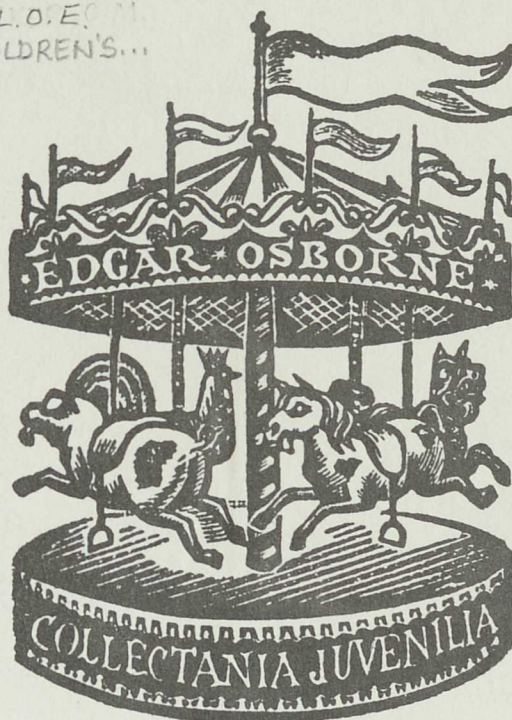




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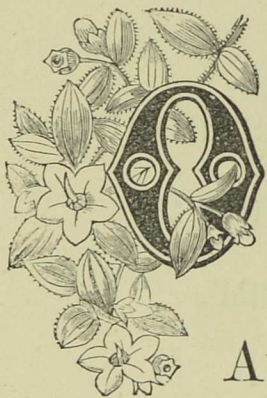
*Presented to the
Osborne Collection by*

Ethel McLaren

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N E P T U N E.



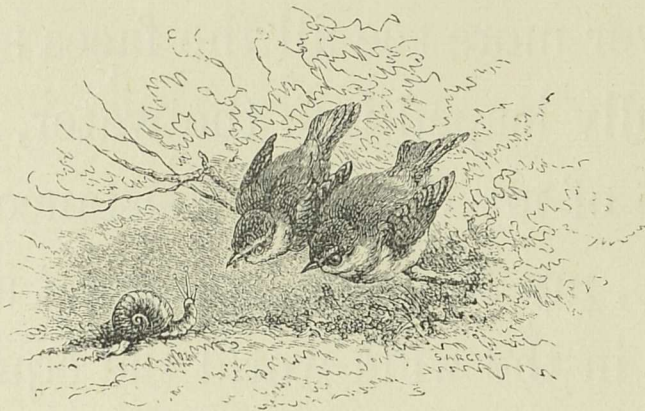
H, Neptune, my Neptune, so honest and true,
No dog in the wide world can be equal to you,
With your generous face, so kindly and bright,
And those eyes that seem filled with a genial light;
My guardian by night, my companion by day,
The comrade that shares in my work and my play,—
Oh, Neptune, my Neptune, so honest and true,
Is there dog in the wide world the equal of *you*?

Pray, don't you remember the willow-fringed pool,
That lies in the copse on the way home from school,
Where one day I fell in, and was shrieking with fear
I should never more see all the faces so dear;
But you boldly leaped into the water, and caught
A firm grasp of my dress till assistance was brought?
Oh, Neptune, my Neptune, so honest and true,
Is there dog in the wide world the equal of *you*?

And don't you remember that winter of woe,
When the valley lay deep in its burden of snow,

And Grandpapa surely had strayed on the moor,
But the track you found out, and ran barking before,
Nor ceased from your task till you led him again
To the dear little cottage that stands in the lane?
Oh, Neptune, my Neptune, so honest and true,
Is there dog in the wide world the equal of *you*?

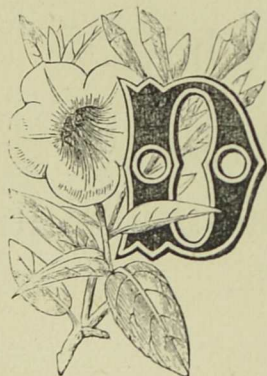
A fine ramble we've had, these bright summer hours,
And a posy I've plucked of the loveliest flowers;
But, Neptune, you're weary and hungry, I fear,
So let us sit down, and partake of our cheer:
You shall bite and *I'll* bite, and we'll rest side by side,
So hold up your paws, and your mouth open wide!
Oh, Neptune, my Neptune, so honest and true,
Is there dog in the wide world the equal of *you*?



THE SAND-FORT.

BY A. L. O. E.

AIR—" *The Campbells are coming.*"



DIG away cheerily, O! my boys!
Never lag wearily, no, my boys!
With hand and with spade
Let your fortress be made,
So work away cheerily, O! my boys!
The tide is rising, the winds at play
From the waves are flinging the wreaths of spray;
Soon, soon round your fort
The waters will sport,
So dig away cheerily, O! my boys!

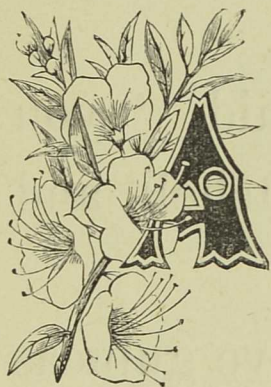
Though some work readily, O! my boys!
Though some work steadily, O! my boys!
That lazy loon, John,
Is but looking on,
While his brothers work readily, O! my boys!
And Sandy thinks it so fine to stand
With flag at his side, and bay'net in hand,

His trumpet to blow,
As if daring a foe,
While others work readily, O! my boys!

'Tis thus in the battle of life, my boys!
'Tis thus in more serious strife, my boys!
Some spirits ne'er shirk
The toil and the work,
So win in the battle of life, my boys!
The lazy loon, and the boaster proud
Who sounds his own trumpet long and loud;
The one who will lag,
The one who will brag—
These win not the battle of life, my boys.



THE SWEET STORY OF SILVERHAIR.



LONG time ago two little children were born on the same night ; but Arthur came to live in a beautiful castle, and Rosa in a little cottage. There was a greater and sadder difference between the children than this,—for it matters very little to the happiness of a child whether it lives in a palace or a cottage, if only that palace or that cottage be a home of love ;—but Arthur could see all the beauty that surrounded him, while Rosa, poor Rosa, was a blind child. As she grew up to be a little girl, no one, merely seeing her with her golden hair, and large soft blue eyes, sitting in the cottage porch, would have said, “ There is a blind child ; ” but when she rose, you saw an uncertain expression come over her face, till the bark of a pretty little terrier told her he was ready to be her guide ; and stooping down, she took hold of a cord that was fastened round his neck. She called him Silverhair, because some one told her his long silky hair shone like silver ; and she had often wondered what that meant. Rosa was a gentle, good, and happy child, in spite of this great shadow over her life. Arthur, in the meantime, with every desire gratified, everything to make life pleasant around him, cried often from morning to night, and was fast becoming a selfish, discontented boy.

One bright May morning, Master Arthur set forth on his pony, accompanied by John, the servant who usually attended him. As they cantered along towards the village, Silverhair, who was out on his own account, crossed their path.

“John, John!” cried Arthur. “Do you see that beautiful terrier?”

“Yes, Master Arthur; I’ve seen it often,” replied John.

“Have you? Then you know whom it belongs to; and I must have it,” said Arthur. “You must get me it this very night.”

The man looked annoyed. “Indeed, master,” he said, “you needn’t send me for that dog. It belongs to little Rosa Mitchell, and her father will not sell it to you.”

“Why not?” said Arthur. “Tell him papa will give five guineas for it, and another dog into the bargain that will do as well for Rosa. She cannot see what like it is,” added the selfish boy.

John could by no means get this new idea out of his young master’s head, so in the evening he went upon his unwelcome mission.

Rosa and her mother were alone in the cottage, and, as he expected, they would not sell Silverhair.

“Silverhair, my own Silverhair!” cried Rosa, when John was gone, and she had her favourite in her arms. “My own Silverhair! the best dog in the whole world! did they think they could bribe us to sell you?” And Silverhair wagged his tail and licked her hand, as if to thank her; and so they thought the matter settled.

When Arthur, next morning, found he could not get the dog, he first got into a furious passion with John, and then declared he would eat nothing until he got the dog. His foolish mother sent another messenger to the cottage, with no better success; and Arthur, secretly

rejoicing at the annoyance he gave, persisted in refusing all food during the day. Being really a delicate child, he had almost cried himself into a fever. When all the household, excepting herself and Lord Stenhouse, had gone to rest, his mother heard screams from Arthur's room. Hastening in, the passionate little boy called out, "I must have food, mamma; I am dying of hunger. I have rung and rung for John, but he does not come."

"John is asleep," replied Lady Stenhouse; "and we need not disturb him. I made Nancy leave some chicken and a plate of jelly in the dining-room, in case my little darling wished it." And without waiting his answer, this too indulgent mother hastened away for the food.

But Master Arthur had not yet sufficiently vented his ill-humour. No sooner did she return than he screamed, "I won't have that nasty cold trash! Cook must make me a steak or a chop, or something warm. I tell you I won't eat that."

