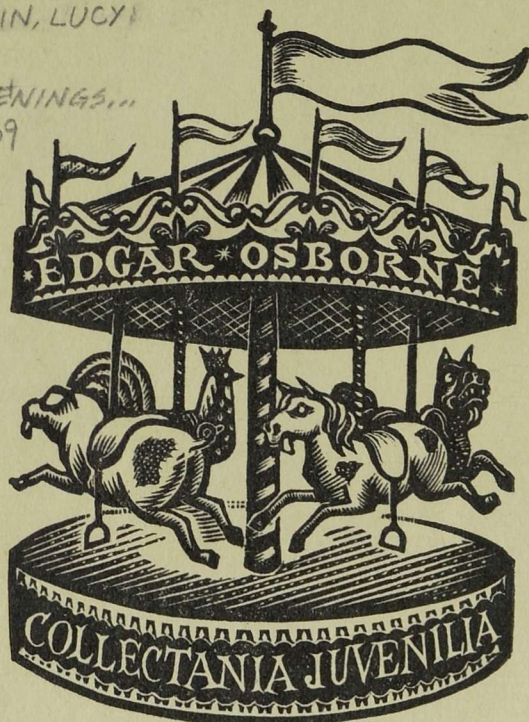


Evenings
at Home
in Words
of One Syllable



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EVENINGS AT HOME

IN WORDS OF

ONE SYLLABLE.

BY

MARY GODOLPHIN,

AUTHOR OF "ROBINSON CRUSOE IN WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE," "THE SWISS
FAMILY ROBINSON IN WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE."

LONDON:
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1869.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

Uniform with this Edition of "Evenings at Home."

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GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.

PREFACE.

—o—

HE great success which has attended the writer's former efforts has induced her to translate another popular work into words of one syllable. It is hoped that, no less than her other books of the same character, the present volume may be of some assistance to those who are interested in the education of the young. The only exception to the rule of using words of one syllable exclusively has been made in the name of King Alfred, which could not be conveniently abbreviated.

EVENINGS AT HOME.

 IN a fine old house, not far from a small town, dwelt Mr. and Mrs. Howe, with their boys and girls, some of whom were taught at home, and some were sent to school.

There were guests too at the house all the year round, who for the most part were near and dear friends, to whom no state was due, and who were made to feel quite at home, and were glad to help Mr. and Mrs. Howe to teach the young folk.

From time to time some of these guests wrote tales in prose and verse

which were put in a box, the key of which was kept by Mrs. Howe, then when the boys and girls came home from school, one of them was sent to the box, and the first thing he found there was read out to all.

This was a source of so much fun, that to please those who were not there, the tales have been set forth in this book.

Night 1.

THE YOUNG MOUSE.

A YOUNG mouse dwelt in a room where sweets were kept; each day she ate some nice things, and few mice are there who have the luck to fare so well. She would have had no one

thing to vex her if it had not been for a cat, who now and then gave her a fright, so as to make her fly post haste to her hole.

One day she ran to her dam in a state of great joy. "O," said she, "the good folk here have built me a house to live in ; I feel sure it is for me, as it is in the store room, and just the right size, and I make no doubt they have built it so well of wood and wire to screen me from that fierce cat I dread so much ; add to this, there is a door to let me in, through which puss could not pass. And they have been so kind as to put in some cheese which smells good ; in short, I should have run in at once to try my new house, but I thought I would tell you first, that you might come too, for it will hold us both."

"My dear child," said the old mouse,

“ I am right glad that you did not go in ; for this house that you speak of is a trap, and you would have come out but to be thrown to the cat, or put to death in some way. Though man has not so fierce a look as a cat, he is as much our foe, and twice as sly.”

Night 2.

THE WASP AND THE BEE.

A WASP met a bee, and said, “ Can you tell me why all men seem to hate me, while they are so fond of you ? They build you huts, with a thatch of straw, and feed you when it is too cold for you to go in search of food. What can all this be for ? I am much the

same to look at ; my wings are as choice as yours ; and, as to my coat, see how bright it is, and my waist how small !”

“ Well,” said the bee, “ all you say is true ; but if I were to do half the harm that you do, men would have no more love for me than they have for you. They own you have a fine shape, and are fair ; but then there’s one thing they can’t put up with ; can you not guess what that is ?”

“ My sting ?”

“ Ah, your sting ! Now, though my coat is plain, and I can boast of none of those gold rings that shine so bright in yours, yet it is true men love me the best, for I harm them not.

“ If I might name one thing more which makes the world like us bees the best, it is this—you do them no good ;

far from it, you rob them, while we go in search of food for them all the live long day.”

Night 3.

THE HORSE AND THE GOOSE.

A GOOSE once got to high words with a horse which fed near him on a heath, and said, “Why should you play off all these airs? I can walk on dry ground as well as you; I have wings with which I can fly; and, when I please, I can sport on ponds and lakes. So I have all that can be found in bird, beast, and fish; while you must needs keep to the dull earth all the days of your life.”

Quoth the horse, with a snort, " You can fly, it is true ; but the lark, as he mounts up in the sky, scorns your dull flight. You can swim ; but can you match the fish ? can you feed in their depths ? And when you walk on your web feet, with your neck thrust out, you raise a laugh from all who see you.

" As for me, I grant you I can move but on the ground ; yet, how fine is my shape, how full of strength my limbs, what a grace is there in the turn of my whole form, and to crown all, see the speed with which I go ! Of a truth, I think it is best to be as I am, than have the range of sea, earth, and air, and be but a goose in all three."

Night 4.

THE YOUNG DOG TRAY.

“WHAT can I do to be of use to the man who feeds me?” said a young dog one day. “I can’t draw a cart, like the horse; nor give him milk, like the cow; nor grow wool to clothe him, like the sheep; nor can I please him by my voice, like the birds; nor be of use to him with my flesh, as the hogs are. What, then, can I do to gain his good will?”

“My child,” said the old dog, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way; do but love him, and prove your love by all those means that lie in your

reach, and you will not fail to please him."

This speech did much to cheer up Tray, and when he next saw the good man, he ran to lick his feet, dance round him, and wag his tail to show his joy; at which the man gave him a pat on the head, and a few kind words, which sent him half out of his wits, so proud did it make him.

On fine days the boys had him out for a walk, when his tricks and bright ways were a source of great fun to them. Tray strove to be of use at home, and would drive off the birds from the seeds, and from the corn when they came to steal the fowls' food; and he would run to bark at pigs that sought to stray in at the yard gate. If the good man took off his coat in the fields to help at the hay, Tray would sit

by and let no one touch it; by these means he came to be thought the best of dogs and was dear to all in the house.

Night 5.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

As Jack Yarn sat by the fire with a group of boys and girls round him, one of them, whose name was Will, said, "Pray tell us some tales of what you have seen in climes far off."

"Well, then," said Jack Yarn, "I was once, just at this time of the year, in a land where it was bleak and cold, and it was as much as the poor folk who dwelt there could do to keep warm. They were clad in skins made soft and smooth by a nice art, and in



clothes made from the coats of great beasts which they strip once a year, and then leave them to go bare.

“ These men dwelt in a sort of cot, which was in part sunk in the ground, and was made of stones, or of earth burnt in the fire ; and so fierce are the storms of wind and rain in that land, that some lay flat slates as close as they can on their roofs, to keep them safe.

“ Their walls had holes to let in the light ; and that they might keep out the cold air and the rain, these were shut in with a sort of clear stone, made with much skill, from sand or flint.

“ As wood was scarce, I know not what they would have done for fires, had they not found out, in the depths of the earth, a strange kind of stone which, when set in the midst of a wood fire, shot forth flame like a torch.”

“Bless me!” said Will, “what an odd stone! I should think it must be what they call fire stone, that shines so bright when we rub it.”

“I don’t think fire stones would burn,” said Jack Yarn, “and those I speak of have a dark hue.

“Well, their food too, was strange; for some of them ate fish that had been hung up in smoke till it was quite dry and hard, and with it they took the roots of plants, or a sort of coarse black cake made of ground seeds. These were the poor folk; the rich had a kind of white cake, on which they laid a coat of grease, that was got from a large beast. This grease was put in most of their food, and when fresh, it was good.

