



STRIVE TO ENTER IN

AT THE STRAIT GATE

Nelly's
Experience;

OR,

TRY TO
BE THANKFUL.

EDINBURGH
GALL & INGLIS
6 GEORGE STREET



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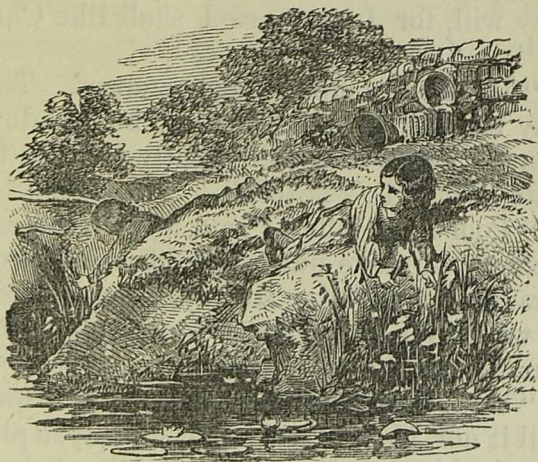
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CHAPTER I.

“Thou, who hast given me eyes to see
And love this world so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee,
And read Thee everywhere.”

“MRS GRAHAM and her little boy will be

with us to-morrow," said Mr Hammond, as he threw a letter he had just perused on the breakfast-table, and broke the seal of another.

"To-morrow!" exclaimed his wife, in an accent of surprise; "I thought they would not be here till the end of the week."

"Will they stay long, papa," inquired Nelly, Mr Hammond's only child. "I hope they will, for I am sure I shall like Charlie."

"It depends upon circumstances. They may be with us some months; but the duration of their visit will greatly rest on the state of Charlie's health."

"Poor little fellow," said Mrs Hammond, "they will make but little difference in our arrangements. Miss Murray, I must get you to walk over to Silverton, to execute a little commission for me."

"With pleasure; it will be a nice walk, will it not, Nelly?" said Miss Murray, a pleasant-looking young lady, who devoted the greater portion of her time and attention to the instruction of Nelly Hammond.

"Yes; I don't mind going that way," said Nelly. "Shall we go directly, mamma?"

"As soon as you like, or rather when Miss Murray thinks best."

"That depends entirely on your wishes.

At this season of the year it is pleasanter to walk quite early in the morning than later in the day."

"You must not be walking in the heat," said Mr Hammond, gathering up his papers, and preparing to leave the room.

"The road to Silverton is very shady," said Mrs Hammond, "so it will not be unpleasant."

"We will go at once, then," said Miss Murray. "Nelly, dear, will you dress yourself—"

"And meet me in the garden," said Mrs Hammond; "I must go and get a breath of fresh air before I begin the occupations of the day."

With a bright, happy countenance, Nelly ran away to dress,—the rosy colour on her cheeks, the bright sparkle in her clear blue eyes, the easy activity of her movements, telling of the excellent health with which she was blessed; the fond look of affection her mamma cast on her as she quitted the room, betraying the happiness she enjoyed in a kind, loving mother; the numerous nick-nacks and pretty properties of the young lady, which were scattered about the apartment, proving that she had not only a comfortable home, but very indulgent parents and kind friends.

Before many minutes had elapsed she entered the garden with her governess; but the bright, merry look had quite passed away, and a discontented frown puckered her brow, robbed her eyes of their sparkle, and her pretty mouth of its good-tempered smile. She was quite a changed child.

"What is the matter, Nelly?" inquired her mamma, when she gazed on her little girl.

"Nothing," said Nelly.

"Nay, tell your mamma what has vexed you," said Miss Murray.

"Nothing," repeated Nelly.

"What is it, Miss Murray?" inquired Mrs Hammond.

"I thought this dress was quite sufficiently good for this morning's expedition, and Nelly wished to wear her best frock and hat."

"Yes, mamma, we shall pass the Park, you know, and Clara Fielding is sure to meet us."

"And if she does? Oh! I am quite ashamed of you for caring for such nonsense. Now, Miss Murray, what I wish you to do is to go to the laundress, and request her to send home the things you will find specified in this list, as I require them sooner than I expected for the visitors' apartment."

“And I will take the flannel I promised to her mother,” said Miss Murray.

“Yes, so you can. Now, Nelly, put away that frown. I am quite grieved to see you so discontented. Do try to be thankful for the many blessings the Almighty has bestowed on you.”

Nelly made no reply, but, kissing her mamma, returned to the house with her governess, to fetch the parcel for Mrs Brown’s mother.

“What a lovely day!” said Miss Murray, as they turned down a shady lane, which led from Daisy Hill, the residence of Mr Hammond, who was the principal surgeon in the place, to the little village of Silverton, which was about a mile and a half distant. “Come now, smile Nelly. How glad every thing seems!—how bright the sunshine is!—how gay the birds are!—they are all thankful for this beautiful weather. Do smile and be happy.”

“So I am, Miss Murray, but I do wish I had not to be careful as you and mamma say. I hate being careful. I wish I could be like Clara Fielding; she always looks nice, and there is no *carefulness* with her.”

“Her father is richer than yours. But, Nelly, you ought to be thankful that you are so well off. Think how good God has

been to you in giving you such a comfortable home, such kind parents, and good health, even though you are obliged to be careful."

"Clara Fielding is happier."

"Is she? Perhaps she has something to want, and she may be quite as unhappy as you choose to make yourself."