"You shall, sir," said the stern voice of his father. "There has been enough of this nonsense. I will not let you tyrannize over your mother and the whole household any longer. This day has shown me what all this indulgence leads to, and I shall see that there is no more of it. Come away, my dear," he added to his wife, "and leave this wayward child; and, Arthur, let me tell you that you shall have no food of any description until this is finished."

The spoiled child commenced a new fit of screaming, but seeing he was left to scream to himself, he soon ceased; and being very hungry, he soon ate the supper his kind mother had brought him.

Lord Stenhouse was true to his word, and from that day a new system was begun, at which Arthur rebelled greatly at first; but its

good effects soon began to be apparent, though selfishness had taken too deep root in his heart to be easily eradicated.

About ten months after this time, a great sorrow befell poor Rosa Mitchell. Her father, who was a mason, fell from the top of a high scaffolding, and was carried home apparently in a dying state. Week after week passed on without much improvement. Rosa was sitting silently beside him one day, when she heard her mother saying to the doctor,—

“Is there really no hope, sir?”

“I would not say that, my good woman,” he replied; “but the chances are against him. He should be having very generous diet now—good port wine, and strong beef-tea; but that is not easily got, I know, and as his constitution is strong, he may rally without it.”

Mrs. Mitchell looked sadly distressed. These weeks of illness had used up all her savings, and with the prospect of her husband being still many weeks off work, to get such things was not possible.

Rosa’s arms were round her little Silverhair, and a sudden resolution filled her mind.

“I love you, my pretty Silverhair,” she murmured, as she bent over him; “but I love father better.”

Softly leaving the cottage, and led by Silverhair, she walked with a half-breaking heart towards the castle. Arthur’s joy was as great as poor Rosa’s sorrow when he found that Silverhair was to be his own; and he ran to get the pretty brown terrier he had promised to Rosa, and five pounds, the purchase-money of her Silverhair. Meanwhile Rosa sat on the doorstep, still clasping the dog in her arms. “I would not have done it, Silverhair, my dear, dear Silverhair,” she sobbed,

“you know I would not have done it, only for father’s sake !” And the wise little creature whined sadly in reply.

And so she and Silverhair parted. Bouncer, the little substitute, of course did not know in the least how to guide her ; and when she had walked down the avenue, and passed the gate, she sat down sorrowfully by the roadside, waiting until some one should come. She had not to wait long, for every one knew the little blind girl, and was willing to help her.

“What are you doing here, Rosa, and what has become of Silverhair ?” asked her chosen friend, Lily Raeburn, who could scarcely believe when Rosa told her the dog was sold ; and she gladly offered to lead her home.

“But first,” said Rosa, “take me to Stewart the flesher’s, and to a grocer’s ; for I must take home some beef and some wine.”

The poor child’s spirits rose after she made her purchases ; and in the triumphant joy of giving them to her mother, the loss of her favourite was, for the moment, all forgotten. She had not made the sacrifice in vain, as Mitchell soon began to improve, and before very many weeks was able to resume his work.

Bouncer was a kind, merry little dog, and after a while Rosa could once more venture to walk beyond their garden under his care.

One lovely autumn day she set out to visit her grandmother, who lived about a mile distant from their cottage. The road lay along the river-side, and the reapers were busy in the fields above it. The air was laden with perfume, and the singing of birds and humming of bees mingled with the snatches of song that burst every now and then from the harvest-fields. Rosa tripped cheerfully along, and both she and

Bouncer seemed to share in the general rejoicing. Just then a hare crossed their path, and, alas! Bouncer, forgetting altogether that he was now to be the sober guardian of a blind child, made a wild spring in pursuit of it. The sudden jerk of the cord from her grasp precipitated poor Rosa over the brink, just where there was a dark, deep pool. In a moment the waters closed over her, but almost immediately one of the reapers had dashed in after her, and succeeded in rescuing her from their dark depths. A crowd had gathered round her when he laid her on the bank; but they made way for Lord Stenhouse, who had left his carriage to inquire about the accident.

“She is a pretty little thing,” he said; “how could her parents trust her to such a dog as that!”

“Did you not know, my lord,” said John, “that Master Arthur had bought little Rosa’s dog? and this one is not half so sensible a creature.”

Lord Stenhouse had never inquired into the history of Silverhair, and Arthur, having some idea that it was better not to tell it, had said little about the dog to his father.

His lordship ordered John to put the child into the carriage, and to drive as fast as possible to the castle. There she was stripped of her wet clothing, and rolled in warm blankets; but for a time it was impossible to restore her to consciousness. It was not until the faithful Silverhair came and licked her white cheeks, and whined piteously beside her, that she at last opened her eyes; but they closed again almost immediately.

Arthur was in real distress, so great, that his father did not speak of his selfish coveting of the poor blind girl’s favourite; and when

Rosa was able to go home, it was his own wish that Silverhair should go with her.

From that time much kindness was shown to Rosa by every one in the castle ; and one day Lord Stenhouse begged leave to take her with him to London, as he thought it possible that an eminent oculist there might be able to cure her. So Rosa went with her kind friend ; and two months afterwards, the carriage once more stopped at the cottage gate, and Rosa, no longer a poor blind girl, sprang into the arms of her parents !

It seemed as if she could never gaze enough at their dear faces, the stranger faces of her beloved parents ; but at last she found time to turn to Silverhair, who was trying in every way to attract her attention.

“I can see you now, my beautiful, beautiful Silverhair !” she cried ; “and when you get old I will nurse you ; and when you get blind I will lead you, and never, never part from you again.”

And so ends the sweet story of Silverhair.



THE TWO DINNERS.

BY A. L. O. E.



It was on a clear December day, not far from the merry time of Christmas, that old Colonel Caswell looked out of his dining-room window on the enclosure of the large London square in which his house was built. The snow which had fallen during the night still rested on the boughs of some of the trees, but every trace of it had disappeared on the road, over which carts and carriages passed so often that they soon turned snow to slush and mud. No one knew this better than little Tom, the sweeper-boy, who, on the day of which I am writing, had plied his broom so briskly that, as he had said to himself, "there warn't a lady as might not walk over without dirtying the tip of her boots."

The old Colonel had a kind of acquaintance with this young sweeper, who always kept the pavement in front of the gentleman's house quite clear of dust in summer or snow in winter. Many a penny piece, and sometimes even a silver bit, had the Colonel dropped into the boy's brown sunburnt hand, and the gentleman had made up his mind to give poor Tom a new pair of trousers and another of boots at

Christmas, of both of which articles of dress the young sweeper stood in great need.

When the Colonel looked forth from his dining-room window he saw two very different objects before him. The nearer was Tom, with his broom, giving a finishing touch to his excellent crossing; the farther was the Colonel's niece, Lady Lovelace, walking across the road towards his own house, where she was engaged to take luncheon. No two persons could look much more unlike each other than the ragged boy and the handsomely-dressed lady; the one barefoot, and in clothes which would hardly hold together; the other wearing a figured silk dress over an eider-down skirt, and her little feet cased in the daintiest of kid-boots.

But it was not the difference between their dresses which struck the old gentleman, as he glanced from the one to the other; it was the difference in the expression of the two faces. That of Tom, as he plied his broom, looked as merry as if he had not a trouble in the world; while that of Lady Lovelace showed vexation and care.

"It's odd enough," said the Colonel to himself; "to judge by their looks, one would say that the little barefooted boy has the lighter heart of the two."

The Colonel was a polite old man, so he left his dining-room, took his hat from the stand in the hall, and opening the door, went out to meet and welcome his niece before she could reach his house. Of course, on his way to her Colonel Caswell could not help passing poor Tom; and as the kind old gentleman often had done before, he gave the sweeper a penny, and a kindly word besides.

"You look merry on this cold day, my lad," said the Colonel.

“Sure, sir, ain’t I agoing to the dinner!” cried Tom, as he touched his cap. “It’s time to be off!” and off ran Tom to put away his broom before going for a meal to the place where the little sweeper went every night to learn how to read his Bible.

Colonel Caswell was a subscriber to the nearest Ragged School, and a teacher in it besides; and he knew well how it was that once a week poor Tom had a warm dinner to eat in the school-room. The kind old man felt a glow of pleasure when he thought how happy his poor little friend had been made by an invitation to a dinner which cost but a few pence. The Colonel met and shook hands with his niece with his face still bright with the smile which had been reflected back from Tom’s.

But there was no smile on that of Lady Lovelace. As she took her uncle’s arm, and went with him towards his house, she still wore the look of vexation which had attracted his notice when he had first seen her from his dining-room window.

“Has anything happened to trouble you, Matilda?” asked the old Colonel, when the uncle and niece sat together before the large cheerful fire.

“Yes,” replied the lady, who always spoke freely to her uncle. “You know that yesterday evening I gave a dinner-party—my first dinner-party since my marriage.”

The Colonel nodded his head. He had been himself invited to the party, but had declined to go, as he would be at that late hour engaged in teaching at the school.

“The dinner was a failure,” said the lady, biting her lip with vexation.

“How came that to be?” asked the Colonel, as he stirred the fire to a brighter blaze.