“They would take at their meals the flesh of birds and beasts when they could get it, as well as the leaves of

plants that grow in those parts, some of which they ate quite raw.

One of the things they were fond of was the curd of milk made up in a hard mass; but this had so rank a smell that some could not bear to come near it.

They made a dark drink of the seeds of a kind of grass, which I thought vile the first time I took some, but which in time I got to like much. They have a drink too, which is as hot as fire; I once took a sip by chance, and thought I should have lost my breath; it has been known to kill men, and yet they drink it as fast as they can get it.

It is strange to see these men fill their mouths with smoke, and sniff a kind of dry leaf, ground as fine as dust, up their nose.

"I should think it would choke them," said Will.

“ Well, it made me sneeze to stand by while one of them did it,” said Jack Yarn.

“ I was glad to leave this cold clime, and next I fell in with folk whose home was in a land full of charms; the air was mild, the trees and shrubs bore all kinds of fruits, and there were whole fields full of plants, some with pods that bore seeds which were good for man and beast. Birds sang their sweet notes in the woods and groves; and the men were mild in their speech, and knew much of the arts of life.

“ Some of them were clad in a thin cloth made of a plant which they grow for that use; but the most strange dress was worn by the rich folk; it was of a fine bright stuff, made from the web of grubs. Do but think of the hosts of grubs it must take to make all the stuff I saw worn there!

“One thing struck me much, which was that in some rich men’s homes I saw small wild beasts brought up tame, with sharp teeth and claws, and left to go at large, while no one felt the least fear of them.”

“I am sure I would not go near them,” said Will.

“Well, you might by chance get a bad scratch if you did,” said Jack Yarn.

“The speech of these folk seems harsh at first, but they talk with great ease and mirth. They have too, a strange way when they meet, for let the day be wet or fine, they lay bare their heads.”

“Why, that is like us when we take off our hats,” said Will.

“Ah,” said Anne, “I have found you out! You have told us of our own land all this while.”

“But,” said Will, “we do not burn stones, and eat ground seeds, or wear skins and grub’s webs, or let wild beasts run from room to room.”

“No?” said Jack Yarn. “Pray what are coals but stones, and corn but seeds? Are not wool and fur skins, and silk the web of a grub, are not a cat and a dog small wild beasts brought up tame? So, if you think of all that I have told you, you will find that each of these strange things is well known to us. What I meant my tale to point out was this—that one might tell things of one’s own land which sound quite as strange as those which are told us of climes far off, if we did but clothe them in new names; and that each day of our lives we call a host of things by their names, while we know nought of them *but* by their names.”

Night 6.

S Q U G G.

BLANCHE had a pet to whom she gave the name of Squgg. He had a full brush tail, a large bright eye, ate nuts, and leapt from chair to chair.

At last Blanche lost him; for he ran off to live in a wood which stood on the east side a ridge of hills, and there he spent two or three years in peace. But at length he thought he should like a change. "What!" said he, "must I pass all my life in this one spot, run up and down the same trees, seek nuts to store up, and then doze through long months in a hole?"

"The birds in this wood roam where

their will takes them, and when the cold sets in, they fly off to some far land where the sun shines warm and bright. It is true, I have not wings as they have, but I have a spring in my legs, and a brush to my tail which helps me on, and if I make no use of these, I might as well be a mole. It would not take me long to reach that blue ridge that I see when I mount to the tops of the trees, and which, I make no doubt, is a fine place; for at the close of day, I see the sun throw out its gold beams from it. It can do me no harm at least to try, as I could soon get back did I not like it. I have made up my mind, and I shall start at the first peep of day."

Squigg could get no sleep for the thought of it, and at dawn he set off in high glee.

He sprang from tree to tree, and soon got out of the wood, and came to the wild moors that lay at the foot of the ridge; here he broke his fast on some nuts, and then set off to climb the steep sides of the hills.

This was hard work, and he had to stop more than once to take breath, so that when he set foot on the top of the first cliff it was mid day. Squgg was much struck with the fine view which he saw spread out at the foot of the hill; the spot from whence he had come lay far down at his feet, and he saw with scorn, the poor wood in which he had spent so great a part of his life. He was swift of limb, and it did not take him long to jump right round and spring to the top of a tree—when all his hopes fell to the ground, for just in front of him he saw a high peak which

rose still more steep than that which it had cost him so much toil to mount. In spite of this, he went on once more, but by no means at so brisk a pace.

Squgg was no sage, and could not think how it was that, while he went to meet the sun's rays, he felt it grow more and more cold; for he knew not that such heights are at all times clad in a cap of snow. In less than two hours' time he lost all heart, and thought he must give up the point and go back. But just then clouds drew round the sides of the hills and shut out all the view, and down came such a fall of snow and hail that poor Squgg could not move on, nor could he go back; and now the snow fell so thick that he lost his track, and could not tell which was the way back to that snug

home which it was now his one wish to reach.

The storm went on till night, so all he could do was to creep to a cave in the rock, roll his brush tail round him, and try to get to sleep ; this he did, in spite of the bleak wind which made so shrill a sound through the trees.

When the morn broke, Squgg crept out cold and faint, to peep round the brow of the hill, and find out, if he could, the right track ; but while he did so, a kite who flew by in search of prey, got sight of him, and caught him up in her claws. So poor Squgg was borne off to be food for the young brood. But a great bird of prey, who had seen the kite seize Squgg, flew up to take him from her, and dealt such a stroke with his bill as made her drop her prize and look to her own fate.

Squigg fell through the air, and at last he stuck in the midst of a thick tree, the boughs of which so broke his fall, that though quite out of breath, he was not much hurt.

In a short time he took a look round him, and what was his joy to find that he was in the same tree that held his own nest! “Ah, my dear, snug, safe home!” said he, “if I should be so mad as to leave thee twice, may I meet with worse things than all the fears and all the cares by which I have been struck down since I left thee.”

Night 7.

ON THE SWIFT TRIBE.

“LOOK up, my dear,” said Mr. Hill to his son Frank, “at those birds’ nests in the eaves of the house. Some, you see, are made of no more than a patch of clay stuck on the wall, while some are built up close and tight, with a small hole left for the old birds to come in and go out at. See how fast they fly to and fro, with clay and earth in their beaks, which they lay on their nests, and form them to the right shape with their feet, and then they line them with down to make them soft for their young. Some

too, have flies, gnats, and grubs in their bills, to feed their brood with.

“It is good fun to watch their ways, and to see how fast they skim through the air in chase of their prey! They are up at sun rise, and chirp round the house while you are yet in bed; and all day long are on the wing to get food. As soon as they have caught a few flies they haste to their nests, pop in at the hole, and feed their young ones. I will tell you a tale which shows the great care they take of them.

“A pair once built their nest in a porch; but one of the young ones fell out, and when the old birds found him dead on the stones, they set out at once to get some strong bits of straw, on which they stuck mud, so that it had the look of a small fence all round the hole

in their nest. This was done that the young birds which were left should not share the same fate as the one that was lost.

“On hot days they have been known to fly to and fro in front of their nest, to screen their young ones from the heat of the sun’s rays.”

“How wise of them !” said Will.

“Yes, and they are wise in more ways than one ; for when the cold time of the year draws near, these birds meet in large flocks on high roofs, with the view to make their flight to some warm clime ; for as the flies here die of the frost, they would have no food if they were to stay. They take short trips at first, just to try their strength, and then on some fine calm day, they all set off and wing their way to a far land.”

“ But how do they find their way ? ”
said Frank.

Mr. Hill told him that God gives them a sense of the right road and the right time to leave us ; and they steer their course through the wide air straight to the spot for which they are bound. It is true, storms and winds now and then meet them, and drive the poor birds to and fro till they are quite spent, and are lost in the sea if there is no ship near for them to rest on.

When the spring comes they take a long flight back to us, and now and then a few of them come too soon, and in the frost and snow the poor things starve for want of food or die from the cold ; but when a large flock come, we may be sure the cold has gone.

