



Simple Tales.

The Little
Needle-Women.

AND OTHER PIECES.

Price One Penny.



THE INDUSTRIOUS GIRL
AND THE PROUD GIRL.

THE
LITTLE
Needle-Women.



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THE LITTLE NEEDLE-WOMEN.

CLARA was a cheerful little girl and very fond of play; she was good-natured to her brothers and sisters, and loved by all her friends; but she did not know that much pleasure may be found besides that of play.

When poor John Robson died, and left behind him a family of children who were help-

less, and could look to no one for support, now their father was gone. Farmer Dickson went round the village to collect a little money for them. When Mr. Dickson called, Clara was eating her breakfast, but she stopped to listen. "If we can raise a small sum," said Mr. Dickson, "just to help this poor widow till some work can be found for her to do, there is no fear she will be able afterwards to earn something handsome for herself. In truth, the poor woman has always been careful and attended to her family: many in the parish, who have more to do with, and fewer

children, neither make their cottages so comfortable, nor keep their children so clean as poor Jane Robson."

Clara went with her father to visit Robson's family, and they met the poor woman at the door of her cottage. It was but a mean low hut, but every thing about it was decent and cleanly: the husband's industry had never been wanting to keep the little garden in good order. There were fine growing crops of pease and beans, and herbs and roots of various kinds. On one side of the cottage door there grew a beautiful honeysuckle which twisted about the

branches of a sweetbriar and shaded the top of the door and the window.

As they entered the cottage the children began to make awkward motions with their heads and feet, such as they had been taught at the village school, but did not say a word: indeed they were very shame-faced and bashful. The two little girls went out into the garden, and soon returned with some fine black currants, which they had picked for Clara, who in a polite manner thanked them for their kindness: and these little ragged children were very glad to hear her civil and kind words.

The poor woman wept much as she talked about her husband; he had been ever careful to save all his earnings for his family; and his chief pleasure was, to take his children on his knees and talk kindly to them, on an evening after his day's labour.

Soon after this, Clara had leave given to visit Mrs. Vincent and to remain with her for a week. Now when the morning came, on which Clara was to go on this visit, she felt very glad, for she loved her three cousins Mary, Jane, and Lucy; and had spent many a happy day at the Hill Farm. As she walked along with the servant

she could think of nothing but the expected pleasure of running about the shrubbery and the orchard with her cousins.

Jane had a little garden, and had planted every thing in it with her own hands; it was beautiful with flowers of various kinds, springing forth one after another: there was the crocus, rich with gold colour and purple; the violet, delighting with it's sweet smell; and carnations and roses. Mary had a little library, and had learnt to draw, and to paint flowers. She would often walk out with her sisters into the fields through the shrubbery and over the great pastures

as far as hazle-wood. Clara called to mind the pleasure she had enjoyed in those walks; the fresh green leaves of beautiful shrubs; the blossoms of the hawthron, the sloe, and the crabtree: how pleasant it was also, to hear the birds sing and to see the squirrel and the dormouse in the bushes, or on the ground.

As the Servant and Lucy passed over the shrubby field, called the Hill-top, Clara was delighted to see Lucy's Pet Lamb skipping about the Orchard: but near the house all was silent and still. Some cattle were reposing under the tall

sycamore trees, beside the rick-yard, the fowls were busy about the barn, and old dog Trusty laid near the door of the house, enjoying the warmth of the sun.

Mrs. Vincent met her young friend and she was kindly welcomed by all the family, but was much surprised to find her cousins busy at work. One was sewing a little Jacket, another had part of a frock, and a third was stitching the seam of a pair of trowsers. After sitting in silence a short time; Clara began to express her surprise. Dear me! my grave cousins, what, in the name of goodness, can cause you to work

away at such a rate? I hope you do not intend to sit here moping long?" "We were moping, as you call it," said Mary, "all the day yesterday, and have been at it again ever since the clock struck seven." "If you knew," said Jane, "for whom we are working, I am sure you would willingly make one among us. Guess who it is for." Clara had not been taught the use of her needle, nor yet learnt how much pleasure arises from being able to assist poor unfortunate people, who do not know how to help themselves. She tried in vain to guess what could cause all

this bustle and close attention to work. "Well then," said her cousins, "we will tell you. It is for the children of the poor widow woman who has lately lost her husband, and cannot get a bit of bread. It is true, some money has been collected, but there were debts to pay, and bread to buy. As for clothes for the children, we have taken that upon ourselves, and, when the whole are finished, we will send for the poor woman, and you shall be with us; we know how glad you will be to see Madge, and Joan, in their new frocks, and poor little Billy in his dimity Jacket and trowsers of brown calico."

Clara was now much pleased in thinking of the comfortable things preparing for the poor fatherless children, and wished to help in this good work. But what could she do? She had not been taught to sew. She could only hand the scissors from one to another, or take up any thing that fell down. She lamented she had not been taught the use of her needle. Just as these little needle-women were finishing their work, in came Mrs. Vincent with Madge, and Joan, and little Billy; for she had sent for them, and their mother also. Now Mrs. Robson had washed the children's

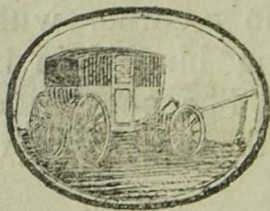
faces, and hands, and put their ragged clothing in as decent order as she could ; Billy had no shoes ; his bare legs were sun-burnt of a dirty brown colour ; his little Jacket was too strait to meet over his body, and his dress seemed nothing but rags and patches. The little girls were in no better state. " Come forward," said Jane, to the children, " do not be afraid."

And now, Lucy and Jane, and all this merry company, were in a bustle to dress the poor children, and their haste put all in confusion. The frock intended for Joan was put on Madge, it covered her to the

feet, and her head did not appear; and Joan's knees were scarcely covered with the shorter garment intended for her sister. Clara was all this time trying to give what help she could: combing the children's hair, and assisting Lucy to put Billy's dress in proper order. Mrs. Vincent came into the room with the poor widow, in time to see all completed. Madge and Joan were walking over the floor before their kind benefactors, and little Billy stood in a corner with Clara, admiring himself in his new dress. The poor widow was truly thankful; the children

were overjoyed at the change made in their appearance, and those good little needle-women were made happy in finding that their labour of love had been the cause of so much comfort and satisfaction to others.

“It is in this manner, my dear children,” said Mrs. Vincent, “that the most heart-felt pleasure is obtained; and you can never better bestow your labour and industry than in works of charity and benevolence.”



THE DAY OF LIFE.

THE morning hours of cheerful light
Of all the day are best ;
But as they speed their hasty flight,
If ev'ry hour be spent aright,
We sweetly sink to sleep at night,
And pleasant is our rest.

And life is like a summer's day,
It seems so quickly past :
Youth is the morning bright and gay,
And if 'tis spent in wisdom's way,
We meet old age without dismay,
And death is sweet at last.

From " Hymns for Infant Minds .



