

A decorative border with ornate floral and scrollwork designs in each corner, framing the text.

PROTECTION;

OR, THE

CANDLE AND THE DOG.

BY

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“ My poor little kitten ! What can have become of her, mamma ? ” said

Clement. "I staid out till it got quite dusk, and hunted about in all the places, near the arbour, where she had been playing with me; and what *can* have become of her!"

"Such a pity!" said Lucy; "for the wind is getting rather gusty, and the night may be wet and cold, and the poor little thing has no notion of taking care of itself."

Their papa, who had just come in from a ride, and was reading a letter, looked up, and said, "Was your kitten a white one?"

"Almost, very nearly white, papa; only a few yellow spots," said all the children very eagerly.

"Well, then, I think I must have seen her just now. After leaving my

horse with William, I walked round by the shrubbery, and not far from the arbour I started some little animal, which I thought white from seeing it so clearly in the dusk; and which took shelter, as I think, under the large rhododendron."

"Oh how nice!" said little Kate, clapping her hands, "we shall catch pussy again. Mamma, may I save some of my milk for her?"

The children were all in a bustle, in the hope of recovering their pretty playfellow; and their mamma told Clement to put on his cap, and take one of the servants with a light, and to go softly, and call pussy; taking care to look under the large shrub where she was supposed to be hidden.

Away ran Clement; and the rest, with their mamma, went into the next room, to look from the large window, which gave a view of the place. They soon saw Clement hastening along, and William the groom carrying a candle beside him.

“There!” cried Lucy, “I saw the kitten. No: it was the light falling on some flowers. Now Clement is running; he has turned back.” “They are not near the rhododendron yet,” said John.

“Oh,” cried Fanny, “the candle! the candle will be blown out: see how it flickers in the wind.”

“William should have taken a lantern,” observed mamma: “but you see he is holding his hat to screen

the light from the breeze that blows in the open space.”

“ Now they are at the rhododendron,” said John; “ and William has enough to do to keep the light in.”

For a long while they stood watching, while poor Clement called, and searched, and seemed in great distress; and William moved cautiously about, still keeping his hat on the side where the wind would have blown upon the light: but they were unable to find the kitten. Papa came and looked for a minute, and then said, “ I must try my hand too at recovering the little straggler,” and went out.

“ Now, mamma,” said Lucy, “ you often tell us that there is something

to learn from whatever happens: what can we learn out of Clement going to hunt for his kitten?"

"My love," answered mamma, "I was at that moment thinking what a valuable lesson is to be learned from the objects now before us."

"What is it, mamma? what is it?" said the children.

"Look, my dears, at the candle; every thing depends on its being kept alight, and you see how the wind is blowing against it on all sides, and what danger there is of its being extinguished."

"Yes, mamma; but William takes care of it, and keeps the wind off."

"And if the candle could under-

stand, and speak, what would it say to William?"

All the children answered: each of them had a speech for the candle to make; and all agreed in making it ask William to protect it from the wind.

"Well, now, my dears, what would be the value of that candle if it was never lighted?"

"Nothing at all," replied the children: and John said, "It is nothing but dirty tallow, and ragged cotton; and if it were never to give light, the mice might as well eat it at once."

"True: and we are like that candle. If the light of truth is not in us, if we remain in the darkness natural to us, we are utterly worthless; and

worse, we are offensive to God, useless among men, and fit only to be destroyed."

"I see that, mamma," said Lucy; "and you know our blessed Lord compares his disciples to lights: and he says, 'Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house,'" Matt. v. 15.

"Who kindles the light in our dark souls?"

"God: it is God alone who can do it, mamma. Jesus Christ saith, 'I am the light of the world,'" John viii. 12. It was Fanny who gave this answer; and Lucy added, "The Scripture says of Him, 'That was

the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' ”

John spoke next, and repeated, “ ‘Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,’ ” Ephes. v. 14.

“ May I say a text, mamma ? ” lisped little Kate.

“ Yes, surely, my darling, ” said mamma.

The child repeated, “ ‘ You were dark, but now you are light in the Lord. ’ ” See Ephes. v. 8.

“ Dear little thing ! ” said Lucy ; “ she has said the sense, and almost the words exactly. ”

“ And now, mamma, ” said John, “ why does William’s candle make

you think of this more than the candles in the next room?"

"Because, my dear boy, William's candle is exposed to the wind: an enemy, invisible, but very active, and very subtle, and very strong, is trying hard to extinguish the light first kindled; and nothing but William's great care and watchfulness would hinder its being blown quite out. I could say a great deal to you about this; but look, who is that coming from the shrubbery?"

"Oh, it's papa, it's papa!" cried the children. "And see," said John, "he has been and unchained Nelson, and is bringing him too."