These birds find their way for miles and miles of sea and land to the same

house where they were bred ; this you can prove if you put a mark on one of them ; and they mend their old nests or build new ones, and then bring up their brood. There are but few men or boys who will knock down their nests, or steal their eggs and young ones ; they come such a long way to dwell with us, that we ought to treat them well.

Night 8.

THE APE, THE DOG, AND THE MOUSE.

A POOR young mouse—Peep by name—was much in want of food, and made bold one day to steal out of her hole and pick up the crumbs

that fell on the floor whilst the good folk ate their meal. But at last she was seen by the guests, when some gave a loud scream; some sent for the cat; some sprang on their chair; some took up what they could find, and flung it at her to crush her; so that the poor young thing flew round the room in fear of her life. At length she had the good luck to gain her hole, where she sat down quite spent with haste and fear.

By and by in came a dog and an ape; the dog sprang on the lap of a young child, and sat there to beg for tit bits from her plate, till he had had as much as he could eat; the ape, on his part, got much praise for all his droll tricks, which he had but to play off with a grin, to win all hearts; and he ate his fill of pears, plums, and nuts.

If chance had led those who sat at meat to look that way, they might have seen Peep at her hole put up her paw and brush off a tear. "Ah!" said she, "I now see that if a mouse, a dog, or an ape would live by the gifts of man, they must pay their court to him."

Night 9.

A FEW DAYS AT A FARM.

"DEAR TOM,—Since school broke up I have been most of the time at a fine old farm, where I stroll through the lanes, or help as well as I can in the work that goes on in the fields. On wet days, or at night, I write down some of the chief things that take place here, and I think in the stir and whirl.

of your town life you may like to know what is done at a farm, so I send you a leaf out of my note book. Pray let me know how you get on in the town, and send all the news to your friend,
“DICK NORTH.”

June the sixth.

Last night we had a great fright. A loud scream was heard from the hen roost, the geese all set up their shrill cry, and the dogs their bark. Ned—the boy who sleeps in the hay loft—was up and in the yard in a trice, where he saw a fox dash off with a chick in his mouth, and all the dogs in full chase; but they could not catch him, and soon came back. The fine white cock was found flat on the ground, red with blood, and his comb torn half off; and the brown hen and three chicks lay dead close to him.



The cock came to, but was wild with fright.

We found that the fox got through the thorn hedge and went round the yard, and then crept up to the hen roost through a hole in the pales.

June the eighth.

The old black hen that was set to hatch the duck's eggs has brought out such a sweet brood of young ducks! And they all ran at once down to the pond, and swam like corks. Let the poor hen cluck and run round her coop as she would, they paid no heed to her calls, but set sail in the wake of the old drake.

By and by a kite was seen to soar round the farm, in hopes to catch one of the young chicks; but the hens spread their wings to guard their broods, and the cocks drew up to

fight the foe ; so the kite was held in check. At length one chick was seen to stray from the rest, when down came the kite with a swoop, and caught it in his claws.

The cries of the young chick, and all the cocks and hens, brought Ralph (who is the cow boy) to their aid, and he took up his gun, and, just as the kite would have flown off with his prey, shot both him and the poor chick, and brought them dead to the ground. We thought it a good plan to nail the dead kite to the wall, to warn off his fierce friends.

June the tenth.

At noon we heard a strange noise close at hand, and saw a lot of folk with tin pans, tongs, and what not, who all made as much noise as they could. We found they came with all

this din from the next farm, to catch a swarm of bees which we saw high up in the air; the bees at length thought fit to fix on our tall pear tree, and they hung in a bunch from one of the boughs.

Steps were brought out, and a man went up the tree with gloves on his hands, a veil on his face, and a cloth on his head; and swept them in the hive, at the wide end of it. But as he came down, some bees that had crept up his gloves, stung him so much that he threw down the hive, and the bees flew out; and in a rage they stung all that stood round, right and left. Off ran the boys and girls with shouts and cries; and the poor man who held the hive had to lie on his face, and crawl to a thick bush to hide.

The end of it was that the bees came

back to the hive, where the queen bee had been all the while, and they took the swarm safe home.

In an hour's time three pigs broke loose, and made sad work with the rows of peas and beans ; then they set off to root up the plants with their snouts, but we soon sent the dog to drive them out, who laid hold of their long ears with his teeth, and made them squeak and run off, as fast as fear and swift feet would take them.

At noon our men set to work to wash the sheep in the mill pond ; there were more than six score of them, and they were shut in the high field to dry. Some of them had a great dread of the pool ; and two of us boys went to hold the horns of an old ram, while a third gave him a push, and at last we got him to the brink, and then, by a

quick jerk, we sent him down in the pool, which made great fun for us all.

Last night, when Joe—who sleeps in a loft at the old end of the house—had been in bed some time, he came down stairs as pale as a ghost, and gave a loud call which put all in the house to the rout.

For some time he could not speak a word, but at length he told us how he had heard a strange noise, and in good sooth he swore he would as lief sit up all night as go back to his room. The maids shook with fear from head to foot, for they knew not what to make of it. At length a kind of groan was heard, and then a sort of hiss. “That’s it!” said Joe, and then drew back to the door, while all grew pale with fright.

By and by a glimpse of light from

the moon shone through a hole in the roof, and a dark form was seen to move. The man from the farm house, who felt sure that he knew the cause of all this stir, made Joe climb up to the hole and thrust his hand in; but he soon drew it back with a loud shout, and just then out flew two large white owls! Of course, all made fine fun of poor Joe.

Night 10.

TOO MUCH CHOICE.

“I THINK I will take a ride,” said a young lord one fine day. “Give me my boots, and let my horse be brought to the door.”

The horse was brought round, and the young lord's spurs put on. “No,”

said he, "I'll have my low chaise and the white mule, and take a drive round the park."

The horse was led back, and the white mule put to; when the young lord thought he should walk in the home fields, and try if the new dog would point. "And yet," said he, "I think I will stay at home and play a game at bowls; but when he had got through half a game he gave it up, for he had a mind to read for a while. So his book was brought, and he got through a page or two, and thought he had done a great deal. Then he sent once more for his horse, and with his man at his heels, rode for a mile or two through the lanes, and came, just as the clock struck twelve, to the Green, where stood the old school house, the door of which flew wide, and out burst a shoal of boys

who ran round the Green in high glee, and fell to their sports. The big boys went to play at leap frog, knock out, hat ball, goff, cat and mouse, blind man's buff, hop scotch, and see saw; and the small ones to trap and ball, hoop, spans and snops, ring taw, hide and seek, whip top, sling, hop step and jump, and such like games. So that all was fun, noise, stir, and mirth.

The young lord rode up to one of the throng, and said, "Well, Jack, how do you like school?"

"O, right well, my lord."

"What, have you a good deal of play?"

"O no! We have but from twelve till two, to play and dine, then one hour for tea."

"What hard work!"

"But we play with all our might

when we do play, and work when we work! Good bye, my lord," said the boy, "it is my turn to go in at trap." And Jack ran off.

The young lord gave a sigh, and said, "I wish I were at school!"

Night 11.

THE RAT WITH A BELL.

IN days long gone by, there dwelt in a large old house such a swarm of rats, that no one thing could be kept safe from them; for they would scale the walls, bore through shelves, and make holes in the floors; so that soap, cheese, lard, and such like things were soon gone. The cats could not get at them;

and they were so sly and well fed, that traps caught but one now and then.

At length one of these rats had a small bell hung round his neck, and was then let loose. Right glad to get free, he ran off in search of his friends; but they heard the bell, and fled, some this way and some that. The rat with the bell thought it a good joke to see their fright; for, let him go where he would, his bell rang, and not a tail of one of them could he see; and to chase his old friends from place to place, and laugh at their fears, was his great sport. He had all the more to feast on too, as there were none to share the spoil, and he ate till he got as fat as a pig.

Yet, with all this, in two or three days he grew dull, and would fain mix with his kith and kin once more. But how was he to get rid of the bell? To

pull and tug with his feet wore the skin off his neck, and it was all in vain. Once more he ran from room to room to seek his friends, but they all kept out of his reach, and at length he was the last rat left in the house, so that he did nought but mope and fret; till he fell in the way of the cat, who ate him.