“Two of the guests—the principal guests—disappointed me, just at the last; it was so provoking!” exclaimed Lady Lovelace.

“It was provoking,” echoed her uncle, as he set down the poker.

“And then—how could I ever have guessed it?—the Poles and the Browns, who did come, are not on speaking terms with each other. They bowed so stiffly, and behaved so rudely, that they threw a chill of discomfort over the whole party. It was so very vexatious that I should have chanced to ask them on the same evening.”

“Well, it is vexatious when people will be grumpy, and neither enjoy themselves nor let any one else enjoy a sociable evening,” said the Colonel, shaking his bald head.

“Then,” continued the lady, “just think what the fishmonger did! I will never employ that stupid fellow again! He sent me a brill instead of a turbot! Only fancy what a blunder!—a brill instead of a turbot!”

The Colonel smiled a little—only a little—at this terrible grievance; for, to his mind, both turbot and brill were very excellent fare. His niece, without noticing the smile, went on with her list of vexations.

“And the cook had not half boiled the turkey. I was dreadfully shocked when I saw the first slice,—it was really not fit to be eaten!”

“Happily your guests could fall back upon the roast mutton and the side dishes,” observed the Colonel, in a comforting tone.

“And, as if to crown my vexations,” cried poor Lady Lovelace, “there was a crash in the middle of dinner; the new waiter—handless fellow that he is!—had dropped and smashed half-a-dozen of my new china plates!”

The Colonel drew up his eyebrows, and drew in his lips, to express a moderate amount of pity on account of this unfortunate accident. “It is, no doubt, a provoking thing to have a nice set of china spoilt by the carelessness of a waiter.”

Lady Lovelace gave a weary sigh. “It is a *great* worry,” she said—and she laid a stress on the word *great*—“to spend ever so much money on a dinner, and then to have the whole thing a failure at last!”

“Suppose that you turn your thoughts to something else, my dear Matilda,” suggested the Colonel. “I see that it wants half-an-hour to lunch-time, and you have not yet taken off your bonnet. What would you say to a proposal that you should visit with me the Ragged School just round the corner of the square, as you have often said that you would? It is not school-time now, but you would yet have a peep of a good many of our scholars.”

Lady Lovelace had nothing better to do, and she wished to please her old uncle; so she rose from her seat by the fire, and accompanied the Colonel to a Ragged School which was in a little court, but a very short way from the square. A hum of merry voices from within might have directed any visitor to the spot, even had the name “Ragged School” not appeared in neat letters over the door.

There was no need for the Colonel to knock for admittance, as he was always sure of a welcome. He knew his way in and out of that

school-room as well as he did his way in and out of his house in the square.

When the two visitors entered the long low room, the hum of voices ceased for a moment, and for a moment the eyes of the children, who were seated on benches on either side of long deal tables, were turned from the objects before them to look at their friend and the lady. The objects before them were not books nor slates; the books were neatly ranged on shelves, and the slates had been stowed away in a press out of sight. No, the eager eyes of the children had been fixed upon something else very pleasant to look at—plates filled with hot mutton-stew and potatoes, which sent a savoury smell through the room, a smell which I suspect that the hungry guests preferred to that of roses. There was little Tom the sweeper, with a face beaming with pleasure, as he grasped his little blunt knife and two-pronged fork, prepared to set to work on his mutton at least as briskly as he had done that day on his crossing.

Lady Lovelace had a kindly heart. She was pleased at the cheerful scene before her; she smiled at and spoke to some of the children; and as for the worthy Colonel, he felt quite at home amongst them.

The visitors, however, did not stay long; they thought that the hungry guests might eat more at their ease while the gentry were not looking on. There was a box labelled “DESTITUTE CHILDREN’S DINNER SOCIETY” fastened on the wall near the door. Lady Lovelace noticed it; she drew her purse from her pocket, and dropped a bright new sovereign through the slit in the top of the box.

“That is your invitation to *eighty* guests,” said the Colonel gaily,

as, with his niece leaning on his arm, he walked out into the open air. "Your first dinner-party may have been a failure, but I'll answer for it, Matilda, your second will be a success. There will not be a single expected guest disappointing you just at the last."

"No fear of that," said his niece with a smile.

"There will be none cold or stiff in manner, casting a chill on all around them."

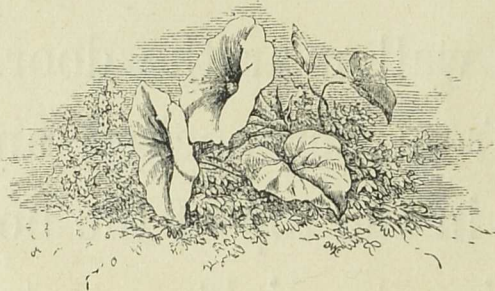
"I should think not," said Lady Lovelace; "to judge by the cheerful good-humour of those whom we have been seeing."

"The guests won't expect either turbot or brill," the merry old Colonel went on; "and as there's no turkey either boiled or roast on the table, there cannot be one underdone."

Lady Lovelace could not help laughing at her uncle's remarks.

"Every child brings his own plate," the Colonel continued, "so there's no great danger of any one's dropping and smashing half-a-dozen at once. So your second dinner-party, my dear, is sure to be enjoyed, sure to be remembered with pleasure; and," he added more gravely, "you will never say of it, either in this world *or the next*, 'It is a great worry to spend ever so much money on a dinner, and then to have the whole thing a failure at last.'"

Lady Lovelace walked on in silence; she was turning over the matter in her mind, which is exactly what I want my dear young readers to do.



A TIGER STORY.



LUCY and Fanny were two little girls who lived with their papa and mamma in London. When Lucy was six and Fanny five years old, their uncle George came home from India. This was a great joy to them; he was so kind, and had so much to tell them about far-away places, and strange people, and animals, and things, such as they had never seen. They never wearied of hearing his stories, and he did not seem to weary either of telling them.

One day after dinner, they both climbed on his knees; and Lucy said,—

“O uncle, do tell us a *tiger* story! We have seen a living tiger in the Zoological Gardens; and what a fierce-looking animal it was! We were afraid to go near the bars of its iron house. Uncle, did you ever see them in India?”

“Yes, indeed I have, both alive and dead; and very fierce they were.”

“Do tell us about them then, uncle. Do not the tigers sometimes run away with little children?”

“Yes, if they are very hungry, and can get near them without

being seen. I will tell you a story about a tiger and a baby, which happened to some friends of my own."

"Oh! that will be so nice."

"Well, this gentleman and lady had one sweet little baby, and they had to take a very long journey with it, through a wild part of India. There were no houses there, and they had to sleep in a tent. That is a kind of house made of cloth, by driving high sticks firmly into the ground, and then drawing curtains all over them. It is very comfortable and cool in a warm country, where there is no rain; but then there are no doors or windows to shut as we do at night, to make all safe. One night they had to sleep in a very wild place, near a thick wood. The lady said: 'Oh, I feel so afraid to-night; I cannot tell you how frightened I am. I know there are many tigers and wild animals in the wood; and what if they should come out upon us?' Her husband replied: 'My dear, we will make the servants light a fire, and keep watch, and you need have no fear; and we must put our trust in God.' So the lady kissed her baby, and put it into its cradle; and then she and her husband knelt down together, and prayed to God to keep them from every danger; and they repeated that pretty verse, 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.'

"In the middle of the night, the lady started up with a loud cry,— 'O my baby! my baby! I dreamed just now that a great tiger had crept below the curtains and run away with my child!' And when she looked into the cradle, the baby was not there! Oh! you may think how dreadful was their distress. They ran out of the tent; and there in the moonlight they saw a great animal, moving towards the wood, with

something white in his mouth. They wakened all the servants, and got loaded guns, and all went after it into the wood. They went as fast and yet as quietly as they could, and very soon they came to a place where they saw through the trees that the tiger had lain down, and was playing with the baby, just as pussie does with a mouse before she kills it. The baby was not crying, and did not seem hurt. The poor father and mother could only pray to the Lord to help; and when one of the men took up his gun, the lady cried, ‘Oh, you will kill my child!’ But the man raised the gun and fired at once, and God made him do it well. The tiger gave a loud howl, and jumped up, and then fell down again, shot quite dead. Then they all rushed forward, and there was the dear baby quite safe, and smiling, as if it were not at all afraid.”

“O uncle, what a delightful story! And did the baby really live?”

“Yes; the poor lady was very ill afterwards, but the baby not at all. I have seen it often since then.”

“Oh, have you really seen a baby that has been in a tiger’s mouth?”

“Yes, I have, and you too.”

“We, uncle! when have *we* seen it?”

“You may see him just now.”

The children looked all round the room, and then back to uncle George, and something in his eyes made Lucy exclaim,—“Uncle, could it have been *yourself*?”

“Just myself.”

“Is it true *you* were once in a tiger’s mouth? But you do not remember about it?”

“Certainly not; but my father and mother have often told me the story. You may be sure that often, when they looked at their child

afterwards, they gave thanks to God. It was He who made the mother dream, and awake just at the right minute, and made the tiger hold the baby by the clothes so as not to hurt it, and the man fire so as to shoot the tiger and not the child. But now, good-night, my dear little girls; and before you go to bed, pray to God to keep *you* safe, as my friends did that night in the tent."