"There she is," said Nelly, as the young lady, on a pretty grey pony, came in sight, a couple of dogs scampering at her side, and a groom not far distant. "Oh! she sees us, I thought she would, and I have on this horrid old dress!"

"Well, Nelly," exclaimed Clara, as she checked her pony, that she might speak to them, "how do you do, Miss Murray? I was going to Daisy Hill."

"Were you? We are going farther, to execute a little commission for Mrs Hammond, or we would beg you to go and wait for us."

"I will turn back and go with you, may I?"

"You will get tired of walking your pony," said Nelly. "Come and see us this afternoon."

"No, I can't. I was going to ask you to spend to-morrow with me, will you?"

“If mamma will let me. May I not, Miss Murray?”

“I don’t doubt your mamma will allow you.”

For some time the little girls talked and laughed, until, the pony becoming quite tired of walking so slowly, Clara Fielding bade her friends good-bye, and cantered off, the personification of careless happiness.

“There, is she not happy? Oh! I wish I were like her, Miss Murray.”

“Nelly, dear, it quite grieves me to hear you speak in this way. You seem to forget that it is God who has placed you in the position you are in, and it is very wicked and ungrateful of you to murmur against Him, who has been so abundant in kindness to you.”

“Clara is happier than I am,” reiterated Nelly.

“How many are there who are much less happy than you! Now, we shall hear what old Mrs Smith says to the flannel.”

As she spoke, Miss Murray tapped at the door of a small cottage, which was rather picturesquely situated on the slope of a hill, on the opposite side of which was a high bank covered with verdant grass, fresh ferns, and bright wild-flowers, which

grew to the very edge of the sparkling stream that coursed rapidly along at its base.

Some fine old apple-trees in the garden behind, formed a pretty back-ground, against which the neat white cottage, with its red-tiled roof, and moss-grown chimney, from which a thin curl of grey smoke was issuing, stood out in bold relief.

The only thing that spoiled its appearance, was the exposure of many articles of clothing, which in renewed purity were displayed on lines, bushes, and low trees, in every direction, in order that they might dry quickly, telling, as plainly as a sign over the door indicates the locality of an inn or tavern, that this humble cottage was the abode of a laundress.

A neat young woman answered the summons, and shewed them into a room, which, though scrupulously clean, was rendered disorderly, at first sight, from the many things that were scattered about, undergoing the various stages of ironing.

Cowering over the fire, which burnt on the hearth, in a large old-fashioned fireplace, an old woman, who had evidently reached the appointed age of threescore years and ten, sat holding some knitting in her trembling hands, and watching a baby

who lay asleep in a wicker-work cradle at her side.

Miss Murray delivered her message, and then turned to Mrs Smith, and, presenting the flannel, inquired how she was."

"Thank God, I keep pretty well," was the reply.

"The rheumatism is still painful, I fear," said Miss Murray, as she noticed the old woman's evident distress in attempting to rise from her chair.

"What can I expect, miss, an old woman like me; sure it's good of the Lord to give me so many blessings as I have, so old as I am—past threescore years and ten."

"And you have have had a laborious life," said Miss Murray; "but there is nothing like being thankful."

"Ay, that's true, miss; I have indeed very many things to be thankful for."

"Indeed, we all have; but it is very sad to see how very few are really thankful for the very many and great mercies the Lord bestows upon us."

"Mine has often been a hard life," said the old woman, and her trembling voice grew steadier as she added, "but you see, miss, God has given me good children. I always prayed that I might have good children, and that God would give me this

day my daily bread ; that's what I have said every day, miss ; and God hears prayer, remember that, little missy," added old Mrs Smith, appealing to Nelly, "and day by day, though often I did not know how I should get it, He has given it me,—I have never been quite without food, so for that I must be thankful."

"Indeed you must," said Miss Murray.

"And now you see, miss, I am too old to work ; my children keep a house over my head, and though very often I can't move, God has still given me power to mind the baby, and do such like ; so I am not quite useless, and for that I must be thankful."

Miss Murray looked at Nelly as she said that truly Mrs Smith ought to be thankful.

"But there's something more than all this," said Mrs Smith, a light shining in her aged eyes, "poor, and wicked, and sinful as I am, and ungrateful as I have been, God sent me His Son,—gave Him to die for me, and because I can't do anything for myself, He has given me everything, and has promised to take me to a bright and glorious home—to be with Christ—to the many mansions, where the blessed

Saviour is. Now, must I not bless God for that, Miss Nelly?"

"Yes," said Nelly, timidly, a blush crossing her fair brow.

"Thank Mrs Hammond for the flannel, and the good Doctor for his medicines, and tell them that I put them in when I am thanking God for all the blessings He has given me, for surely 'tis a mercy to have such kind friends."

"You are very happy, Mrs Smith," said Miss Murray, "because you are thankful. Oh! don't forget that beautiful text, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.'"

"Yes, I am happy; God is very good," said the old woman, as Miss Murray, after a little conversation with her daughter, a comment on the sleeping babe, and a renewed injunction not to disappoint Mrs Hammond of the things, took her way homewards with her young pupil.

CHAPTER II.

“A DAY in the open air will do you a great deal of good, this lovely weather,” said Mrs Hammond, when Nelly made known Clara Fielding’s invitation ; and giving a sketch of the amusements her friend had proposed for the day, she requested her parents to allow her to accept it.

“Certainly, my dear, only do not be late when you return. Most likely Mrs Graham and little blind Charlie will be here.”