This tale points out that the man of mark must make up his mind to leave the haunts of his race, and to grieve for the eyes that do not see, for the hearts that will not feel.

Night 12.

THE DOG WHO WENT OUT
TO SUP.

ONE day a man made a great feast, and his dog Dash said to Gyp, who was a great friend of his, "Come and sup with us to night, eight o'clock is the time, but if you are there an hour too soon, you will find there is much to be done." Gyp lay in the sun a while to wink and wait; he thought of fish, flesh, and fowl, tripe and toast, and made a feast in his heart that might grace a bill of fare for a king.

At length the time came, and he set off to the cook's room, where he found all hands hard at work. He went with

a skulk now here and now there, gave a peep at this dish, and smelt at that, and with a wag of the tail, said, "O rare! What a feast have I in store!"

This wag of the tail brought the eyes of the cook on him, and she said, "How now! What's this I spy? A cur; who let him in? A nice sort of guest to be sure: I shall pack you off!" The cook then took hold of poor Gyp, and threw him out at the back door.

"There's oft a slip
'Twixt cup and lip."

Night 13.

THE KID.

ONE bleak day in March a young girl met with a kid, which was left

by his dam on the bare heath. She heard him bleat a long way off, and found he was so stiff with cold that he could not stand, so she took him up in her arms, and ran home, where she got leave to rear the kid for her own.

May, for that was her name, made for her pet a bed of clean straw in a box, and set it by the hearth; then she fed him with warm milk in a plate, all of which the poor young thing drank up, and made haste to lick her hand for more.

By and by the kid gave a jump out of the box, and how glad it made May to see him skip up and down the room! The next thing was to give him a name, and she chose that of Frisk, as he was so gay. In the house he ran by her side and fed out of her hand, so that he was a great pet.

As spring came on, these two would roam in the fields, and May made wreaths and chains to hang round her kid's neck ; but he could not be taught to wear them long, for he took a bite at all he could reach with his mouth. He was so bold too, as to thrust his nose in the meal tub, and to sip the milk that was set by for cream ; so that he now and then got a blow for his tricks, but May was sure to take his part.

Frisk's horns were now seen to bud, he grew bold and fierce, and would butt at the old cock, and fight with the geese for their corn ; but May still stood his friend, and he was tame and good with her.

The farm house in which May dwelt was in a sweet vale, through which ran a clear stream ; and not far off was a high hill, the top of which was so steep

that no man could climb it. When Frisk was left to roam at will, he was fond of the short grass and wild herbs which grew on a heath close by ; but for all that, when May came to see him, he would leap and bound at her call, and go back with her to the farm.

One fine warm day when May had done her work, and had run out to play with her kid, she could not find him, for he did not come ; she went on and on, but could see no trace of her pet ; her heart beat fast, for the thought came to her mind that some dog had caught him, and that he might be dead. “ O my poor Frisk ! my dear Frisk ! ” was her cry, and she wrung her hands with woe.

Still May went on, with “ Frisk ! Frisk ! where are you my kid ? ” till she came to the foot of the steep hill, but no kid was to be seen.

The air was sweet as it blew past the wild thyme, and was full of the songs of birds. Still it was all lost on May, for she took no heed of the songs nor the scents, but sat down on a bank, sad with the weight of her first grief.

All at once she thought she heard a bleat like the well known voice of her Frisk. She sprang up, and just on the edge of a sharp crag May saw her kid peep down ; she did not dare to call or stretch out her hand to him, lest in his haste to come to her, he should leap down and break his neck.

But there was no cause for such a fear, for it was the fresh breeze of the hills that made Frisk so wild, and his bleat was but a cry of joy ; and no thought did he give to his kind May, nor pay the least heed to her call. He sprang from crag to crag, to crop the

wild herbs which grew in the clefts of the rock, and was quite lost in the wild mirth of his new life.

Poor May was loth to leave the spot, and went with slow steps to the farm. She brought her friends back with her to the hill top, and took a slice of bread and some milk, to tempt her pet kid; but he had gone up the rocks, where he had met with a herd of his own kind with whom to sport and play, and had now no eyes nor ears for his friends of the vale. All old ties were cast off by by him, and he had gone forth on a life that was wild and free.

May came home in tears of wrath as well as grief. "The bad kid!" said she, "to leave me thus, so dear as he was to me, and so kind as I was to him! But from the first he was apt to rove."

“Take care, then, May,” said her friends, “how you set your heart on one who is ‘apt to rove.’”

Night 14.

“HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT.”

WHEN Bob had done a hard day's work in the town, he set off to walk home with his can in his hand. “What a feast shall I have!” said he; “there is this piece of beef to stew, and this meal, with a slice of leek and a pinch of salt and spice, will make a dish fit for a prince. Then I have a good brown loaf at home to wind up with, and I long to be at it.”

A noise in the hedge now caught his

ear, and he saw a bird rise from its nest. "Ha!" thought he, "what a nice gift a nest of young birds would be for the squire's son! I'll try if I can take it." So he set his can down in the road and went to seek the prize. Just as he had all but got it, by chance he cast a look down, when he saw a dog with his nose in the can which held the beef; and though Bob made all speed to save it, the dog was too quick for him, and ran off with the meat in his mouth.

"Well," said Bob, "then I must sup off soup, which, by the bye, will not make a bad dish."

So he went on, and came to a small inn by the road side, where a friend of his sat in front of the house. Bob was glad to rest a while on the bench, and drink a glass of beer with him, so he

put the can down by his side. In the mean time a tame rook which was kept at the house found out that there was a bag of meal in the can, and with a sly look flew off with it to his perch.

Bob did not know of his loss till he had gone on his way; and when he went back to search for the bag, it could not of course be found.

“Well,” said he, “my soup will be thin; but I will boil a slice of bread with it, and that will take the place of the meal.”

So on he went once more, till he got to a small stream, which he had to cross by a plank laid down for a bridge. A young girl came up to pass at the same time, and Bob gave her his hand lest she should slip; but as soon as she had gone half way, from fear or sport, she gave a loud cry, and said she should

fall, when Bob, in his haste to catch her with both hands, let his can drop in the stream.

As soon as the young girl was safe on land, he made all speed to fish out his can, but the salt and spice were quite spoilt, and there was no one thing now left but the leeks. "Well," said Bob, "then I must sup this night on roast leek and brown bread, and the next day it will be all the same as if I had had a feast." So he set off home, and sang all the way as he went.

Night 15.

A LIVE DOLL.

It was a bright day in May, and the clouds which had for some weeks shut

out the sun now made way for it ; the sky was clear and the air warm, and the lark sent forth his sweet notes as he sprang up from the long grass.

That gay laugh tells that this change on the face of things is felt by the young child who has just left the house with so light a bound, and with her doll in her arms.

She had not been gone long when she said to her nurse, " I wish that my doll could breathe and speak, and tell me how she loves to see the May, the wild rose, and these hair bells all come in bloom." And she cast her eyes, first on the wax face of her doll as she drew it to her breast, and then on the scene that lay round her.

All things had the air of fresh life in them ; the trees, the grass, the clear streams wore a gay look, and spoke of

warmth and bright days once more. And as for the young lambs of which the green, soft fields were full, they did so skip and sport in the sun, that it made the child's face shine with joy to see them. But when she gave a look at her doll as it lay in her arms, with the paint on its cheeks and its lips stiff and cold, she thought its face had less life in it than all that she saw round her.

This doll had been the young child's friend in the dead months of the year, when the frost and snow had kept her shut up in the house, and to work frocks and hats for it made the time pass; but Rose (for that was her name) had not once been known then to grieve that her doll had no sense or life in it, nor did she think of how small a use were all her care and pains.

But now that she saw that the spring had brought with it such bright signs of life and growth, Rose could but feel that if all the things in the toy shop were laid at her feet, they would not be of so much worth to her as the buds of the trees and the songs of the birds. So in a short time she held this doll, that had been so dear to her, as though it were a toil to drag it with her.