"But, uncle, *we* do not live in tents; our nursery door shuts quite close, and there are no tigers going about here. The man in the Gardens told us that his one was quite safe locked up."

"Yes, my love, but there are many kinds of danger in this world, and we need God to take care of us here quite as much as in India. Good-night, and learn by heart my mother's favourite verse: 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.'"





So day after day the sunshiny child stopped to watch “Silent Peter’s” proceedings, pausing in the song which she had been singing all the way from school, and looking wonderingly into the red flames, and at the glowing bar of iron upon which the heavy hammer descended so truly and regularly.

“I wonder whether I’m of any good to anybody,” said little May one day to herself. “Miss Morton asked me if I had tried to do anything for Jesus Christ. She said that if we had come to him really, we must try to show our love by doing things for him, and that he died that ‘they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him that died for them’—that was her verse to us last Sunday. How old am I? Ten years old last May; and I don’t think I’ve ever done anything really for Jesus yet. When Allan and grandfather talked to me after the missionary meeting, I thought I’d try; but it wasn’t because I loved Jesus—it was just because I liked it, and wished to do as they said. Allan has been going on, I know; but I’ve just lived to enjoy myself, and nothing else. I’ve not taken any trouble for Jesus. Now, I feel as if I must. I never felt how sinful I was till Miss Morton showed me that *my* sins were weighing on him when he hung on the cross; then it came over me how little I cared for him. Allan says he’d like to be a missionary. I can’t be a missionary to the heathen, but Miss Morton says I can be one at home. Jeanie Dunscombe said grandfather had been a missionary to her when she was ill; I wonder whether I could do anything for her. Jesus says that a cup of cold water given in his name shall by no means lose its reward. I’ve often done kind things for people, but it was because I liked to please them and to be good-natured, not for Christ’s sake. I see the difference now.

I should like always to be doing something for Jesus who did so much for me.

“Mother,” said May one night, “I wonder whether that blacksmith knows anything about Jesus! He’s so cross, or I should like to ask him. I wonder whether he’s got a Testament.”

“I’m afraid that he doesn’t read it if he has, May,” replied Mrs. Ernley: “his character isn’t of the best.”

“I should like to give him one so much, to thank him for helping me to-day; perhaps he’d read it. Miss Morton told us we were to be like missionary sunbeams. I think I know what she meant—to try to bring Jesus Christ’s light everywhere. Good-night, mother.”

It was a few days after this conversation that May accosted Miss Morton, at the close of a geography lesson, with a somewhat novel request.

“Please, Miss Morton,” she began, “would you write a text for me in this Testament?”

Her teacher smiled, and inquired for whom it was intended.

“If you’d please not to ask me, ma’am,” she said, colouring. “I want some verse all about Jesus.”

Miss Morton gave back the book after a minute, and May eagerly inspected the words clearly written—“*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*”

She paused for a few minutes on her way home, to look in at the forge. The blacksmith was busy at work, and May was rather shy of her errand. A bright new sixpence, earned by her own needlework, had been devoted to the purchase for him of the Testament; and she had composed a little speech the night before, which, unfortu-

nately, she could not now recollect, so that she felt puzzled how to begin.

Taking advantage of a pause in the clanging of the hammer, however, May summoned up her courage, and advancing inside the shed, held out the Testament, saying, "I want you to take this from me, and thank you very much for helping me last week."

The man looked surprised. "I didn't do nought out of the common," he said; "what should you be after giving me this for?"

"There's a text written in the beginning," said May shyly.

"There's only one text in the Bible I ever knew to be true," he replied, "and that's where it says 'Man's born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.' That's the moral of everything, and of the blacksmith's forge most of all."

"I don't know," said May, looking puzzled: "I don't think I'm like a spark—I don't quite understand it. I wish, though, you'd look at this."

He took the book, but when his eyes fell upon the words, hastily laid it down. "Who wrote that?" he said; "it was her last words—she talked about going to the angels, and to heaven, and the crown of glory; and she bid me mind that—that cleanseth from all sin."

May was too much surprised to answer, and followed him with wondering eyes, as he withdrew from a remote corner of the shed a little brown hymn-book, and put it into her hand. "There," he said, "that was hers; and you're like her, as if you'd been sisters, only she hadn't health and strength like you. When she was going, she'd have that always by her side, and nothing would satisfy her except my

reading the hymns to her. I heard you singing one of them the other day—you know, about a harp.”

The child paused to think, and then, with unconscious tact, softly sang, in a sweet, clear tone:—

“Lord, I believe thou hast prepared,
Unworthy though I be,
For me a blood-bought free reward—
A golden harp for me.”

“Yes,” he said, “Rose sang that. She never knew nought of such things until she fell in with some Christian folks, who set a school going; and once she got hold of their hymns and texts, there was no end of it. *That* was what she sung as well as she could before she died.”

May’s eyes were filling fast as she looked at the little worn hymn-book, and caught sight of pencil-marks throughout, which indicated the favourite verses.

“Don’t you want to see her in heaven?” she asked. “Jesus wants us all to be there.”

“It’s not for me,” he answered, half sullenly; “it’s all very well for good folks.”

“Oh, but *indeed* that’s wrong!” said she eagerly: “Jesus says he came not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance. He heard the prayer, ‘*God be merciful to me a sinner.*’”

“Well,” he replied gently, “you say the same things as she said; but I’m not that sort of stuff that those things are wrote for. You’re like her. When I see you coming across the bridge, many times

you've brought it all back—the log hut, and the grave all by itself in the other country.”

As little May went on homeward, she revolved a plan concerning him, and it was with a sober, grave face that she laid aside hat and cape at the conclusion of her walk.

“Mother,” she said that evening, when the parting kiss had been given, “I had a strange dream last night about what Miss Morton said to us. It was a sunbeam that came in and talked to me. It said, ‘We are missionaries, little May. In the morning we go forth to our work. We wake up the birds to sing God’s praises, and we wake up the flowers, and we carry back the heavy dew from the long meadow-grass to its storehouse in the clouds. When the cold frost has bound up all the springs, and has frozen the green earth, and saddened the hearts of the poor, then we go on our mission. And the ice gives way when we light upon it, and the springs water the earth again, and the children rejoice in the warm sunshine, and everywhere our work is missionary work, and our mission is from the sky.’ You know, mother, Miss Morton had been telling us all the different sorts of work the sunbeams have to do, and it came back in my dream. It seemed so strange, to think of a sunbeam speaking to me; and then I woke, and it made me think that I must be at work too, like them.”



THE ILL WIND.



T'S an ill wind that blaws naebody good, Master Harry—we maun say that,” observed old Ailsie, Mrs. Delmar’s Scotch nurse, as she went to close the window, through which rushed in the furious blast; “but I hae a dear laddie at sea, and when I hear the wind howl like that, I think—”

“Oh, shut the window, nurse! Quick, quick! or we’ll have the casement blown in!” cried Nina. “Did you ever hear such a gust!”

Ailsie shut the window, but not in time to prevent some pictures, which the little lady had been sorting, from being scattered in every direction over the room.

“Our fine larch has been blown down on the lawn,” cried Harry, who had sauntered up to the window.

“Oh, what a pity!” exclaimed his sister, as she went down on her knees to pick up the pictures. “Our beauty larch, that was planted only this spring, and that looked so lovely with its tassels of green! To think of the dreadful wind rooting up that! I’m sure that this at least is an ill wind, that blows nobody good.”

“You should see the mischief it has done in the wood,” observed

Harry; “snapping off great branches as if they were twigs. The whole path through the wood is strewn with the boughs and the leaves.”

“I can’t bear the fierce wind,” exclaimed Nina. “When I was out half an hour ago I thought it would have blown me away. I really could scarcely keep my feet.”

“I could not keep my cap,” laughed Harry. “Off it scudded, whirling round and round right into the river, where I could watch it floating for ever so long. I shall never get it again.”

“Mischievous, horrid wind!” cried Nina, who had just picked up the last of her pictures.

“Oh, missie, ye maunna speak against the wind—for ye ken who sends it,” observed the old nurse. “It has its work to do, as we hae ours. Depend on’t, the proverb is true, ‘It’s an ill wind that blows naebody good.’”

“There’s no sense in that proverb,” said Harry, bluntly. “*This* wind does nothing but harm. It has snapped off the head of mamma’s beautiful favourite flower—”

“And smashed panes in her greenhouse,” added Nina.

It was indeed a furious wind that was blowing that evening, and as the night came on it seemed to increase. It rattled the shutters, it shrieked in the chimneys, it tore off some of the slates, and kept the children awake with its howling. The storm lulled, however, before the morning broke; and when the sun had risen, all was bright, calm, and serene.

“What a lovely morning after such a stormy night!” cried Nina, as with her brother Harry she rambled in the green wood, while old

Ailsie followed behind them. "I never felt the air more sweet and fresh, and it seemed so heavy yesterday morning."

"Ay, ay, the wind cleared the air," observed Ailsie. "It's an ill wind that blaws naebody good."