“How big is Charlie, mamma?”

“I have not seen him since he was a baby, and then he had large blue eyes—he could see quite well.”

“Will he always be blind?” inquired Miss Murray.

“We hope not. The object of this visit is that Mrs Graham may have Mr Hammond’s opinion of him.”

“Poor child ! what an affliction for him !” said Miss Murray

“What should I do if I were blind?”
said Nelly.

“Miss Murray, will you see that this wild child of mine is dressed tidily, for I must go now to my engagements, and I have a very particular letter to write?”

“Certainly,” said Miss Murray. “Ah! Nelly, you will be happy to-day, for I suppose you must wear your new blue frock.”

Nelly blushed, and answered, she did not care,—just as Miss Murray thought best.

“I shall have such a pleasant day; I wish you were going too.”

“You are very fortunate in having such nice friends. Do you remember what old Mrs Smith said yesterday?”

“Indeed I do,—that I ought to thank God.”

“Yes; and have you done so?”

Again the colour mounted to Nelly’s temples, but she made no reply.

“There are two new things you have not yet thanked God for, *I* think,” said her governess, gently—“the infinite blessing of sight and health—of which poor little Charlie is deprived—and the many kind friends you have.”

“I will, indeed, Miss Murray; but you

see I am not more fortunate than Clara, and she is much happier than I am."

"You don't know that ; at any rate, you are better off than poor Mrs Smith, and if you think of what she said, you will find so many things to be thankful for, that you must be happy."

With her usual gentle thoughtfulness, Miss Murray quitted the little girl's room, and afforded her the opportunity she trusted she would avail herself of—of thanking God for her very many blessings, and praying him to keep her from discontent,—the temptation to which, she was about to meet that day.

For a few minutes Nelly sat quietly looking out of the window on the lawn which lay in front of the house. Many opposite feelings seemed to influence her, for a frown would chase away a smile, and again the frown would vanish at the bidding of some more pleasant feeling, till all indecision being conquered by the still small voice the Lord Jesus grants to all who seek Him, to warn them of evil, to encourage them to good, she sank at the side of her tiny bed, and heartily thanked God for His great mercies to her.

How fresh was her smile, how buoyant

were her spirits, as she bade farewell to her kind mamma, and listened to her friend's grave injunction to beware of the thief that was trying to rob her of her happiness—that great enemy of little and big children, weak girls and strong men—discontent—that brings a veil between us and our merciful Father, and quenches the flame of thankful love.

“I *will* be careful,” said Nelly, as she tripped away to her father, who had promised to drop her at Fairbank on his way to Silverton, where he had many patients ; and Miss Murray had bright hope that her young friend would be successful, as she was convinced she had sought the aid of that Holy Spirit who gives strength in every time of need.

Though Daisy Hill was a pretty home, and had a large, neat garden, it was quite mean and small in comparison with Fairbank, the estate of Mr Fielding, Clara's papa.

Instead of driving to the house, as Mr Hammond had expected, he was able to leave Nelly at the gate, for Clara was waiting at the lodge to receive her, the low pony-carriage being in attendance to convey them home.

“It is quite a treat to have you, Nelly,” said Clara, as she seated herself in the little carriage.

“Do you drive?” inquired Nelly.

“Yes, to be sure I do. Snowdrop is so quiet, papa always lets me do as I like. Shall we go round the grounds?”

“Yes do,” said Nelly, leaning back in the carriage, and looking at her friend, who gaily shook the reins, to announce to her pony that it was time they should start.

“I often wish I were you,” said Clara.

“Why?” inquired Nelly, remembering how often the desire that she were Clara had taken possession of her.

“Your mamma and papa are so indulgent, and you are always with them, and you have Miss Murray.”

“Well,” said Nelly, “I thought you had nothing to wish for.”

“It must be pleasant to have Miss Murray always with you, and your mamma and papa let you be with them, while I scarcely see mine; papa is always either away from home, you know, or else in the study, and mamma has so many visitors.”

“Still, it is so pleasant to drive about when you please, and to have everything you want.”

“ Yes, yes, but you have everything you can want except ponies.”

Nelly laughed at this, and commenced enumerating the many lovely and desirable things she coveted. Still she added, “ I must try and be what Miss Murray says I ought to be, that is, thankful.”

Gaily the girls talked as they passed easily along the smooth road that girded the park. Clara was some years older than Nelly, and they were not by any means alike. Clara was tall, dark, handsome, and haughty, sighing for companionship, and revelling in her luxurious home, tired of herself, and longing for she knew not what. Nelly was rather small, fair, pleasant-looking and happy ; loving her parents sincerely and cordially, and though often discontented, she was acquainted with the deep love of God, as shewn in the gift of the precious Saviour, and therefore in a fair way to obtain that peace and happiness promised to those who love God, and seek the Holy Spirit to enable them worthily to glorify His holy name.

“ I am so often lonely,” said Clara, as they wandered through the great hall. “ Mamma is out to-day, and papa does not come home till Monday. I wonder whether all members of Parliament have as much to do.”

“What a lovely piano!” said Nelly, as they entered the drawing-room.



“Yes, but I wanted a grand piano, and mamma only bought me that one.”

“I wish I had as good a one.”

“You see there is no one near that I can like, so I am bored to death during the holidays. I wish I had a governess.”