As Rose took up the sweet blue hair bells that peep and smile from the grass, and wove them in a wreath, she felt as if she had that which she could love far more than a doll. "See, here's a wreath," said she to her nurse.

"Ah! of a truth, my dear child, these blue hair bells ought to make us love that great God who, while

He could cause the sun, the moon, and the stars to move in their course, could at the same time deck our path with gems so sweet."

The child felt the truth of what the nurse said, and year by year, when the spring came with its bright face, she could not but call to mind that speech.

But scarce had she left off her praise of the hair bells of which the wreath was made, when their heads were seen to droop and their leaves to grow limp, and all that was so bright, to fade.

"How sad it makes me," said she, "to think we can't keep life in things so choice as these!"

"It would, in good sooth, be sad, my child, if it were not that each nook that sends up the hair bells and 'paints

them blue' is the place where they are meant to bloom, and this but for a short time. But you must learn that all these bright, yet frail, things must needs fade, while things of more worth have more to shield them."

The poor child grew grave when she found it would be of no use to take her wreath home with her, and she was once more left with no one thing to pet and love. But, to her great joy, she saw a man in a field with some nets and birds, one of which was kept in a small cage, that its song might draw to the spot those wild ones whose note the young child had heard with so much glee.

What would Rose give to call one of the man's birds her own, pet it, feed it, and make it lie in her breast when it was cold! So one of the

birds was bought, and the man lent her a cage to take it home in.

She was mad with joy to think it was her own, and what was still more in her thoughts, it was a real, live thing, that would in time know who she was and sing to her.

There sat the bird up at one end of the perch; its head hung down, its wings were rough, and its eyes had a thick film on them. From time to time Rose took a peep and spoke fond words to it; at last she got her nurse to rest a while, and then sat down on a bank to have a good gaze at her new pet.

The birds in the wood all sang out in loud tones, and the young child saw their gay wings flit from bough to bough, or float on the breeze. She spoke once more to her new pet, but



the poor bird did not cheer up; far from it, no sound came from its tongue, no spark shone from its eyes.

In great grief Rose gave a glance up at the face of her nurse. "Yes," said she to the child, "I had no doubt that you would soon find out you were in the wrong. I knew that you would be kind to the bird, but that that would not suit it half so well as a life that is free; add to which, it could not thank you for your pains, nor talk with you."

"No, nor more it could," said the child, and she hung down her head. She then took the door of the cage in her hand to play with it, as she went on to say, "Well, I am sure you are right, for if it would be kind in me to keep the bird shut up in a cage all day, it would be but a poor pet to love!"

As Rose said this, she flung the

cage door back, and the bird put his head out at first with some fear, then shook his wings, gave a dart, and was seen no more. Rose now cast a look at her doll, and said she thought she must needs make it her pet at last, for there was no fear that the doll would fade like the hair bells, or fret like the bird. But this thought did not last long; for, as the nurse and child went through a field where some lambs lay, Rose thought she would try to pet one of them, that she might play with it and love it. Yet once more she found, to her grief, that it would not do; for when she came near one of them to speak a soft word to it, she saw it look up in her face for a while, then bound off, and no art on her part could make it come back to her.

The walk was now just at an end,

and all that the sweet spring morn had done for the young child was to make her feel out of sorts with her poor dumb doll.

At the edge of a fine park stood the cot of a poor man, and here the nurse was to make a call; so they both went in. The cot was neat and clean, and it stood on a piece of ground which was laid out in fruit trees and sweet herbs, and in the midst of it stood a group of boys and girls, from the age of twelve months to that of six years.

“What a dear babe!” said Rose, as she ran up to one of them. It flung out its arms to go to her, and with a laugh put its face up for a kiss.

“O nurse!” said Rose, “nurse, here’s a live doll!” And she threw her own wax doll to the girl, and

took the babe, all life and joy, in her arms.

“Well,” said the nurse, “now you have found a pet as sweet as the spring buds, as gay as the birds, as full of life as the young lambs, and, what is best of all, with a mind like your own.”

As the young child grew up, she learnt to spend her days so as to be of use to those round her, and there was no lack of live dolls to lisp out their thanks for the warm clothes she made for them, and the care she took to make them good boys and girls.

Night 16.

THE HOG WHO SPEAKS HIS MIND.

ONE day all the beasts in a farm yard got to high words as to which stood first in rank. The horse, the ox, the cow, the dog, and the sheep had all said their say, when the hog took up the theme—" 'Tis plain," said he, "that the best price must be set on that beast who is kept for his own sake, and least for the work that may be got out of him. Now, which of you can boast so well of this as I can?"

To the horse he spoke first, "As for you, though you are well fed and have grooms to wait on you, and make you

sleek and clean, yet all this is for the sake of your work; for do I not see you led out at break of day, put in chains, and bound to the shafts of a cart or a plough, and brought back at noon for a short rest, and then set to work on till dusk?

“I may say just the same to the ox, save that he does not work for such good fare.”

To the cow he spoke next—“What can be said of you who are so fond of your grass and your straw? It is your milk that makes you worth your cost, which the maid comes with her pail to draw from you twice a day; and your calf—whose it is by good right—is torn from you to go—we will not ask where.

“You poor meek sheep, who are sent out to shift as you can on the bare hills,

or are shut up in a pen, you pay dear for your keep, for you have to part with your warm coats once a year, and at night starve with the cold.

“As for the dog, who is so proud to be made the friend of man that he will not thank me to count him one of us, just think how all the live long night he has to keep watch, while birds, beasts, and fish are wrapt in soft sleep. In short, you are all poor slaves kept for work; while I, in the same yard, live like a prince, with no more to do than to get fat and lie at my ease in the sun.” Thus spoke the hog, and all the rest were mute.

By and by the frost set in, which made food scarce, and the man of the farm was in great straits to keep his live stock till the spring. “As for the horse and the ox,” said he, “I shall have work

for them ; they must be kept, cost what it may. My cows will not give much milk, it is true ; but they will calve in the spring, and will thrive in the new grass. The sheep must do as they can while there is a blade on the hills ; and should snow come, they must have hay, for I count on their wool to make out my rent with ; but my hog will eat me out of house and home ; so, as he yields nought but flesh, I will kill him at once."

Night 17.

DOGS THAT BARK DO NOT BITE.

RALPH—a boy six years old—took a walk one day, and met two or three



small curs, who flew at him with bark and snarl, as if they would tear his throat. Ralph then came home through a farm yard, where a huge blood hound lay at full length in the sun ; and the poor boy did not like to pass him, for he had so gruff a look ; yet the dog took no heed of him, but let him go by.

Then he came out on a heath where a flock of geese fed, who held out their long necks to hiss and look fierce at him, so that it made him laugh to see them. “The fools !” said he, and he gave one of them a blow with his stick.

Not far off there were a herd of cows and an ox or two, of which Ralph felt in some fear ; but as he went by, they ate the grass and did not raise their heads from the ground.

“It is a good thing,” said Ralph to his friend, “that cows and large dogs

are not so fierce as curs and geese. How is it?"

"Well," said his friend, "the small and weak think they must make a show of their strength, while the strong are calm and mild."

Night 18.

THE ANT'S TOUR.

THERE was once a plot of ground which was laid out in the old style, with high brick walls to close it in, square beds for plants and fruit trees, bee hives, and a broad, well kept walk; and in the midst stood a fish pond, with lawns round it.

At the root of a peach tree there was an ant hill, the works of which spread

so far as to reach one of the beds, near which, deep down in the earth, two ants met.

“Ha, my friend!” said the first, “Is it you? I am glad to see you, for we have all had fears that you were ill, nay, that you were dead; why, where have you been?”

“All round the earth,” said she. “For a long time I had felt a wish to know more of this world of ours; at last I set off to make the tour of it, and I can now boast that I have seen it all.”

“In good truth, strange sights must have met your eye,” said the friend.

“Why, yes, I have seen more than most ants, to be sure; but it has been at the cost of so much toil and risk, that I know not that it was worth the pains.”

“Do, pray, tell me all that you saw.”