"But think of your poor son at sea," observed Harry.

"I was just thinking o' him when I spake, Master Harry. I was thinking that maybe that verra wind was filling the sails o' his ship, and blawing him hame all the faster, to cheer the eyes o' his mither. It is sure to be in the right quarter for *some one*, let it blaw from north, south, east, or west."

"Why, there's little Ruth Laurie just before us," cried Harry, as he turned a bend in the woodland path. "What a great bundle of fagots she is carrying bravely on her little back!"

"Let's ask her after her sick mother," said Nina, running up to the orphan child, who was well known to the Delmars. Ruth dwelt with her mother in a very small cottage near the wood; and the children were allowed to visit the widow in her poor but respectable home.

"Blessings on the wee barefooted lassie!" exclaimed Ailsie; "I'll be bound she's been up with the lark, to gather up the broken branches which the wind has stripped from the trees."

"That's a heavy bundle for you to carry, Ruth!" said Harry; "it is almost as big as yourself."

"I shouldn't mind carrying it were it twice as heavy and big," cried the peasant child, looking up with a bright, happy smile. "Coals be terrible dear, and we've not a stick of wood left in the shed; and mother, she gets so chilly of an evening. There's nothing

she likes so well as a hot cup of tea and a good warm fire; your dear mamma gives us the tea, and you see I've the wood for boiling the water. Won't mother be glad when she sees my big fagots; and wasn't I pleased when I heard the wind blowing last night, for I knew I should find branches strewn about in the morning!"

"Ah," cried Harry, "that reminds me of the proverb, 'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good.'"

"Harry," whispered Nina to her brother, "don't you think that you and I might help Ruth to fill her poor mother's little wood-shed?"

"What! pick up sticks, and carry them in fagots on our backs? How funny that would look!" exclaimed Harry.

"We should be doing some good," replied Nina. "Don't you remember that nurse said that the wind has its work to do, as we have ours? If it's an ill wind that does nobody good, it must be an *ill child* that does good to no one."

"That's a funny little tail that you tack on to the proverb," laughed Harry; "but I rather like the notion. The good wind blows down the branches, we good children pick up the branches; so the wind and the children between them will soon fill the widow's little shed."

Merrily and heartily Harry and Nina set about their labour of kindness; Ailsie's back was too stiff for stooping, but she helped them to tie up the fagots. And cheerfully, as the children tripped along with their burdens to the poor woman's cottage, Nina repeated her old nurse's proverb, "'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good."

A REAL THING.

BY A. L. O. E.



JOYFUL day was it for the children at Ivy Lodge, Lily, Charley, and Jane, when their mother returned from India, after an absence of more than two years. It was a day for jumping, and kissing, and shouting for joy. Not that the children remembered the face of their mother, except from the picture hung up in the nursery, for two years are a long time in the lives of the young; but Mrs. Dale had not been with them for half-an-hour before it seemed as if they had never been parted at all. Whose voice is so sweet as a mother's, whose smile is so loving, who besides can give such a fond tender kiss as she gives to her children!

There was much to amuse the little ones after the first excitement of the meeting was over. They were allowed to remain with their mother while she unpacked her luggage, for she could scarcely bear to have them out of her sight. Many were the exclamations of admiration as curious articles were drawn forth one by one from Mrs. Dale's boxes—articles such as are brought from few places but India. There was the fan of sandal-wood, which Lily said smelt as sweet as a nosegay; and the six handles for knives cut out of a single tooth of an

elephant. And there were pretty presents for each of the children,—bangles made of gay beads, yellow baskets and bright painted toys, red glazed cups, and carved figures of animals. One of the last named especially took the fancy of all the children; it was a little elephant with a gilded howdah (a kind of canopy) on its back, which the lady gave to Jane. Mrs. Dale felt as much pleasure as did the children themselves, in seeing the delight which was given by her presents brought from a far distant land.

The happiest day must come at last to an end. The Dales, after sitting up half-an-hour longer than usual, tripped upstairs to the nursery. But still their mamma was with them; the lady felt that to her the greatest joy of all would be to be beside her darlings at evening prayer.

“I am sure, my Lily,” said she, “that you have been taught to pray before going to bed.”

“Oh yes, mamma,” cried the child; “I’ll pray to you instead of to nurse to-night;” and without stopping for one moment to consider that she was going to pray *to the Lord*, Lily, with a smile still on her face, dropped down on her knees beside her mother. The little girl then gabbled what she called a prayer, so fast that the words could scarcely be heard: “Pray God bless dear papa and mamma, and make me a good child,” &c. All the time that Lily was speaking her eyes were wandering to Jane’s painted elephant, which was near her on the floor; even when she said the holy name at the end of the prayer, she was thinking only of the toy, and she jumped up almost before she had ended with “Amen,” that she might lay hold of the plaything.



to have what you ask for. When you say, 'Bless dear papa and mamma,' think that your parents cannot have food and clothes, or joy and peace, nor even health and life, except from the Lord. And when you pray 'Make me a good child,' do it honestly, wishing and resolving, by God's help, to leave off all naughty ways, and to do and speak what you know to be right."

There are too many children who scarcely pay any attention when their parents or friends try to teach them, but Lily was not one of these careless children. When she put her little arms round her mother's neck, and returned her good-night kiss, Lily thought that she would try hard to make her prayer a *real thing*, and not only to repeat a few words without caring in the least for their meaning.

The next day was not quite so happy a one as the first had been. The two little girls were inclined to quarrel over their toys, so that the very gifts which their loving mother had brought were a cause of naughtiness and ill-temper. This did not, however, last long; Mrs. Dale made the children kiss each other, and play again as friends. Lily looked still a little sulky; she had shown enough of ill-humour to prove how much she needed to pray to the Lord, "Make me a good child."

But when the time came for Lily again to kneel down beside her mother's knee to repeat her evening prayer, the little girl hung back. She did not hastily drop down on her knees as she had dropped before; she stood hesitating and grave, with flushed cheeks, and with tears in her eyes.

"Is not my Lily going to ask the Lord to make her good?" asked the gentle mother.

Still Lily did not kneel down. Charley and Jane stood looking on in surprise. They could not think what their little sister was stopping for.

Mrs. Dale was not impatient; she felt that it was better to wait for a while. She could not read the heart, nor tell what was passing in Lily's, but she saw that something was upon the little one's mind. The lady paused till the child should be able to speak, for something seemed to be choking her voice.

At last Lily went closer still to her mother, and whispered into her ear, "Did you not say that there is no use in *asking* to be made good unless we *wish* and *try* to be good?"

"I did say so," replied Mrs. Dale, "for otherwise our prayer would not be a real thing."

Lily's next whisper was lower still, so low that her mother could hardly hear it, though she bent down her head till the lips of her child touched her ear.

"Mamma, suppose I don't want to be good, and don't mean to be good," said the child.

"That would be sad; that would grieve me indeed," said the lady. "How could my darling lie down in peace, and go to sleep, if she kept such naughtiness in her heart!"

"But, mamma," again whispered Lily, this time with the tears running down her cheeks, "if I really try to be good, I must tell Jane what I've done to her elephant."

Mrs. Dale did not smile; she did not think it a small matter that the conscience of a little child but four years old was troubled by a fault which she felt that she ought to confess before she dared to kneel

down to pray. The mother took Lily upon her lap, and opening her Bible, read aloud to her some words of the Lord, explaining them as she went on, so that the child might understand them.

“*If thou bring thy gift to the altar,—that is, if we pray, or go to church, or do anything else religious,—and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee,—that means, if we remember that we have done a wrong to any person whatever,—leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother,—that is, first go and ask pardon and make amends,—and then come and offer thy gift.* Now if my Lily remembers that she has done anything unkind to Jane, she must obey the Lord’s command, and make up with her sister before she ventures to pray.”

Lily hesitated a few moments longer, for, young as she was, she had already evil pride in her heart, and did not like to own a fault; nor did she wish that her mother should see how naughty she had been. While Lily was hesitating her mother was praying—but not aloud so that any one could hear her. Mrs. Dale’s prayer was *real* though it was silent—she was asking that the Lord would indeed make her dear little daughter good, and give her both grace to *wish* to conquer her faults, and strength to do so.

Presently Lily sprang down from her mother’s lap. She ran up to an arm-chair and pulled forward the green cushion which had rested upon it, so as to show what she had hidden behind it. There lay Jane’s toy elephant, with a broken trunk and howdah—half its beauty was gone!

“Oh, Jane, there it is;—I’m so sorry that I broke it;—will you forgive me?” cried Lily with tears.

“Oh, my pretty, pretty toy! Did you break it on purpose?” exclaimed Jane, as she caught up the injured plaything.

Lily nodded her head. She was resolved to *try* to be good, and she knew that she could not be good unless she confessed the whole truth.

“I’ll give you my beauty bangles to make up,” she said with an effort, for she sorely disliked to part with the present given to herself.

“No, no, Lily, I don’t want your bangles,” cried the generous Jane; “I’ll forgive you outright, or I should not be fit to pray either, you know. I dare say that you are just as sorry about the elephant as I am.”