"I am afraid Nelson will worry the poor kitten, or frighten it quite away," said Lucy.

“Never fear, my love. Papa has the dog in such perfect command, that he will do nothing but what he is bidden. Let us watch now, and finish our talk afterwards.”

So they watched, and saw their papa come along towards the place where Clement was standing perplexed; and they saw the great Newfoundland dog marching very closely beside him, looking up every now and then for leave to run about: but his master shook his head, and seemed to say No. When they got close to Clement, his papa spoke to him, and while he was answering, they saw in the strong light of the candle the dog pricking his ears, and putting his head to one side, as dogs do when their

attention is suddenly roused. So papa left speaking, and looked in the direction that Nelson looked in; and then he stooped down, and spoke to the dog, lifting up his finger, as if admonishing him; and then he gave him a pat on the head, and away went Nelson, walking quietly with his nose to the ground, and disappeared in the dark shade.

Now the children were quite out of breath with anxiety: they did not speak, but pressed their faces closer to each other, and to the glass of the window; and after about a minute, pop came the kitten, like a little white ball, towards Clement, who held out his hands in great delight to her; but she passed him, and ran under

the rhododendron. Nelson would have followed, but his master ordered him to stand still, close to the shrub, on one side, and he stood on another side himself, and William opposite him; and then Clement crept under the branches, which were down on the grass, and came out, hugging his kitten; while Nelson, being much patted and commended by his master, began to bound, and bark, and run, and roll on the soft grass; and the children in the drawing-room jumped as much as he, and clapped their hands, and laughed with delight. Presently, the party came in; that is to say, Clement, carrying pussy, and his papa whistling to Nelson, who seemed very proud of being permitted

to come into the parlour. Some of the children ran to kiss pussy, and others to hug Nelson, and all thanked their papa for his kindness. Lucy ran to the table, where the tea things still were, and poured out some milk into a saucer for the kitten, who lapped it most eagerly, purring as loud as her little throat could sing; and mamma gave some to the dog, who wagged his fine long tail in thanks, and took it very gently. Then he got some pats from every body, and was sent out again. As soon as they were settled once more, Lucy told Clement about the candle; and Fanny, who was a giddy child, said, "I know the wind tried to blow the candle out; but I don't see how any body can blow us out."

“The wind,” said her mamma, “did not threaten to break the candle in pieces, but only to put out the delicate flame that was kindled on it. May we not learn a good lesson from this? Remember, my dear children, that Satan’s chief attempt is to undo the work of God in our souls, to quench the light that He has caused to shine there: and nothing but the watchful care of our heavenly Guardian prevents his succeeding with every one of us. We are as unable to defend ourselves against his devices, or to resist his powerful malice, as that light of a feeble taper is to withstand the midnight storm; and I need only remind you of what you all said, when, supposing the candle able

to think and to speak, you agreed that its language would be to intreat still to be protected from an enemy too strong for it."

"But how," said Fanny, "does Satan try to put out our light?"

"In more ways than I can possibly reckon up to you," answered her mamma. "We have all duties to fulfil to God, to ourselves, and to others; and this cruel enemy watches to interrupt us, and to distract our attention, if he can do no more. He lays snares for us by various temptations, and he draws us on to commit wickedness, and so to grieve the Holy Spirit, and provoke him to leave us. When the Lord puts into our minds a good desire, Satan sets to work

trying to hinder us from putting it in practice; and the more anxious we are to fulfil a duty, the harder does he strive to prevent us."

"I will tell you an instance, Fanny," said her papa. "Our greatest blessings, you know, come to us by prayer, and the studying of God's word; and a right attendance on public worship is a very great means of grace. Well, not long ago, I saw a little boy in the house of God very attentive to what he was about, and certainly trying to keep his mind fixed upon it, and to join in the prayers and praises of the congregation; and while I looked on him with pleasure, I saw a little girl, sitting near, who began to pull the ribbons of his book, to point

out the shining of a silver clasp on a Bible, and in many other ways to try to divert his attention. And I thought within myself, Does that little girl know whose work she is now doing, while depriving her brother of the blessing that he would fain seek?"

Fanny's cheeks became very red while her papa was speaking. She knew very well that she had done all this the day before, and sadly interrupted John; but she did not know that any one had observed it, and the thought of God's eye being upon her had given her no concern. Now she hung her head; and her papa went on: "I mean to talk very seriously with that little girl by and by; but

this may serve now as an instance of what your mamma was describing."

"I think I understand it quite well," said Lucy. There is a great deal in the Bible about Satan, and the hatred he bears to God's people. I remember one verse: 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,'" 1 Pet. v. 8.