“ By all means. I set out one bright day at noon, when the rays of the sun were hot, and the first thing was to cross our own land ; that done, I came on a wide plain, where, as far as the eye could reach, not a green thing was seen, but the hard ground was strewn with huge stones, which gave as much pain to the eye as to the feet.

“ As I strove to toil on I felt the earth shake, and a sound came from it which grew more and more loud. I cast my eyes up, and there I saw, with awe and dread, a vast mass as high as a hill roll up to me on four wheels ; I could not hope to get out of the way of it, so I lay down flat on the ground, as close as I could to a stone, and felt sure of death. When lo ! the great thing went with a bound just where I lay. I fell in a sort of swoon ; but, as luck

would have it, I was not hurt, though the stone I hid by was half sunk in the earth by the crush."

"What a risk you ran!" said the friend.

"Yes, it was a rare chance, to be sure. At last I came to the end of this bare plain, and went on and on, till I got to a wide green track, where a bed of plants with sharp leaves grew so close that it was hard work to make my way through them, and I should have lost my road had I not kept the sun in view all the time.

"As I got through the heart of this place, it gave me a fright to see a large brown beast, with four legs, and spots on his skin, take a long leap. Then I fell in with one of those things which would seem to have life in them, though they have no head, legs, or tail, and

which we meet with, from time to time, down in the mould, and though I know not how, they seem to get on as fast as we do. When I put out my sting he soon drew back to his hole, and so fast that he well nigh took me with him, but I made all haste and went on my way.

“With much toil I got at last to the end of this track, and came to a wide space like that on which we live, in the midst of which grew trees so tall that I could not see their tops. Much in want of food, I set to work to climb up the first I came to, in the hopes that I might find some fruit. But my search was vain ; for though there was no lack of leaves and bloom, there was not a thing off which I could make a meal ; and there would have been an end of me, had I not found some sour peas and beans on the ground, which I ate,

though they were poor food ; but as I did so I met with the worst risk of all. You know too well our foes with plumes that have two wings and two legs ; well, one of these flew up with my bean to the top branch of a tree, and in the mean time I let go my hold, and fell from a vast height to the ground ; but I took no hurt, and went on with my tour.

“ I had to cross more of the wide green tracts which I spoke of, and came, all at once, to the brim of a large, smooth, bright sort of plain that shone as if it had been glass, and the like of which I had not seen in all my days. What it was I could not guess ; but when I took a peep from the edge of it, I saw with joy a strange ant come up to meet me face to face. I ran to greet her and she came to greet me ; when I

drew back, she drew back; when I came up once more, she came too. 'How is this?' said I; 'with me she comes and goes; when I move she moves; and when I stand still she stands still!' But as soon as I found my feet sink in the wet, I thought that this large bright space must needs be full of rain from the sky, which we dread so much when it fills our holes; but as to the ways of the strange ant, to this day I can't so much as guess what she meant.

"While I stood to think how I might best get on with my tour, a slight breeze sprang up, which blew the leaf I stood on off from the land, out in the midst of this cold wet plain.

"At first I felt full of fear, and ran round and round my leaf, in hopes to find some way to get back; but as that

was vain, I made the best of my fate, and at length thought it rare sport to glide on so fast.

“When I stood at the edge of my leaf, what a strange world did I see! New forms of great bulk shot by me, with bright scales of all hues, large heads, round wild eyes, wide mouths, but no legs; yet they went at a great rate, by the help of a kind of small wing which stood out at each side of them.

“It made me quail to see that the large ones ate the small ones by scores, as if it was the aim of their life to do so.

“When I got mid way, a strong wind blew, so as to rock my leaf up and down, first this way, then that. I shook in each limb to think how I should feel if I were in truth thrown

off my leaf to those strange beasts ; but at last I got safe to the far side, and with joy set my feet on dry land once more. I now bent my steps up a green slope which led to a grove of tall plants ; then came more green plains and bare wastes of sand and stone, which brought me at length to the far end of the world.

Here I fell in with a new tribe of our race, whose way of life is much the same as our own. They were so kind as to let me stay in their town for a while, and I went with them to some sweet spots not far off. From time to time a troop of us went up a fruit tree, and as I ate my fill at the heart of a plum, I felt all at once borne off with great speed, till I came to a dark place where I fell, but from which I was soon shot forth, and found that I

lay on a piece of ground which was strewn with wet lime, and which it cost me some pains to get rid of.

At last my new friends gave me a hint that it was time to go, for you know we none of us like to have strange folk to dwell with us, and well it was for me that I took their hint when I did, for I had but just left the place when I heard a loud crash, and felt the ground quake, and I saw their whole town blown up in the air with a cloud of fire and smoke!

I have since heard that these vile deeds were due to our foes with two arms and two legs, who were seen to pour some black grains down the holes which led to the chief rooms, and then they set a match on fire, and threw it in the midst.

On my way back from this far land I

kept to the great wall, which I find goes all round the world, and which I felt sure must at length bring me safe to my home. I met with tribes and tribes of our own race on my way, and one day a sweet smell led some of us to climb up some high posts, on which stood a kind of hut with but one door to it, through which there ran great fat things with wings, ten times as big as we are, and with a large sting. How they made such a grand house, or if it was made for them, I can't tell, but they went in one by one with loads of sweets which I saw them steal from the rose and the pink, and then come out of the hut with none, and this led me to think that a store of good things was laid up there.

But we stood too much in fear of their bold mien and fierce hum to join them; till at length two or three ants,

more bold than the rest, chose a time when the coast was clear, and crept in, but the poor souls were soon thrust through the gate and put to death, and the rest of us fled with all speed.

Twice more I ran the risk of death. One night I and some of my new friends chose to sleep in an old snail shell, which we thought would be snug and safe, but there came on such a storm that I woke with a start, and found the shell full of rain. By good luck I had my head close to the mouth of the shell, so I rose to the top, and made shift to crawl to a dry place, but my poor friends, who were a long way up the shell, were heard of no more.

I had not gone far when I met with a small pit or round hole, which grew less as it went down. As I came to the brink to look in, the edge of it (which

was of fine sand) gave way, and I slid down the pit. Then a beast with a huge pair of horns and long claws, came up from his pit of sand to seize me; I flew back, and would have run up the side of it, but he threw sand in my face, to blind me, and was like to have brought me down; yet, by the help of all my strength, I got out of his reach, and did not cease to run till I was far on my way. I have since learnt that this was the den of a dread foe of our race, though he bears our name, and who, as he can't match us in speed, makes use of this sly trap to catch his prey.

“This was the last of my frights and fears, and, to my great joy, I got back to my home, where I hope to rest in peace.

“I know not what good I have got

by my tour, but I have learnt one thing."

"What is that?" said the friend.

"Why you know we ants are apt to think that this earth, and all that is on it, is made but for our use; now, in my tour round the world, I have seen such vast tracts—not fit for us so much as to tread on—full of birds, beasts, and fish, all of which are so much more than a match for us in size and strength that I can but feel the truth thrust on me that the world was made as much for them as for us.

"In short, in lieu of 'All the world for each,' I now find it is 'Each for all.'"

Night 19.

THE DOG AND HIS KIN.

A WATCH dog, brave and true, whose name was Dash, one day met a wolf and a fox in a wood, and though Dash knew not what fear was, he did not like their looks, and would have gone on his way. But the fox ran to stop him, and said, "Why, sir, you will not, I hope, 'cut' your own kith and kin; Gaunt and I are but too proud to count you as a friend; and you know that at the first, wolves and dogs were all one race; since which, dogs took to live with man, and dwell in towns, while the rest of the race kept to their old mode of life. And as to us, I look on

it we were a branch of the same stock, but went up north where the frost was apt to stunt us, and gave us this warm coat and this brush tail. So, since we are all of one blood, I am sure it is our best plan to be good friends."

The wolf was of the same mind, and Dash, who had a warm heart, was loth to do less than meet them half way ; so all three took their walk side by side. But Dash could not make out why most of the beasts they met cast a sly glance of fear at them, and would fain know the cause of the quick flight of a flock of sheep as they came in view ; but still Dash told his new friends to call on him in his yard, and then took his leave.