Thus spoke Clara all day, shewing Nelly how foolish she had been to envy her friend's grandeur and position, for after all, though she had a pony to ride, and could dress as she pleased, and could do as she chose, she was not half so happy as little

Nelly Hammond in her comfortable, quiet home, enjoying her mamma's loving control, and Miss Murray's instruction.

What a merry day the girls had—they wandered in and out of the shrubberies, visited the greenhouses, watched the fountain, looked at the gold-fish as they peeped out from the sparkling water, drove again in the evening, laughed and talked, and did whatever they fancied ; indeed, spent a happy day.

It was quite dark when Clara parted from her friend at Daisy Hill, a groom having accompanied the young ladies to drive Miss Fielding home.

“ Good-bye ; do come soon again, Nelly.”

“ Yes, good-bye, come and see me soon. I have had a very pleasant day, thank *you* for it, Clara dear. Good-bye.”

Clara nodded as she drove away, and sunk back in the little carriage quite sad and tired. What was it that made her sad ? Not that she had not everything this world could give her to enjoy, *but that she lacked a grateful, thankful heart*, to bless God for all His benefits, to love Him for His infinite mercies, and enjoy the innumerable blessings He had granted, because they came from Him.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Nelly returned from the Hall, she received the intelligence that the expected guests had arrived, that Mrs Graham and her little boy had retired to rest after their long journey, and that she must therefore be very quiet.

“What kind of child is he?” inquired Nelly; “is he pleasant or pretty?”

“Both, miss,” said nurse; “he is small and delicate, but so cheerful and merry, you would never think for a moment that he is blind.”

“Will papa cure him, do you think?”

“I can’t say, I am sure, miss; your papa just looked at him for a minute, but then he went to bed, and I have not heard anything said about him. I hope God will bless him though, for you know, Miss Nelly, that, although your papa is very clever, he can’t do any good, unless the Almighty blesses the means he uses.”

“No, no,” said Nelly, “papa often says so; but I quite want to see the little boy.”

“You must sleep now,” said nurse, as she took the candle and prepared to quit

the apartment, "and to-morrow morning you will no doubt be introduced to him."

"Poor little boy!" said Nelly, as she laid her head on her pillow, "what a dreadful thing it must be to be blind!"

"That it must be," said nurse, "but you know we should not grumble at the will of God;—and really he seems very happy. Good-night, miss."

"Good-night," said Nelly, and, with a prayer on her lips in behalf of the little stranger who had entered her father's house, the little girl fell asleep, and did not awake till a bright sunbeam peeped in at her window, and made a deep blush spread over her cheek from the warmth of its quiet salute.

Quite ashamed of her laziness, Nelly arose, and dressed in haste, and after commending herself to the protection of the Good Shepherd, and adding a new petition in favour of the stranger boy, she quitted her sleeping-room for the snug little parlour, where she usually breakfasted with her parents.

Although she was later than usual, her mamma was not present, and her papa having been summoned by peep of day, to give his assistance to a sick person in the next village, she found herself alone in the presence of the strangers—a calm, pleasant-

looking lady, in deep mourning, and the blind boy, little Charlie.

As the nurse had said, he was a pleasant, delicate-looking child—a bright smile lighted his intelligent face—a lovely bloom flushed his soft, pale cheeks. He was seated in the window beneath the canary, and, as Nelly entered, was talking in a low, merry voice to her pet.

“Sing, Dickie; I want to hear you; I love to hear birds sing—sing, now do sing.”

“Here is Mrs Hammond’s little daughter, Charlie,” said Mrs Graham, rising as she spoke, and extending her hand to Nelly; “this is my little boy, my dear; I do not doubt you have heard something about him.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Nelly, looking **passionately** at the little fellow, who quitted his seat by the window and approached his mother, guided by her voice.

While he was shaking hands with Nelly, the canary again began to sing, and the boy, quite pleased, resumed his place, and raised his eyes as though to look at the songster.

Could they be *sightless* eyes that gazed so intently? Could utter darkness be the lot of that light, merry young face? Could pain have ever trembled in that delicate form—have crushed the bright, free spirit that

seemed so gay and glad? Nelly could scarcely believe the boy was blind, as he sat looking at her pet—that such happiness and contentment could be enjoyed by one deprived of that inestimable blessing—sight.

Mrs Graham was very pleasant, and before many minutes were over, the strangers were her friends, and Nelly was talking gaily with little Charlie, while they awaited the appearance of Mrs Hammond.

How clever Charlie was! you scarce could trace a difference between him and other children of his age, save for the quietness which marked his conduct—the peace which sat upon his brow—the gentleness of his movements. He was rather shy, but before breakfast was over he was acquainted with both Nelly and her mother,—delighted at the idea of visiting the rabbits, and walking in the garden.

“I love all these things,” said the boy, as a young leveret was placed in his arms.

“You don’t seem unhappy,” said Nelly, wonderingly, as the gay laugh of her companion, the merry look, the eager anxiety to enter into all the amusements, attracted her surprise.

“Why should I be?” said Charlie.

“Oh! I can’t say,” answered Nelly, rather abashed at the question.

“Because I am blind, do you mean?” said Charlie. “All the bright things come close to me, and I love them; the birds sing and the flowers bloom, and mamma says I shall soon see them.”

“Shall you?” said Nelly.

“I hope so—I think so—mamma says so,—and if God wills it, I shall.”

“Yes, if God wills it,” said Nelly; “I hope He does.”

“Mamma has asked Him, and I pray every day for it,” said Charlie, “and God answers prayer.”

