rest had surely come; but, oh! how desolate it was to think that he had gone from us, that perhaps it would be so long, *so long* before we could see him again! My sad heart felt like repeating Minie's desolate wail: "Oh, Auntie Belle, if he could *only* have taken us all right up to heaven with him how sweet it would have been." We had many anxious thoughts about Gracie during that long morning. She was sleeping peacefully when her grandpa went away, and we dreaded the awakening. She had

seemed too young to understand about the coming death ; she had been the only one in the house who had gone brightly, merrily through the days while we were stepping softly and waiting ; but now that the dear face had changed and the dear voice would speak to her no more we feared that when she realized it her little heart would break with grief, for she *loved* her grandpa. Very gently mamma tried to explain it to her when at last she opened her eyes ; very carefully the loving mother tried to choke back her own grief and speak cheerfully to the little girl. It was a strange story, that in the night Jesus had made up his mind that he wanted grandpa in heaven. Grandpa had been sick and suffering for a long, long time, and Jesus had said to an angel, "I don't want Gracie's dear, good grandpa to have any more pain or trouble. You may go down and bring him up to me."

Shall we ever forget the brightness that glowed on that sweet baby face as she said,

clasping her hands together and speaking earnestly :

“Well, I can be happy if he has gone to *heaven* can not you?”

Dear little boys and girls, my story is ended. Both Minie and Gracie are living now ; they are a good deal older. Grandpa has been four years in heaven. I might tell you much about them, but someway the brightness has gone out of my story ; I should miss the constant presence and love and care of the dear grandpa, so would you. I think you have learned to love him during these talks that we have had together about him. I want you to remember that this is not a story in a book about some people who never lived. We are just as much alive to-day as you are, and grandpa is just as much in heaven as you are on earth. What I want of you is to be sure to get acquainted with him. There is no telling how many of you may meet Minie and Gracie and talk with them here on earth ; it will be strange

if some of you don't. But as many of you as want to see the dear grandpa must get ready to go over the river where he lives. Isn't it nice to think that we are all invited to the same beautiful city? Be sure that none of you are too late to get in.

Lovingly,

PANSY.

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OUR BOOK TABLE.

MORE POETRY FOR CHILDREN.

Not by Charles Lamb and his sister, whose "Poetry for Children" we spoke of here a few weeks since, but two other volumes, one called **Poems in Company with Children*, by Mrs. S. M. B. Piatt; the other **Sugar Plums*, made up of poetry by Ella Farman, the editor of *Wide Awake*, and of pictures by Miss C. A. Northam.

Mrs. Piatt, whose book is the larger of the two, is a lady living in Ohio; and not only is she a poet, but her husband, J. J. Piatt, is one too; and it would be hard to say which is the better. We do not know that it is necessary to say that at all. A good many years ago, as we happen to know, a very heavy grief came to Mr. and Mrs. Piatt; and the mother-heart, at least has never parted with it. All of her poetry is more or less tinged with the color of this grief, which had its occasion in the death of a beloved and beautiful boy under circumstances too painful to be recited here. We do not mean that all the poetry in this volume of hers is mournful, for it is not; in fact there are many things in it which are bright and even merry. It is the best of poetry for children, musical, simple, tender, and true. We shall now quote some of it, to prove what we say:

WHEN IT RAINS.

Do?—like the things in the garden. Oh!
Just keep quiet a while and grow. —
Do?—like the bird. It shuts its wings,
And waits for the sun. Do you hear?—it sings!
Do?—like the lilies. Let it beat,
Nestle below it—and be sweet.

THE LAMB IN THE SKY.

"There is a lamb," the children said:—
Sweet in the grass they saw it lie.
But the baby lifted the goldenest head
And looked for the Lamb in the sky.
Then the children laughed as they saw him look
At the high white clouds, but I know not why—
For (have I not read in a beautiful Book?)
There *is* a Lamb, in the sky.

* *Poems in Company with Children*. By Mrs. S. M. B. Piatt.
Price \$1.50.

OUR BOOK TABLE.

Miss Farman's book is very pretty by reason of the beautiful pictures in it; pictures of children and child-life which are certainly among the best of their kind. One of these pictures is of baby Dotty, fat-cheeked and chubby-legged, fast asleep on the sofa. Behind the sofa stands the dog Carlo, and this is what he is doing, and what comes of it:

MOUNTING GUARD.

He thinks BOW-WOW, at that fly
Lighting down on Dotty's eye.
Bow-wow, too, at little Sam,
Letting that front gate go SLAM.

Do you understand it? Carlo is watching his little friend Dotty, afraid that somebody, or something, will wake her up.

He lifts up a warning paw,
As puss, pushing with her claw
At the lightly-swinging door,
Patters in across the floor,
Looks a bite towards papa,
For his sudden ha-ha-ha!
Glares at the piano keys,
Snaps at mamma for her sneeze,
Eyes that baby in her lap,
Just awakened from his nap—
COO-A-COO and GOO-A-GOO
GOO-A-GOO and COO A-COO—

All so loud in mamma's lap,
Never minding Dotty's nap,

'Cause it's baby, no one cares,
And poor Carlo quite despairs.

How she jingles spoon and cup—
Bite her! eat her! chew her up!

Carlo's wild!
That dreadful child!

No use no how—
Bow-wow, BOW-WOW—

Carlo's self wakes Dotty up,
Not the baby with her cup.

The Congregationalist.

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