When they came, Dash made them quite at home, and gave them part of his meal. As soon as it was dark,

they left him with thanks and kind words.

The next day at dawn news was brought to the farm that a goose and three ducks had been run off with, and that two lambs were found dead in the home field with half their flesh torn off.

Dash was too true to doubt his friends, so he threw no blame on them in this case ; but when next they came to call on him a hen and her brood and a fat sheep had been made off with ; and then Dash had some vague doubts which he could not get rid of.

The wolf and the fox came a third time to call on him, when Dash threw out a hint that the time he should best like to see them was by day light, and when they took their leave he made up his mind to keep a sharp look out.

As he left, the wolf laid hold of one

of some young pigs that lay near a hay rick which stood not far from the yard ; the old sow gave a shrill squeak, which soon brought Dash to the spot, and in spite of a storm of fierce growls from the wolf, he flew at him, and made him loose his prey.

The fox, who had been to prowl round the hen roost, now came up, and swore he had no share in the guilt of the wolf, who, he said, had brought shame on all his kith and kin.

“ Off, vile rogues both ! ” said Dash, “ I know you now too well ! You may be of my blood, but I am sure you are not of my mind, for Dash owns no bond with thieves.”

Night 20.

THE LIFE OF A CAT.

I WAS one of five born in a farm house ; but as soon as I came in the world there was great fear that I should leave it, for a boy on the farm was told to drown us all in the horse pond. While we strove for dear life, a young child ran fast to the side of the pond to beg that she might save one of us, and bring it up for her own, so by and by the boy took hold of me, and brought me out while I had just life in me. I was laid out on the grass, and in course of time I got well.

My poor dam, who was all joy to get one of her young ones back, took me

in her mouth to a dark hole, where she kept me till such time as I could see, and could run by her side. Now that I had come to life once more the child took care of me, in short was much too fond of me, for she gave my sides such a pinch as she took hold of them to move me from place to place that I knew not what to make of it; and once or twice she let me fall, which hurt me a great deal.

But as time went on, I could play and frisk all day long, to the great glee of the child and those round me. Just at this time I had a great fright; for a man brought a strange dog to the house, who had been taught to tease all the cats that he could meet with. My old dam got out of his way with a skulk; but I, who, like a fool, thought I could fight my own fights, must needs stand on

the floor to growl and set up my back. The dog ran at me, and just as I had got my claws out, took me in his mouth to gripe and shake me.

I gave a loud scream, and, by rare luck, the good dame of the farm ran out, yet she could not take me from the dog; but the man of the farm came up and gave him such a blow with a stick, that he could not choose but leave hold of me. For some time I had not strength to stand, but by care I got well.

I now ran at the heels of all who went by, and in this way I one day got shut up in a place where the milk was laid by in large red pans for cream; but at this I did not fret, as I thought I should have a rare feast on the good things I found there.

As I made a jump to a shelf to get at



the cream, I fell back in a large pail of milk, where I might have lost my life had not the maid heard the noise, and come to see what it could be. She took me out of the milk, held me at the pump to clean me, and then gave me a box on the ear; and from that hour I went not near the milk.

In course of time I got to the yard, and puss took me to the barn to teach me to catch mice. As we sat by one of their holes, out came a mouse with a lot of young ones. Puss gave a dart at the old mouse, who ran right and left in great dread and fear. I now thought it was high time for me to do my part; so I sprang at one of the young ones, and caught him.

How proud was I to pat him with my paw, while he shook from head to foot in fear of his life!

But my pride soon met with a check ; for one day, when I saw a large rat I flew at him, and he did not turn tail, but gave me such a bite on the nose that I ran home in fear and great pain, and all red with blood. For some time I had nought to say to rats ; but at length, when I had grown more strong, I had more skill, and knew not what fear was. One day I ate some of the stuff which had been put out to kill the rats with, and I was well nigh dead from it.

Then by chance I set my foot in a rat trap, the teeth of which so cut my paws that, though I was let loose with great care by those who heard my cries, I was lame for some weeks.

Time went on, and I came to my full growth, when, one day as I went to prowl some way from home, the squire's

hounds came that way in the chase ; as soon as they saw me they ran full speed up to me, when, as quick as thought, I flew up a tree. But this was a poor screen from my foes, for the boys threw stones from all sides, so that I got some hard blows, one of which brought me to the ground.

One of the big boys now took me up, and said to the rest what rare sport they could have. This sport was to tie me to a board and launch me on a pond, and set some dogs on to duck and half drown me, and I was to fight them off as well as I could, with a bite on their nose or a scratch on their eyes.

Well, I was bound to the board, and in trim to set sail, when the head man of the school, who took a walk that way, saw there was a great stir and buzz

made by his boys, so he came up and bade them set me free, and gave them all the cane for the base deed which they had in hand.

The next great change in my life was to be sent from the farm. The man of the house had a tame finch, of which he was so fond that he would let it fly out of its cage to be fed from his hand, and it would perch on his head, and sing to him.

One day, when there were but the bird and I in the room, it came down on the ground to pick up the crumbs. When I saw so great a prize in my reach I sprang at it, caught it in my claws, and ate it. Whilst I was in the midst of my meal, who should come in the room but the man who kept the bird! He ran to me with fierce looks, and gave me chase round the room

three times, when at last he caught me. So full of rage was he to lose his pet bird that he would have had me hung, had not the cook, in tears, gone down on her knees to beg for my life. In the end he said he would spare me if I were sent off the farm at once. So they put me in a cart, and sent me to a friend of the cook's, who was on the look out for a cat. Here I spent the rest of my days in peace.

Night 21.

KING KNUT AND THE
WAVES.

(Knut, the King. Gurth and Sweyn pay their court to him.)

Scene—The Sea Shore.

Knut.—Is it true, my friends, as you tell me from time to time, that there is no king so great as I?

Gurth.—Nay, there is none so great, my liege; you are the chief of kings!

Sweyn.—We are all your slaves, we kiss the dust of your feet.

Gurth.—Ay, more than this; fire, earth, air, and sea are your slaves; all

the land from shore to shore does your will, and the sea rolls as you bid it.

Knut.—Does the sea in truth heed me? Will that dread sea, whose wild waves now boil in their rage, hear my words?

Gurth.—Yes, for the sea is yours; it was made but to bear your ships, and to pour the wealth of the whole world at your feet. True, it is fierce to your foes, but it knows you to be its lord.

Knut.—Does the tide flow in?

Sweyn.—Yes, my liege; I did but now see the swell.

Knut.—Bring me a chair then; set it here on the sands.

Gurth.—Where the tide comes up, my good lord?

Knut.—Yes, set it here.

Sweyn (to Gurth).—What can he mean to do?

Gurth (to Sweyn).—Can he be such a fool as to think we speak truth to him ?

Knut.—O dread sea ! Though thy fierce waves war with the wind, thou art my slave ! My lords tell me so. The land on which I sit is mine ; I say, then, to thee, touch it not ; roll back the fierce, proud swell of thy waves, and let not the spray of them wet the sole of my foot ; for lo ! I am thy king !

Sweyn (to Gurth).—I trow the sea will pay slight heed to his words.

Gurth. — See how fast the tide comes in !

Sweyn.—The next wave will reach the chair on which you sit, my liege ; and look, the sea will soon be on us ! (To Gurth) Look ! look ! the waves send their spray up to the king's crown.

Knut.—Well, does the sea heed my voice? If it is my slave, it is a bold one. See how it swells and flings its white foam and spray on my proud head. Fools! Did you think I was the dupe of your base lies? Know there is but One whom the sea will heed; He rules earth and sky; He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords; none but He can say to the sea, "Thus far shalt thou go, and here shall thy proud waves turn." A king is but a man; a man is but a worm. Shall a worm lay claim to the might of the great God, and think to rule the winds and the sea? Take off my crown, for no more will I wear it! And may all kings learn of me to veil their pride; and all men learn from your shame, to speak the truth.

Night 22.

THE OAK.

WHAT a size is this tree! How wide each branch spreads! Pray, sir, what tree is it?

Mr. Vere.—It is an oak—the best tree this land of ours yields. It is grand to the sight, but its use is the best part of it.