“Yes,” said Nelly, “but He may not give you sight.”

“So mamma says; but then I have so many, many things, I am much happier than I was.”

“How?” said Nelly; “happier than when you could see?”

“Yes; I did not care for the pretty things, and I did not know Jesus; but now, oh! I am happy—don’t you think I am?”

“Yes, indeed, I do; I can’t think how it is.”

“I have such lots of friends, I quite forget that I am blind; the flowers give me their scent, and the birds sing to me, and then mamma reads to me, and I can see Jesus as much while I am blind, as I could

if I were to see, and I have so very many blessings, I must be happy."

"There is your mamma," said Nelly, "we must go in; I suppose papa has come home."

"Then I shall know soon," said Charlie, and a tremor crept through his slight frame; "if I can see, oh! how happy mamma will be."

"And if not?" said Nelly.

"Well," said Charlie, a smile breaking out again, "I shall have as much pleasure as I have now, and therefore I must be as happy."

Poor Charlie! how he had won Nelly's heart, though she had known him but two hours; she walked up and down by the surgery and study, where the examination was taking place, and then, her heart-beating, and her whole frame unnerved, she retired to her little room, and, within the shade the white dimity curtain of her bed afforded, she besought the loving Saviour to grant sight to the poor blind boy.

Half an hour had elapsed. She quitted her room, and, as she passed along the passage, she heard the soft voice of her little friend consoling his mother. She paused—how her heart trembled—could Charlie be without hope?—she listened.

“Don't grieve, dear mother—you know I am no more unhappy than I was—you know I can read, and I am your own Charlie just the same.”

“You are, indeed, my own dear boy,” sobbed Mrs Graham.

“And I can read—and I can hear the birds sing—and I can remember you quite well,—and,” added Charlie, “you know, mamma, whether I am blind or not, Jesus is mine; and I am happy, mamma, if you will but be so too.”

Quietly Nelly slipped down stairs, so as not to disturb the mother and her boy.

CHAPTER IV.

IRREVOCABLE blindness! few can tell what those words convey, but this was the sentence Mr Hammond, after a careful examination, pronounced as the lot of his interesting little friend.

“I may improve his health,” said the good doctor, (for the boy was delicate, and often suffered much). So Mrs Graham, partly for the pleasure of being with her old friends, and partly in order that, by God’s blessing, her darling might be benefited, remained a visitor at Daisy Hill.

The weight of sorrow added fresh gloom to Mrs Graham’s sad countenance. Another line on her trial-marked brow, but a welcome gleam of joy, a bright ray of consolation accompanied it; “for I must be thankful,” she said, “that things are not worse, that God has mercifully given my darling grace, not only to be resigned, but thankful for the blessings he enjoys.”

For a day or two, Charlie was sadder; he cared less to talk and run about than usual, but he became fond of Nelly and Miss Murray, and often left his mamma’s side to

accompany them in their walks through the village, or in their drives into the town.

“I can read,” said Charlie, one morning ; “mamma taught me long ago. Have you looked at my Bible, Nelly ?”

“No ; I should like to see it, though.”

“I will get it ; may I, mamma ?” said Charlie to Mrs Graham, who was seated at work in the window of the sitting-room.

“It is too heavy, I am afraid, for you to bring down stairs ; ask Mary to fetch it for you.”

Charlie, who knew his way about the house quite well now, quitted the room without guidance, skilfully avoiding all the tables and chairs, and different objects which obstructed his progress, and proceeded to his own room in search of Mary and the big book.

Little Charlie’s good-tempered cheerfulness and affliction had disposed the servants to look kindly on him, and they were always ready to do anything to please or amuse him. Mary was not difficult to find, and in a few minutes accompanied the little boy to the sitting-room, with the heavy Bible in her arms.

“I don’t wonder at your not being able to carry it,” said Nelly, as she seated herself

by the table to look at the much-prized volume.

“It would, indeed, be thick and heavy if all the Bible were there,” said Mrs Graham; “we have another volume; this one has only the psalms.”

“How big it is!” said Nelly; “may I open it, Charlie?”

“Yes, and I will read it to you,” said Charlie, as he turned back the cover and a few leaves.

The book was as large and heavy as most family Bibles—I mean those big Bibles which often have pictures and long notes or explanations at the bottom of the pages, and are printed in large type, and have thick heavy covers.

It was not quite like those Bibles though, for it opened the opposite way, the pages being very broad and short—about ten lines of type in a page, and all the letters were distinct and far apart, pressed out, raised from the paper instead of being inked as our books are. It was bound in speckled calf-skin, and though it had evidently been well taken care of, it shewed plainly that it had been much used.

“What shall I read, mamma?”

“Anything you like; tell Nelly what you like best.”

“Mamma likes this best,” said Charlie, turning to the ninety-second Psalm, “and wishes me to learn it; I don’t know it quite, but I can read it to you if you like.”

Charlie seated himself again, and passing his sensitive fingers over the raised letters, read—

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High,” &c., &c.

“There,” said Mrs Graham, “is it not a blessing that this type was invented? To what numbers of persons it has brought joy and peace; it has been the bow in that cloud which separated them from the rest of mankind.”

“The Bible will be all made in these letters some day,” said Charlie; “won’t that be nice?”

“It must be very expensive,” said Miss Murray.

“Yes; it is very expensive; it takes so much of everything; but there are subscriptions, and, I am sure, if persons knew the comfort it is to the blind, they would willingly give something annually for the gratuitous distribution amongst the poor.