Lily was a good deal more sorry, and she felt her fault all the more because her sister was so forgiving and kind. The two little girls kissed each other, while their mother looked on with a thankful heart.

Then, with a conscience at peace, little Lily knelt down to pray. She rested her face on her mother’s lap, and covered her eyes, so that they could not wander. And this time her prayer was a *real thing*, for she felt that the Lord was listening; and she not only *asked* to be made a good child, but honestly wished and resolved, by God’s help, to be one.

My little readers may like to know that when the children came downstairs the next morning they found the elephant on the breakfast table, looking almost as well as ever. Mrs. Dale’s neat fingers, and a little strong glue, had fixed both trunk and howdah so firmly into their places that scarcely a mark remained to show that they had ever been broken.

And now, my dear young reader, let me give you a word of loving advice before I end my story. Before you next repeat a prayer, first ask your conscience, "Have I done wrong to-day to any one that I know?" and if conscience answer, "Yes," do not rest till amends have been made. And then, when you kneel down to pray, oh, try to let your heart go with your words; and whether you ask for forgiveness, or grace, or for a blessing on those whom you love, make sure that your prayer be a *real thing*, so that the Lord may accept and grant it.



HAPPY JACK.



'M as happy as a king," said little Jack Harley, as he was see-sawing with his playmate Job Brown under the trees near his father's cottage.

"O Jack!" said Job, "you are not so happy as a king. Why, kings are such great folks, and they have such big houses, and such fine horses, and such lots of money, and everything they like."

"Well, I've got everything I like," said Jack. "I am sure kings don't play at see-saw, like you and me, Job."

Jack was so elated with his own idea of happiness, that giving a sharp spring he bumped his companion's end of the see-saw on the ground, whilst he himself toppled off and received a rather severe blow on the head.

Happy Jack was not the boy to make a fuss about a little, but, rubbing his head, he leaped again to his seat, singing—

"Tumble up, tumble down;
Get a crack upon the crown."

"If it had been a king's crown," said he, "it would have come down much heavier than mine."

“Everybody calls you Happy Jack,” said Job; “what is it that makes you always happy?”

“I don’t want anything to *make* me happy,” said Jack; “I am happy. Ain’t you happy, Job?”



“I AM SURE KINGS DON’T PLAY AT SEE-SAW, LIKE YOU AND ME, JOB.”

“I am, when I am with you,” said Job. “I don’t know what’s the reason, except it is that we love each other.”

“That’s it,” said Jack. “Kings don’t love one another, for they are always fighting, and I am sure those who fight can never be happy.” Jack, feeling sure he was right, as he knew how unhappy many of his school-fellows were who were constantly fighting as they left school, concluded with one of his original rhymes:—

“Ye kings, ye may fight
For the wrong or the right;
I rather would love,
Like the angels above.”

This allusion to the angels turned Job Brown's thoughts from the crowned heads of earth to those happy and holy spirits of heaven.

“Where do the angels live?” said Job.

“Oh, anywhere,” said Jack Harley. “Sometimes they live in my bedroom.”

“In your bedroom!” said Job with surprise. “Ain't you afraid to go to sleep?”

“No,” said Jack; “that is just the reason why I am not afraid. Don't you know the little hymn I say to my mother before I go to my bed?—

‘I lay my body down to sleep,
While angels guard my head,
And through the hours of darkness keep
Their watch around my bed!’

They are sent by God to watch over us and to keep us from danger; and we need not be afraid of wicked angels nor of wicked men whilst the good angels are with us, for they are so holy that no one that is wicked dare come near them.”

“But where is the angels' home?” said little Job.

“In heaven,” said Jack.

“Yes,” said he; “but where is heaven?”

“Why, can't you see it?” said Jack. “It's up yonder, through the clouds. Those beautiful mountains, like wool edged with gold, are the

mountains on which the angels live. Don't you know the beautiful hymn says—

‘ Up to the fields where angels lie,
And living waters gently roll,
Fain would my thoughts leap out and fly,
But sin hangs heavy on my soul.’

My mother taught me that hymn,” said Jack.

“Do you ever see them on those hills?” said little Job.

“No,” said Jack, “because they are so far off.”

“But,” said Job, “do you ever see them when they are in your bedroom?”

“Sometimes I think I do,” said Jack, “when I am going to sleep; and I feel so happy, because I know they are there.”

Jack's father was an honest, industrious man—a man that worked hard all day, and read his Bible before he retired to rest at night. He would often sit down and read to his little son some of the stories from that precious Book, which tells us of God, of the Saviour, and of the holy angels. And Jack would feel deep interest as his father read to him of Jacob's ladder and the holy angels ascending and descending thereon; of the angels that delivered Daniel from the lions' mouths and Peter from prison; of the very wonderful appearance of the angels to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus, who sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men;” and of the angel that appeared to the women at the sepulchre, who said, “Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified.” We need not wonder then that Jack said, “They live anywhere;” nor that he felt so happy at the thought that they watched over him in his bedroom whilst he slept.

His father always studied to impress upon his son's mind the fact from the Word of God, that these holy, happy spirits, are sent from the courts of heaven to protect those who fear God and obey his will. And little Jack did fear God, and hoped some day to go and live with these bright and happy angels in heaven, and see Jesus who died for his sins, and have a beautiful golden harp to praise God, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. It was true he was a playful, merry little fellow; but if children do not commit sin, God will not be angry with them for being cheerful and happy.

Poor little Job Brown was not so highly favoured as his friend Jack. His father did not care for the Bible. Nor did he go to any place of worship, but lived a very sinful life; and Job therefore was indebted to his playmate for the little knowledge he had of that which is good, who took pleasure in answering the questions of his little companion.

The heavenly hills and all the beautiful scenery of that celestial country, which Jack declared he saw, awakened in his little friend a fresh curiosity; and he was never weary of asking Jack for more information of that bright abode.

"There!" said little Jack one day; "don't you see, that is one of the chariots of fire."

"Chariots of fire!" said Job in astonishment.

"Yes," said Jack. "Have you never heard of the good prophets Elijah and Elisha? When they were walking together one day, there came a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. The Bible says there are *twenty thousand* of them; and all good people, when they die, their spirits go to heaven in these chariots of fire."

Poor little Job Brown wondered how his friend Jack did to know so much about heaven; and he wished he could see these things as plainly as his companion. Thus these little playmates spent their time together, and Job was never so happy as when in the company of his friend Jack.

Now some little boy or girl will perhaps say, "Well, I should be as happy as Happy Jack if I were allowed to play like him; but just as I get to play, my mother calls me to run on an errand, or to do something; and I think little children ought not to be called away when they are at play, but to be allowed to have the game out."

Yes, my little dear, I can understand. When mother calls, the little boy *frowns, and mutters, and whimpers, and throws down the bat or ball in a passion*, and goes off sulkily where he is bidden, twisting his little body as though he ought not to be interfered with.

Now little Jack was often called away from his play, but he felt proud that he was able to do something for his kind parents, who were always doing so much for him; and he felt it his duty to obey their commands, for God says, "Honour thy father and thy mother." And however much he liked play, yet he knew that he must learn to do little things when a boy, that he might be fitted to work and earn his living when he grew to manhood. When he stood by the carpenter's bench, and saw the big drops of sweat roll down his father's face, he often wished he were strong enough to help him more; for he knew that his father must work hard else they could not live.

Many little jobs fell to Jack's share; and though whilst thus assisting his father he got many a hard knock and severe pinch, yet

he was pretty merry over his work. Sometimes in straightening a nail Jack would hit his finger with the hammer, but he always made a doctor's shop of his mouth, and would drive away care with one of his little ditties:—

“Now, Mr. Nail, I will give you another ;
And if that won't do, you shall soon have his brother.”

Thus he had a happy way of getting rid of the little pains and cares which so many boys make such a mighty fuss about. A few rubs in youth fit us for the trials of life ; and boys and girls should always try to endure these little pains without crying or running to tell mother.

But we must look at Happy Jack in another place. His father always took him to a place of worship on the Sunday ; and his little son felt much pleasure in going up to God's house. In the Sunday-school he was delighted to meet with other boys ; and although he could not read much, he listened very attentively to what his teacher told him. And when the good old clerk stood up and said, “Let us commence the worship of God by singing the sixty-eighth hymn—

“Lord, 'tis a pleasant thing to stand
In garden planted by thy hand ;
Let me within thy courts be seen,
Like a young cedar fresh and green ;”

or some other suitable Sabbath song of praise, our little friend felt it quite an honour to be admitted to the company of such good men. During the reading, prayer, and sermon by the minister, Jack paid the deepest attention, as he knew that Jesus is present where his people meet, and sees every careless movement and reads every sinful thought of the heart.

Thus Jack Harley was worthy of the name of Happy Jack, for he felt that true happiness lay in a contented mind, a thankful spirit, reverence for the Word of God, obedience to his parents, and patient endurance of the sufferings of life. And you may be quite sure that such a happy boy would make a happy man; and when he came to die, would feel happy in the thought that the chariots of fire and horses of fire were coming to take him to his Saviour's bosom. May all my little readers learn to imitate such a good example!