"Yes," said her mamma, "and it is added, 'Whom resist stedfast in the faith.' Nothing but faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a constant looking for his almighty protection, will enable us to resist the devil. This is exactly what I meant when speaking of being screened from the

wind. The same hand that lighted the flame must guard it; the same power that gives us spiritual life must keep our souls alive, while Satan seeks to destroy them. I think, Lucy, I have now answered your question, as to the lesson which we may learn from the scene we were looking at; and I hope you will all remember it, and earnestly pray for the good hand of your God upon you to defend you from the mighty foe."

"Thank you, dear mamma," said the children: and then their papa said, "I have something else to point out to you; and I intend to use Nelson for our farther instruction."

The children crowded round him: they were very fond of Nelson; but

they could not think what lesson they could thus be taught. "You know," said papa, "that a dog, if left to follow his natural instinct, will worry a cat: and what an easy prey that poor little kitten would be to a Newfoundlander like Nelson! One blow of his great paw would break its delicate limbs; or a single bite would finish its existence. The flame of a candle is not more helpless against the wind, than such a creature as that against a powerful dog."

"Ah, papa," said Clement, "I was frightened when I saw him coming with you."

"But you found him very useful, my boy. I have Nelson under control, so that I can make use of his instinct

and his strength to do what I please for me, and prevent his doing injury. Your kitten strayed from you, and all your calling would not bring her back, nor all your searching recover her. Now, I allowed Nelson to frighten, but forbade him to hurt her : so when the poor little puss, in the dusky corner where she lay, found herself so near a very terrible foe, she was glad to run back to the light she had shunned, and the friends she had left, and here we have her safe at home. Can any body tell to what this may be compared ?”

Lucy spoke first : “ I think, papa, that as Nelson naturally hates a cat, and would worry it if he dared, so Satan hates men’s souls and would

destroy them at once if God did not hinder him."

"Yes," said Clement; "and the fear of Nelson drove pussy back to me: can you teach us any lesson from that, papa?"

"I will try," said his papa: "Do you remember the case of Dick Smith? You know how our good pastor was grieved and distressed when Dick ran away from his home and school, and there was every reason to fear he had gone with the gipsies."

"So he did, papa."

"He did: and he meant to remain with them, far away from all the good friends and good teaching that God had supplied him with. But though

Dick would, no doubt, like other people, have soon become as bad as the worst, he was not prepared to be openly, desperately wicked in a moment. So when he saw and heard, all at once, in the gipsy's camp, every



thing bad,—lying, and swearing, and

stealing, and fighting, and drunkenness,—he got so alarmed, that it did what, very likely, all the entreaties of his friends would not have done—it sent him back to his parents, and to his pastor, and humbled him before God for his sin in running away from such mercies. Now, was not this very much like the kitten being frightened back to you by Nelson?”

“Yes, papa,” said Clement. “And I know God has power over Satan, and that he cannot hurt any one unless leave is given him: and what a great mercy it was that he showed himself, as one may say, to poor little Smith, so that he ran away from him!”

His papa said, “A very pious man, Matthew Henry, in writing a Com-

mentary on the Scriptures, says that Christ, the good Shepherd, uses Satan as a shepherd uses his dog, to drive back the straying sheep into the flock again. What we see with our own eyes is apt to impress us more than a remark or a comparison made by others; and you have seen two very instructive things to-night. The candle, proving that a careful hand can keep a poor little flickering flame alive and steady in a windy place; and the dog, showing how, by being kept under authority, his most mischievous instinct may be turned to the preservation of what he would fain destroy. And now let the incident of to-night teach us something to profit our souls: remember, there

is One, even Jesus, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, who can keep alive the Divine light that he kindles in the soul; and who can make all things, yea, even the craft and malice of Satan, work together for good to his children."

"Thank you, papa, for this lesson; we will try to remember it always."

"But do not presume upon it, my dear children," said papa: "Remember, you must not expect deliverance if you run into temptation and sin, depending on the Lord to preserve you in the midst of it. You know, in that awful scene in the wilderness, when the blessed Jesus, our Lord, was tempted of the devil, that wicked spirit desired him to cast himself down

from the pinnacle of the temple, quoting Scripture to prove that he would be kept safe. What answer did our Lord make to him?"

Clement replied, " 'It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,' " Matt. iv. 7.

"Then let us ever bear in mind that example by Him whose steps we are commanded to follow."

The children all thanked their papa and mamma; and went to rest, hoping they should not forget the good counsel they had received.

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CREATION.

COME, child, look upward to the sky,
Behold the sun and moon ;
The host of stars that sparkle high
To cheer the midnight gloom.

Come, child, and now behold the earth
In varied beauty stand,
The product view of six day's birth,
How wondrous and how grand !

'Twas God who made the earth and sea,
To whom the angels bow ;
That God who made both thee and me,
The God who sees us now.