“Some one is coming here,” said Charlie, putting up his hand; “who is it?”

“I can’t see any one,” said Nelly, looking

from the window ; “ I don’t see any one, Charlie.”

Still Charlie listened ; in a minute he said, “ I think I know ; it is Mr Neville ; now, is it not, mamma ? I can almost always tell who it is that comes.”

“ Mr Neville it is,” said Mrs Hammond, opening the window which led into the garden, to admit the visitor. “ I am very glad to see you, Mr Neville.”

The rector, Mr Neville, was well known to Charlie, for he had taken an interest in the boy, and, from their first arrival, had endeavoured, by conversation and little presents to Charlie, to induce him to include him in the circle of his friends.

He had much sorrow himself ; had lost both his children in one week, and his home was desolate and dreary without their little pattering feet, and clear young voices ; and the drawing-room looked quite uncomfortably tidy without Eva’s doll and Percy’s soldiers, or any other indications of their lost darlings’ presence.

Charlie was interested in listening to the tale of how the little ones had been taken away, and he was sorry for Mr Neville ; and his kind wife had accepted invitations

to spend the day at the Rectory with Nelly two or three times. No frown or discontented look lurked in the countenances of the rector or his wife. "Not lost, but gone before," said Mr Neville; "God's will be done. 'Of such is the kingdom of Heaven,' the Lord Jesus said. Don't you think we ought to be pleased, Charlie? thankful, to have had two little lambs of the Good Shepherd's fold given us, even for a while, to care for?"

"I see you can read," said Mr Neville, glancing at the big Bible. "Can you write, Charlie?"

"No, no, it is so difficult."

"Did I shew you a book that was given me by a blind man—all his own writing?"

"No," said Charlie; "how did he do it?"

"Is it really written?" inquired Nelly.

"Beautifully printed; written in printing letters. Come down this afternoon and I will shew it to you."

After some conversation, the rector went away, repeating the invitation for the afternoon.

"That will be a pleasure for you, Charlie, if you can't write," said his mother; "I could not quite see how to manage it

for you. What a comfort it is to have friends!"

"As old Mr Smith said," remarked Miss Murray, "one of the things we must thank God for is, that we have kind, good friends."

GRACE.

Grace is a plant, where'er it grows,
Of pure and heav'nly root;
But fairest in the youngest shows,
And yields the sweetest fruit.

Ye careless ones, O hear betimes
The voice of Sovereign love!
Your youth is stain'd with many crimes,
But mercy reigns above.

For you the public prayer is made,—
Oh, join the public prayer!
For you the secret tear is shed,—
O shed yourselves a tear!

We pray that you may early prove
The Spirit's power to teach:
You cannot be too young to love
That Jesus whom we praise.

CHAPTER V.

THE rectory was no distance from Daisy Hill, not too far for a pleasant walk in the evening. Mrs Graham, Miss Murray, Nelly, and Charlie, all went down there to pay the proposed visit, and learn how the rector's friend had managed to write his book.

Mrs Neville was expecting them, and came to the gate to meet them. She had just returned from her "mothers' meeting," and, as the evening was pleasant, she proposed walking round the pretty churchyard before they entered the house, as Mr Neville had been called from home.

The church was neat, though not remarkably pretty. It had a large porch with a seat on each side, and a desk, where, in olden time a Bible used to be chained, for the use of those who were sufficiently clever and devout to read. Some persons wished it to be altered and modernised, but the rector agreed with the patron that it was best left as it was, reminding those who passed or

entered of the great boon the advancement in education had proved; of the changed times now, when Bibles might be easily got for every home, and of cheap instruction, which enabled almost every one to peruse them.

The turret was covered with ivy, and an old owl had built his nest there. The beadle, or bell-ringer, an aged man, said the great grey owl had seen three generations in succession—he was such a very old fellow.

When Charlie and Nelly had finished talking with the bell-ringer, they passed on to the group by the long white grave, by the side of which Mrs Neville and her friends were standing.

“Of such is the kingdom of heaven,” read Nelly—it was the only phrase on the tablet, the footstone bearing the names and dates.

Mr Neville entered the gate; Charlie again heard his footsteps, and the children went to meet him. Then they adjourned to the rectory, and the clergyman took the young folks into the study.

After looking through some papers, he found the book, and, seating himself in his easy chair, he called Charlie to him that he might examine it.

“What is written here?” inquired the boy.

“A piece of poetry—a kind of hymn; would you like to hear it?”

“Yes,” said Nelly; “I should be ever so glad to hear it.”

“You know when little Eva died? that is some months since.”

“I remember,” said Nelly.

“Well, poor William Dowding wrote this. He often writes hymns and poetry, and he thought I should like to see it, because he was dreaming of my little Eva when he wrote it; so he copied it out here as best he could.”

The book was made of writing paper, but was very broad. It held one verse in a page, and was very regularly and neatly pricked in large printing capitals.

“It took him a long time to do,” said Mr Neville; “but he succeeded, you see, and in a short time you might. Doing it by feeling, he could read all he wrote as he wrote it—for, you see, it is pricked all on one side, which makes the other slightly raised—all the little dots being on one side, just like sticking pins into a pin-cushion.”

“Read it, though,” said Charlie; “I want to hear it. What a funny man to write about Eva!”

“ An angel paused in his flight,
 Enchanted by that lovely sight—
 A babe asleep :
 But soon he nearer gently sped,
 To canopy the pretty head,
 And watch to keep.