LIGHT SHINING IN DARKNESS.



VISITOR, on some errand of kindness, had entered a passage in some wretched tenement of one of our larger towns. There was an air of squalid misery everywhere over the whole place. It was towards evening, and the increasing darkness added another element of discomfort to the scene. His ear caught the sound of a young voice reading aloud; and on reaching a door which stood ajar, he was struck with the spectacle which presented itself. The furniture of the room was of the poorest. A boy was busy reading to his mother, and brief attention only was needed to make out that it was the Word of God from which he was reading. The family, it would seem, could afford neither lamp nor candle. But there is quick wit where there is a resolute will. The boy sat at one side of the fire, a little sister at the other, and a heap of shavings lay between; and ever and anon the tiny fingers of the little sister dropped a fresh supply of shavings into the grate, kindling a fresh blaze, during which the boy seized the opportunity, and contrived to get another line or two read for the edification of the mother, who sat listening with eagerness to the truth of God from the lips of her son.

The poor boy had learned to read at a ragged school, and this was the use to which he was putting the newly acquired gift. The visitor did not desert the family. The boy got more learning, was sent to college, distinguished himself in his classes, and ultimately came to fill a station of usefulness in the Church of Christ, in which he could preach Christ not to a mother only, but to multitudes. Good seed yields not one blade only, but the full corn in the ear.



THE BIRDS OF SILVERDALE.



SILVERDALE was one of the prettiest spots to be found anywhere. It was deep in the country; away from railways or dusty roads, or anything of the kind. Many people would not have liked it so well, for this reason; but the people who lived there liked it a great deal better, and that was the principal thing to be considered.

Silverdale was a mere hamlet, but it had one great house belonging to it, and that was called "Silverdale House."

It was a very old house, and had gables all covered with ivy. And the garden wall was covered with ivy too; and there were so many shrubs and evergreens, that the place looked almost as green in the winter as it did in the summer.

There was a beautiful garden—the lawn was as smooth as velvet, and the beds in it were as full of flowers as they could hold. As for the roses, there were so many, that in the summer the air was scented with them a long way off.

The people who lived at Silverdale House were very fond of flowers. Every morning, the mamma would come out to water her flowers. And after her used to run her three children, a boy and two little girls. The boy was named Harry, and the little girls Ellen and Letty.

They were very happy children indeed. There was no end to their pleasures in that great Silverdale garden. They were fond of flowers, and had their own little gardens, where they used to sow seeds, and weed and water, and be very industrious.



But they had a greater pleasure still. And that pleasure was the birds! Now, the birds at Silverdale had it all their own way. There was no one to pelt them, or to set traps for them, or to take their nests

or their young ones. And the birds seemed to know they were safe, and they were so tame they would eat out of your hand! And there was such a number of birds, too!

There was a large owl, that lived in a tree, and used only to come out at night. When he did come out, he made a very harsh noise, as he flew round and round looking for his supper. His supper would be a mouse, or a poor little bird that chanced to be out of its nest. When daylight came, the owl would be safe back in the tree. Here he would sit winking and blinking, or else he would go fast to sleep and snore—for an owl can snore as loud as you can.

The children would not have liked any one to meddle with the owl. Once, a little boy came to spend his holidays at Silverdale. He was not a kind little boy, and he did not love the birds as the other children did. He always wanted to catch them, and put them in a cage; and the moment he came, he began to hunt about for the owl.

One day, when the children were out of the way, he got a ladder and put it against the tree, close to the place where the owl lived. And then he climbed the ladder and peeped in. There sat the owl, looking as grave as a judge; and the naughty boy put out his hand and laid hold of him. He thought it would be such a fine thing to have a live owl in a cage. But the owl did not agree with him. He began to scratch, and to bite with his hard bill; and he bit the naughty boy's hand so sharply, that he was glad to let go, and hurry down the ladder as fast as he could. His hand was very much hurt, and he had it tied up all the rest of the holidays.

The children's papa told him it served him right for meddling with the owl.

There was a row of tall trees at the bottom of the garden, and here, in the very top branches, the rooks used to live. They kept caw, cawing all day long. And they would run about in the fields close by, looking for worms and grubs. The papa of the Silverdale children never let his rooks be shot. He said they did a great deal of good, and he looked upon them as his friends.

There was a cruel man who lived not far from Silverdale, and who always shot his rooks, or indeed any bird he could catch sight of. His sons were great boys, and used to walk about with their guns over their shoulders. When any little bird came hopping out of the hedges or trees, the boys would take aim at it in a minute; and they thought it famous sport to shoot as many birds as they could. Now, the poor little birds had done them no harm, and there was plenty of room, in this wide world, for them and for the boys too. And the birds would have done good if they had been let alone; for they liked nothing better than grubs and caterpillars, and they would come down on the fields and gardens, and pick up as many as they could find. You would think there would be hardly any grubs and caterpillars left by the end of the summer. And so perhaps it would have been, if the boys had not been so busy with their guns. As it is, I am quite certain of one thing, there were fewer grubs and caterpillars in the Silverdale garden than in any place I ever saw.

And as to the garden where the cruel boys lived, everything was eaten up; and you might pick off the caterpillars by thousands, and the grubs too!

But at Silverdale, the good papa had taught his children to be kind to the birds. He said the birds were sent into the world to be happy.

God provides them with food, without any trouble of their own, and has given them instinct to build their nests and rear their young; and not one sparrow falls to the ground without his notice.

The good papa would not have liked any child of his to be cruel to the birds. But the children did not know what it was to be cruel.

One morning, they sat down to breakfast as usual. The window was wide open, and you could see the smooth lawn, with the black-birds and starlings running about upon it, and getting their breakfasts as well. The birds who had little ones in their nests at home did not stay long on the lawn. You could see them flying off with a worm or a grub, to pop into the little open beak that was ready for it. Then they would come back for another; and they did not mind how many journeys they took, so long as their young ones had plenty to eat.

Now, the children knew all about the nests in the garden—from the nest of the great owl in the tree, to that of the pair of linnets in the porch; and if a nest was near the ground, as the blackbird's was, they would look in, to see if the eggs were hatched. And if they saw the little downy creatures, with their mouths open asking for food, they would be delighted, and run to tell their mamma that the eggs were hatched. And they would take care not to frighten the old birds as they flew in and out; but they would lay crumbs of bread on the ground for them, to help them a little. For it was hard work to provide for such a hungry family as they had.



THE MAN AT THE HELM.



TELL me about the night of the storm, Maurice."

Maurice at once complied, and said:—

"It was the night on which the child died. All that day I had watched beside her bed. They told me she must die; yet I could not, or *would* not, believe them. But when the little hand in mine grew cold with the chill of death, a sudden sense of the nearness of God came over me, such as I had never realized before,—a consciousness of the presence of One who held the keys of death and the grave. Oh to win by prayers and tears if it were but a brief delay! 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,' were words that rang in my ears. It is wonderful, sir, how many verses pressed into my mind."

"You seem to have read and known much of the Bible."

"Well, sir, I had always thought it a beautiful book; but you know there is a great difference between admiring it as a wonderful book, and clinging to it as a shipwrecked man clings to a rock. I had always said my prayers, too, and yet it was only on that night that I believe my heart sent up its first real prayer. I prayed for the child's life, with a solemn vow to live henceforth to God if only the

child might be spared. But God knew that my vow would be better fulfilled by her death. Once she opened her dear eyes upon me with a look such as angels must wear, and then she lay still and pale like a gathered lily. The vessel was to leave on that same night, and I was glad of it. Ah, sir, when I kissed that little white cheek for the last time, I knew what God's prophet felt when he said, 'The waters compassed me about, even to the soul, the depths closed me round about.' It seemed fearful to hold so much love for a creature in my heart; and that terrible 'why' was filling my soul like a heavy sea. It's a small word, sir, but it is the chief tormentor of the human mind. *Why* did God give us so much power to love, if it was to be the channel of so much suffering? *Why* does he call himself the hearer of prayer, and yet allow the child to die?

"That night I was at the helm. It was one of the worst passages we made that winter. The sea indeed 'wrought and was tempestuous;' but it was as nothing compared with the workings of an angry heart, and the strivings of the human will. The dark clouds driving overhead, and the rushing waters below, were but a fit response to the wail of the storm within. I remember being roused out of this by the voice of one of the passengers, who came up to me with an anxious inquiry about the weather. I answered him in a few words. He went on repeating his questions, until the mate went up to him and asked him whether he had ever read the inscription upon the plate beneath the wheel. I remember his reply, 'What is it?' and the mate's next words: '*Passengers are requested not to speak to the Man at the Helm.*' Well, sir, I cannot tell how it was, but I too seemed to hear these words for the first time; and, what was still more strange, those words from

the Gospel rushed into my mind at the same time: 'Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?' and the Master's reply, 'Be not afraid; only believe.' I was not able to think clearly; the words were mingled together in a strange confusion, repeating themselves over and over again. Those last words, 'Be not afraid; only believe,' seemed to come, like the lightning out of the storm-cloud, but for a moment, and only to make the after darkness more dark; while the other words, 'Why troublest thou the Master?' were like the mocking of some evil spirit, borne along upon the angry blast. But these, again, were banished by the first words spoken by the mate: '*Passengers are requested not to speak to the Man at the Helm.*' And then, sir, all in a moment, I saw and felt, for the first time, the analogy between the storm without and the storm within. And, as my mind pictured to itself the distressed soul as a vessel beaten by the waves, the figure of Him who once rebuked the winds came before me as the great Pilot and true Man at the Helm. With outstretched arm he seemed to say, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.' And, sir, with the mighty impulse of a new self within myself, my heart, ay, and I believe my lips too, made answer, 'To thee I come, for I am very weary, and the burden is too heavy for me to bear,—O Lord, thou knowest!' There are some persons who would call this the working of an excited brain; but if I were to do so I should sin against God. Ah no, that was a solemn night. I do not remember whether the tempest around me lulled; I hardly took notice of that. But one thing I know, that within my soul there was 'a great calm.' Now, sir, who but God could work such a change as this?"