“ A rosy blush spread o'er her cheek,
 Her eyes were closed ; she seem'd too meek
 Upward to gaze :
 As over her the angel bent,
 He thought, Ah ! would that I were sent
 Her soul to raise.

“ Why should she tarry here below ?
 This world is full of sin and woe,
 And she, so pure ;
 More fit to dwell above in bliss,
 Than in a world of sin like this,
 So insecure.

“ Oh ! suffer her to come to Thee,
 The angel pray'd ; O Lord, bid me
 Her soul to take :
 The word was given : He spread his wings,
 And bore her to the King of kings,
 For Jesus' sake.

“ The rosy blush had pass'd away,
 And as a lily now she lay,
 So white, so fair ;
 Unsoiled, unruffled by the strife,
 The pain, the anguish of this life
 Of sin and care.

“ And was it awful, stinging Death
 That took away that infant's breath ?
 Nay, it was *Love* :
 The love of Jesus call'd away
 That babe, from earth to realms of day,
 And joys above.”

“ I like to think of angels,” said Charlie.
 “ That angels do watch over us is very

certain," said the rector, "from the beautiful history given by our Lord in the New Testament about the beggar Lazarus and the rich man."

"Well," said Nelly, "may I copy it, Mr Neville; I will prick it out for Charlie."

"Do, do," said Charlie. "May she, Mr Neville?"

"Indeed yes; she may if she likes—only, Nelly, mind you don't press it too hard, or you undo your work by making it all equally flat. Prick it on clear paper, rather thick, with a sharp needle or stiletto—I think Dowding did his with an awl. Mind you do it on a pad of blotting paper, or something smooth, and rather soft, that the lines may be equally raised as you work."

"Was he quite blind?" asked Nelly.

"Yes, quite; he has been blind ever since he was a child; he was placed in an institution or blind asylum to learn a trade, and had been taught shoe-making."

"And to read and write?" said Charlie.

"To read and to sing, and to do many useful things; but his writing was an after accomplishment. He was dreamy and imaginative, and very religious, and used to tell such tales although he was only a shoe-maker."

“Does he live here now?” said Nelly.

“Not far off; I’ll take you to see him some day,” said the rector, as he rose to return to the drawing-room with his young friends.

Mrs Graham was much pleased with the (to her) new idea, as it opened a new door of communication between her and her boy. “You will soon learn the difference of the characters, will you not, Charlie?” she said.

“Yes, and I will write too; for when I go away, mamma, Nelly says she will send me letters.”

Charlie was getting stronger; he had now amusements, and the change seemed to do him good.

Mr Hammond brought him home a young canary, and his delight was to tame it, quite an employment for him and Nelly.

“How warm the sunshine is, I love to feel it,” Charlie would say, stretching out his hands, as though he would grasp the beautiful rays that peeped into the room.

“It is so bright and beautiful,” said Nelly.

“Ah! I must not wish that I could see it,” was the sad response.

“No, no, we must be content my darling; the Lord gave, and the Lord has

taken away; we must add, must we not, blessed be the name of the Lord," said his mamma.

"Yes," said Charlie eagerly, "we do, mamma, don't we?"

Many lessons little blind Charlie taught Nelly, before he quitted Daisy Hill—many blessings she had never noticed before, like sunbeams round her path, brightened all she looked upon.

Earnestly the mother sought to teach her child submission, and effectively she prayed that God would grant him the graces of thankfulness and resignation.

The summer flowers were fading fast, the leaves of the trees were falling, the blades of grass were nightly robed in white, and all nature betokened the approach of autumn, before little Charlie and his mamma returned to their home.

"I shall think of you so often, Nelly, I know you quite well," said Charlie, "and I shall think of Daisy Hill too, for it is my second home."

"I hope it always will be," said Mr Hammond, "I shall ever be happy to have you here, my brave little fellow."

"I shall write presently, and do all kinds of things, and then I will send to you, Nelly."

“Do, and I will write to you.”

“My poor little boy,” said Mrs Graham, with a sigh, as she heard her child speak thus——

“Nay, mamma, don’t sigh, you know I am very happy. Here is Bobby, I hope he won’t forget you, Nelly,” added Charlie, as he took the tiny cage, in which his pet was confined, from his friend’s hand.

In a minute or two, the carriage in which they were to travel to the station, which was nearly four miles off, had started, and Nelly was left alone again with her papa and mamma and Miss Murray.

“I wish I could do something, Miss Murray,” said Nelly, suddenly, one day when they were seated together in the morning room, and lessons were over.

“What is it you wish?” inquired the governess; “are you getting discontented again?”

“No,” said Nelly, laughing, “it is not that.”

“What do you mean, my dear?”

“I was thinking how happy I am, Miss Murray, and I wish I could do something to shew how happy I am.”

“There is a work ready for you.”

“Is there? I wish there were.”

“Yes, as you are so happy, you cannot

do better than try to make others partol-
pate in it."

"How can I? I wish I could."

"Have you forgotten Clara Fielding?"

"What can I do for her?"

"What little Charlie has done for you,—
teach her to value the blessings she has."

"Yes, but besides that, I want to make
others happy, Miss Murray."

"Will not that be making Clara happy?"

"I shall never succeed," said Nelly,
serious thought shading her brow.

"Of yourself you never can, but do you
remember what old Mrs Smith said a long
time ago,—what little Charlie said."

"About loving God? Yes, but Clara is
not at all religious."

"The more reason why you should try
and shew her what a happiness it is to love
God truly and sincerely."

"How can I, Miss Murray? Do tell me
how I can."

"You must be very gentle. Remember
that true love 'vaunteth not itself, is not
puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly,'
does not say, Stand by, for I am holier than
thou; but it leads gently to the Lord Jesus,
and tries to shew how precious His love is,
and how delightful it is to walk in the light
of His Word.

“I shall spend one day with her next week, and I will try then.”

“Do not forget the first step,” said her governess; “prayer is the first round of the ladder. You must ask God to bless her, and give you grace to shew her, not only in words but actions, how good and pleasant a thing it is to be thankful.”

Nelly carefully pondered these words of her governess, and endeavoured to act upon them. “I am so glad little Charlie came,” she often said, and oftener thought. “It was he who shewed me how ungrateful I was, how much happier I should be if I looked at the blessings God gave me, instead of desiring those I have not.”

This is the secret that is wanting to make most young persons happy. Many and many, who, like Nelly, have every blessing this world can afford, are unhappy, because they know not the Giver, and do not appreciate the love that urged the gifts.

It was a difficult task that Nelly had set herself—to convince her young friend Clara that it was only thankfulness that was wanted to make her cup of happiness run over.

“There is Clara, mamma; see how handsome she is,” said Nelly, one afternoon, as she was seated at work with her mamma.

The pretty pony carriage dashed up the drive, and in a moment Clara, quite beautiful from excitement and the exertion of driving, had alighted, and was in the hall.

"I have come to wish you 'good-bye.'"

"Good-bye!" said Nelly. "Where are you going?"

"To London with mamma, to spend the Christmas. Shall I not be happy?"

"I hope so," said Nelly, drawing her friend into the drawing-room to speak to her mamma.

The proposed excursion was spoken of with rapture by Clara, who seemed to expect wonderful delight in her visit. At length she rose to return home.

"A long good-bye, Nelly. I shan't see you till next Midsummer in the holidays."

"Not till the holidays? Oh! Clara, dear!"

"No, I am the most unlucky girl that ever lived; I never have just what I want. I am to go from London to school again."

"Did you not wish it?"

"No; I wanted to see you again, and to have a time with Snowdrop," said Clara, as she stepped into the carriage, and desired Nelly to go into the house out of the cold.

Clara did not look happy as she drove

away, her large dark eyes were sad—so said Nelly when she returned to her mamma.

“And what is the difference between your two friends?” said Mrs Hammond.

“Clara and Charlie?”

“Yes, shall I tell you? The one has so much, she does not know what she wants, and yet has not the gratitude to think of the blessings she enjoys, much less of the Giver. The other has few pleasures, few enjoyments, but the grace of God has opened his heart to receive Jesus, and in Him he has the fulness of all things, love, joy, peace.”

“Clara’s mamma is nothing to her, and Charlie’s mamma is always with him, and so are you and Miss Murray with me.”

“Another reason to be thankful.”

“So it is,” said Nelly, as she seated herself by the fire.

Thus it was that day by day, hour by hour, fresh flowers bloomed in the path of Nelly Hammond, fresh blessings were discerned, and thankfulness drove away discontent.

If any of my young friends are suffering as Nelly Hammond once suffered, from discontent with their station, their position, their health, I would beg them to follow

her example, and pray for that grace which alone can reveal the blessed Saviour, who satisfies the hungry soul, drives discontent away, and urges us to thank God not only for having given the Saviour, but with Him all things richly to enjoy.

JESUS.

A Light, our darken'd steps to guide ;
 A Refuge, where from storms we hide ;
 A Hope, to cheer us midst our gloom ;
 A Portion, for the world to come.

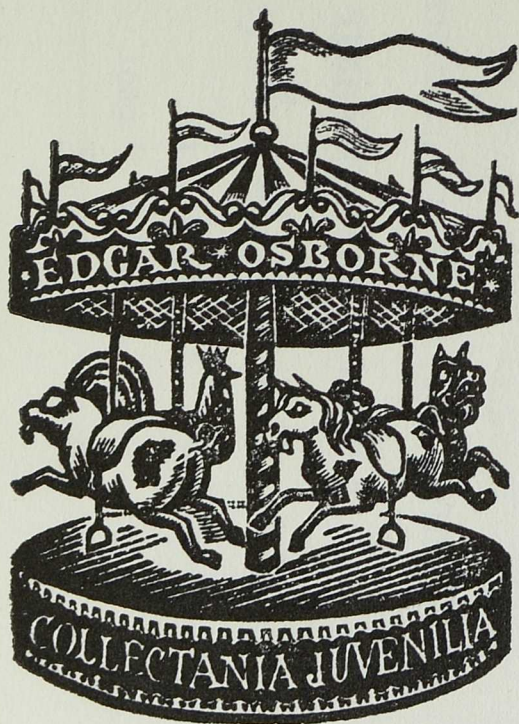
A Strength, to stay the fainting soul ;
 A Balm, to make the sin-sick whole ;
 A Song, to cheer in death's dark vale ;
 Victor, when earth and nature fail.

All this, and more, will Jesus be
 To every soul that bends the knee,
 That bears the cross, that runs the road,
 In truth and love, that leads to God.

Then bear that cross in morning's dawn,
 'Twill cheer thy soul when morning's gone :
 Bear thou that cross in meekness here -
 Fleece of a crown in glory there.

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