"Who indeed?" replied my friend. "I believe that there are



many such solemn seasons in the life of the soul. The records of heaven alone could tell us how many."

By this time the vessel was fast approaching the port, and that pleasant conversation was coming to an end.

"We have made a great deal out of that inscription, have we not, Maurice? Let us read it once more, for it is as good as a parable. Here are man's rules for the safety of his earthly course :—

"Passengers are requested not to speak to the Man at the Helm."

"Now place against this, God's rules for the safety of his heavenly course :—

"In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

"Let us hold fast to this our high privilege of prayer, and let us go to the *Man at the Helm* at all times, asking in faith, and nothing doubting. It is well to speak *of* him, but it is better to speak *to* him ; for one word in his presence is sweeter than the most eloquent praise of him in his absence. And now, farewell, Maurice ; whether or not we shall meet again in this world God only knows ; but one thing is certain, the day will come when those sweet words shall be fulfilled in all those that wait for God, 'Their souls shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.' Let us trust in that sure Friend and Saviour who gave himself for us ; and let us 'look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.'"


"Good-bye, sir," he replied, grasping the offered hand of my friend as we passed on shore together ; "God bless you."

We never saw Maurice Macgregor again. Very shortly afterwards he received the command of a vessel going out to the West Indies,

where he was soon laid low by a fever which ended in his death. Not long was the father parted from his child. We could not mourn for him, for we knew that he had gained the haven where he would be, and was rejoicing in the nearer presence of Him whom, having not seen, he had loved and served faithfully on earth. But I never make the same voyage across the Channel without thinking of him, and recalling his touching narrative; and often in hours of depression and trial has my faith been strengthened, and my hope cheered, by the remembrance of those "Good words spoken on the sea."



THE WAGES OF THE POOR.

OW much is it?" asked the lady, as she drew out her purse, and poured from it into her hand a little pile of silver coins. Before her stood a pale, poorly-dressed, weary-looking woman.

"Eighteenpence, ma'am," was answered.

"Eighteenpence!"—the lady's voice expressed surprise. "No, no, Mary; I can't give that price for three-quarters of a day's work. You did not come until after nine o'clock, remember. If you want full wages, you must do full work. A shilling is all that I can give you."

"I'll have to take it, then," said the woman rather sadly. "My little Eddy was sick, and I couldn't get away as early as I wanted this morning; but I have worked hard all day to make up. I think I have earned it."

"No doubt of that in the world, Mary," broke out the cheerful voice of the lady's husband, who was sitting in the room; "and here's a shilling in addition to my wife's shilling. She's a prudent woman, and tries to be careful of my money; but she's over particular to-night, it strikes me. Buy Eddy something that he will like, as you go home, with the sixpence over, and say that I sent it to him."

“Oh, thank you! thank you, sir!” exclaimed the poor working woman, a sudden light breaking over her face. “You are very good.”

Then she retired, and husband and wife were left alone.

“That wasn’t right, Henry,” said the lady, speaking seriously.

“I know it wasn’t, and therefore I corrected your error at once,” replied Mr. Lawson, as coolly as if he had not understood the meaning of his wife’s remark.

“It wasn’t right, I mean, for you to interfere as you did just now. What’s the use of my trying to be economical if you thwart me in this way? Mary was not entitled to full day’s wages.”

“I think she was,” said the husband.

“How will you make that out? Let me see your calculation.”

“I can make it out in several ways; can give you the figures, and prove the sum. First, then, she alleges that she worked hard all day to make up the lost hours, and thinks she really earned a full day’s wages. There’s the sum worked out clearly. Now, as to proof of the result, I would first offer humanity; next, the woman’s loss of strength in a day’s hard toil, for she looked so pale and weary that the very sight of her gave me pain; next, her poverty—for the mother of three children, who goes out to do washing and house-cleaning in order to get bread for them, must be very poor; next, a sick child, who may need medicine, or some daintier food than usual. Do you want further proof that she was entitled to receive full pay for a day’s work?”

There was a change in the countenance of Mrs. Lawson before her husband had finished these sentences.

“Perhaps you are right,” she said. “These poor women do work very hard for what they get, and I often feel sorry for them. I’m glad,



at least, that you gave Mary the extra shilling. Still, Henry, we cannot afford to overpay people who work for us if they are poor. A shilling here, and a shilling there, repeated over and over again, daily, will amount to a serious item in the year; and, when the shillings are not really earned, will prove, in most cases, but incentives to idleness."

"The other side of the case, my dear," answered Mr. Lawson, "and very well stated. But let us be careful, in our transactions with these poor people, that we do not withhold the shilling actually due in our over-nice calculations as to the time they may be in our service. At best, their labour is poorly compensated. They toil hard, very hard, for the small sum they ask for services rendered; and we can always better afford to give ten extra shillings in a week than they can afford to lose one. Let us not increase our comforts, or add to our possessions, at their cost; but let them be rather objects of our care, sympathy, and protection. The Psalmist says: 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.' There is a vast deal more to gain than to lose, I take it, in concessions to these humbler children of our common Father."

Mrs. Lawson sighed as her husband ceased speaking. His words brought out from her memory more than a single instance where she had paid to the extremely poor who rendered her service for hire, less than the price demanded, under the allegation of an excessive charge for work. In her over-carefulness about what was her own, she had withheld pennies, sixpences, and shillings, which really added nothing to her comforts but diminished the comforts of the poor. Coming back upon her now, these memories troubled her.

"I am afraid," she remarked, looking with a sober aspect into her

husband's face, "that I have not been altogether just in these matters. But you have set me right. I will try to be more considerate in future. I did not really perceive the meaning of what Mary said about having worked hard all day to make up for loss of time, nor feel the allusion to the sick child, or I could not have had the heart to withhold that shilling. Our very thoughtlessness sometimes leads us into wrong."

"There is, as a general thing," remarked Mr. Lawson, "a disposition to reduce still lower than their present low rate the wages of the extremely poor, especially the poor who earn their living among housekeepers. The seamstress, the washerwoman, and the day's-work woman, all have to toil very hard for their meagre wages; and the disposition is to take off the sixpences and the shillings whenever there is an excuse for doing so, instead of a generous concession in their favour. It is wicked and disgraceful. But such things are of daily occurrence. There is a better way, however, and a more Christian spirit. Let us walk in this way; let us encourage this spirit. If we change the wages of the poor in anything, let it be to increase, not diminish them; for sure I am they have been reduced enough already!"



S P R I N G.



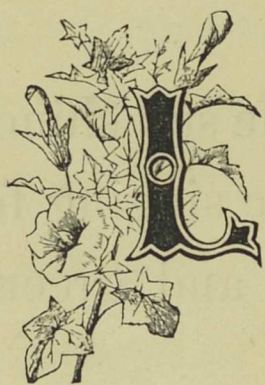
'M very glad the Spring is come, the sun shines out so bright,
The little birds upon the trees are singing for delight ;
The young grass looks so fresh and green, the lambkins
sport and play,
And I can skip and run about as merrily as they.

I like to see the daisy and the buttercups once more,
The primrose and the cowslip, too, and every pretty flower ;
I like to see the butterfly fluttering her painted wing,—
And all things seem, just like myself, so pleased to see the Spring.

The fishes in the little brook are jumping up on high,
The lark is singing sweetly as she mounts into the sky ;
The rooks are building up their nests upon the great tall tree,
And everything's as busy and as happy as can be.

There's not a cloud upon the sky, there's nothing dark or sad ;
I jump, and scarce know what to do, I feel so very glad.
God must be very good indeed, who made each pretty thing ;
I'm sure we ought to love Him much for bringing back the Spring.

BE KIND.



LITTLE children, bright and fair,
Blessed with every needful care,
Always bear this thing in mind—
God commands us to be kind ;

Kind not only to our friends—
They on whom our care depends ;
Kind not only to the poor—
They who poverty endure ;
But, in spite of form or feature,
Kind to every living creature.
Never pain or anguish bring,
Even to the smallest thing ;
For remember that the fly,
Just as much as you or I,
Is the work of that great Hand
That hath made the sea and land.
Therefore, children, bear in mind
Ever, ever to “ be kind.”