Sam.—Tell me, sir, what the use of it is.

Mr. Vere.—Well, see then, in the first place, how rough the bark is. Then look how it grows. Its great arms run in a straight line from the trunk, which gives the whole tree a

sort of round form, and makes it spread far on all sides.

Each branch you see has what we call a crook or twist in it. By these marks you might guess at an oak, though quite bare of leaves. And the leaves, too, are a sure mark to know it by; for there is not a tree that grows on the ground that has leaves like it. They are not round, nor yet are they cut like the teeth of a saw, but have a sort of scoop in them; and they are of a fine deep green. Then, too, there is the fruit.

Sam.—The fruit!

Mr. Vere.—Yes, all kinds of trees and plants have what we may call fruit, though we use that term but for that which is food for man. This, in the oak, is a kind of nut with half of it shut in a cup.

Mark.—Yes, I have made boats of them and set them to swim.

Mr. Vere.—If you were not so big, you might use them for cups to drink out of.

Sam.—Are they good to eat?

Mark.—No, they are not; for I ate one and did not like it at all.

Mr. Vere.—We are told that in days long gone by, men ate them; and, more than this, that they made a great part of their food. Their chief use now is to feed hogs with; and where there are oak woods, large herds of swine are kept, and they eat the nuts for two or three months, and get fat on them. Yet this is but a small part of the use of the oak. What will you say when I tell you that to these trees our land owes the chief part of its fame.

Sam.—How can that be, sir?

Mr. Vere.—They make the walls of wood that keep guard on our isle.

Sam.—Walls of wood ! That's odd. I should think stone walls were much the best, for walls of wood might be set on fire.

Mr. Vere.—True ; but the land we live in is one of great trade, and as the sea is all round it, we must trust to our ships. Nor has it need of stone walls and forts while it has ships to keep off our foes. Now, our ships are the best in the world ; by them we wage war with our foes when they come to our shores, and we go to war with them on shores far off. And all these ships are built of oak.

Mark.—Is oak the sole wood that they use to build ships with ?

Mr. Vere.—Yes, save teak, which is a wood that comes from the East, there

is none to suit so well ; for it is strong and stout, and keeps sound when in the sea, and it bears the blows and shocks of balls from the guns. It does not split nor crack as most woods do, so that a ball can pass through it, and yet not make a large hole or rend it. Have you not heard the old song,

“ Hearts of oak are our ships,
Hearts of oak are our men ” ?

Mark.—No.

Sam.—Is there no use for the oak but to build ships with ?

Mr. Vere.—Oh, yes ; it is made use of when we want a wood for strength. They use it too for doors, and for beams that are laid in walls to make them strong, and floors and stairs are made of it. When you see an old house that was built at a time when there were huge woods of that tree, you will find

that oak is made use of from the floor up to the roof. Chairs, beds, chests, casks, and tubs are made of it; and the last home that a man has need of. What is that, do you think?

Mark.—I don't know.

Sam.—I know what you mean; but why should that be made of such strong wood?

Mr. Vere.—I know not why, save it may be from a weak wish that our poor frames should have care shown them when life has left them and the soul has fled. But I have not yet done with the oak. Have you seen a tan yard?

Mark.—We once went by the one which stands at the north end of the town; but we durst not go far for fear of the great dog.

Mr. Vere.—Has he not a chain in the day time?

Sam.—Yes; but he barks so loud and looks so fierce, that we had fears lest he should break his chain.

Mr. Vere.—Ah! you are not brave. Yet I make no doubt that you came so near as to see the great stacks of bark in the yard.

Mark.—Oh, yes, I saw them.

Mr. Vere.—Those are the bark of the oak, with which they tan the hides.

Sam.—What does the oak do to them?

Mr. Vere.—I will tell you. All parts of the oak have a kind of force which binds all soft things—that is, makes them more close, and tight, and firm. When they have torn the hide from the ox they steep it in lime, so as to get rid of the hair and grease, and then put it to soak in oak bark which is made wet, and this makes the soft hide

stiff, and when dry fit for use. You see how they strip the oaks in the woods, and pile up the bark in heaps.

Mark.—I have seen heaps of bark, but I thought they were put up to be burnt.

Mr. Vere.—I have still one more use of the oak to tell you of, and that is as a dye. The dust that falls from the saw when they cut this wood makes a dye of all sorts of drabs and browns. And it is made use of in ink.

Sam.—Well, as there is so much to be got from oaks, I should think that all rich men who have large parks would plant them out with oaks.

Mr. Vere.—All soils do not suit them, for they have a long tap root, which runs straight down in the earth a great way. Clay suits them best. Then the oak takes so long to grow, that no

man that plants one can hope to see it in its prime, as they are said to live out the life of six men.

Mark.—I think that those who cut down an oak ought to plant one in its room for the good of those who may live when they are dead and gone.

Mr. Vere.—I am quite of your mind.

Night 23.

KING ALFRED THE GREAT.

KING ALFRED.—How sweet the air is! how still and calm this spot! The thick woods fence it from the foe, and the bright stream wends its way in peace. The foul Danes have not yet sought out this wild nook, and I trust that here I may be safe from their

search. Ha! here's a track through the wood; and, if my eyes serve me, I see smoke rise near a break in yon trees; I will trace it, for I starve for want of food and rest.

Scene in front of a small house.

(Hengst comes out; Maud in doors.)

King Alfred.—God save you, good man! Will you give alms to one who is in sore need?

Hengst.—Why, faith, there be no lack of waifs and strays in these days; if we took them all in there would be but a poor meal left for us; but come to my wife, and we will see what can be done. Wife, I say! I am quite spent, for I have hewn wood all the day long.

Maud.—You must just wait for your meal though, till it waits on you. The cakes will take an hour to bake, and the sun is still high; why it is not yet so

low as the old barn. But who comes with you ?

King Alfred.—Good dame, I am in a strange land, and beg for food.

Maud.—“ Good dame,” if you will ; but I love not strange folk, and this land has no cause to love them ; it has gone sore with us all since strange folk set foot on our soil.

King Alfred.—Though this spot is strange to me, I was born in the same land as you, and speak the same tongue.

Hengst.—And do you hate, with all your heart, those base Danes that eat us up and burn our homes and drive off our herds ?

King Alfred.—I do hate them.

Maud.—Root and branch ? (To Hengst) : He does not speak from his heart.

King Alfred.—With all my heart I hate them, root and branch.

Hengst.—Give me thy hand then ; thou art a true man.

King Alfred.—I was with King Alfred in the last fight he fought.

Maud.—With King Alfred ? God bless him !

Hengst.—And where is our good king now ?

King Alfred.—Did you love him, then ?

Hengst.—Yes, as much as a poor man may love a king. I knelt down to pray for him morn and night, and that he might slay those wolves the Danes ; but it was not to be so.

King Alfred.—You could not love Alfred more than I did.

Hengst.—But how is it with him now ?

King Alfred.—He is thought to be dead.

Hengst.—Well, these are sad times ; God help us ! Come, you shall share the brown loaf with us ; I take it you are too sharp set to be nice.

Maud.—Ay, come with us. We could give you no more were you a prince. But hark ye, my good Hengst ; though I am right glad to give food to this man at his need, yet it is but fair he should do what he can to earn it, for he is strong and hale.

Hengst.—Why, that is true. What can you do, friend ?

King Alfred.—I will do my best to help you in all you choose to set me to, for I should be glad to earn the bread which I eat.

Hengst.—Let me see ; can you bind up sticks ?

King Alfred.—I have not learnt the art.

Hengst.—Can you thatch? There is a hole in the roof of the cow house.

King Alfred.—No.

Maud.—Ask him if he can work at the rush?

King Alfred.—I fear not.

Hengst.—Can you stack hay?

King Alfred.—Nay, I know not the way of it.

Hengst.—Why, here's a man for you! And yet he hath a pair of hands like most folk. Wife, can you not find him some work in the house? He might, at least, lay wood on the fire, and rub the chairs.

Maud.—Let him watch these cakes, then; for I must go and milk the cows.

Hengst.—And since we can't sup till

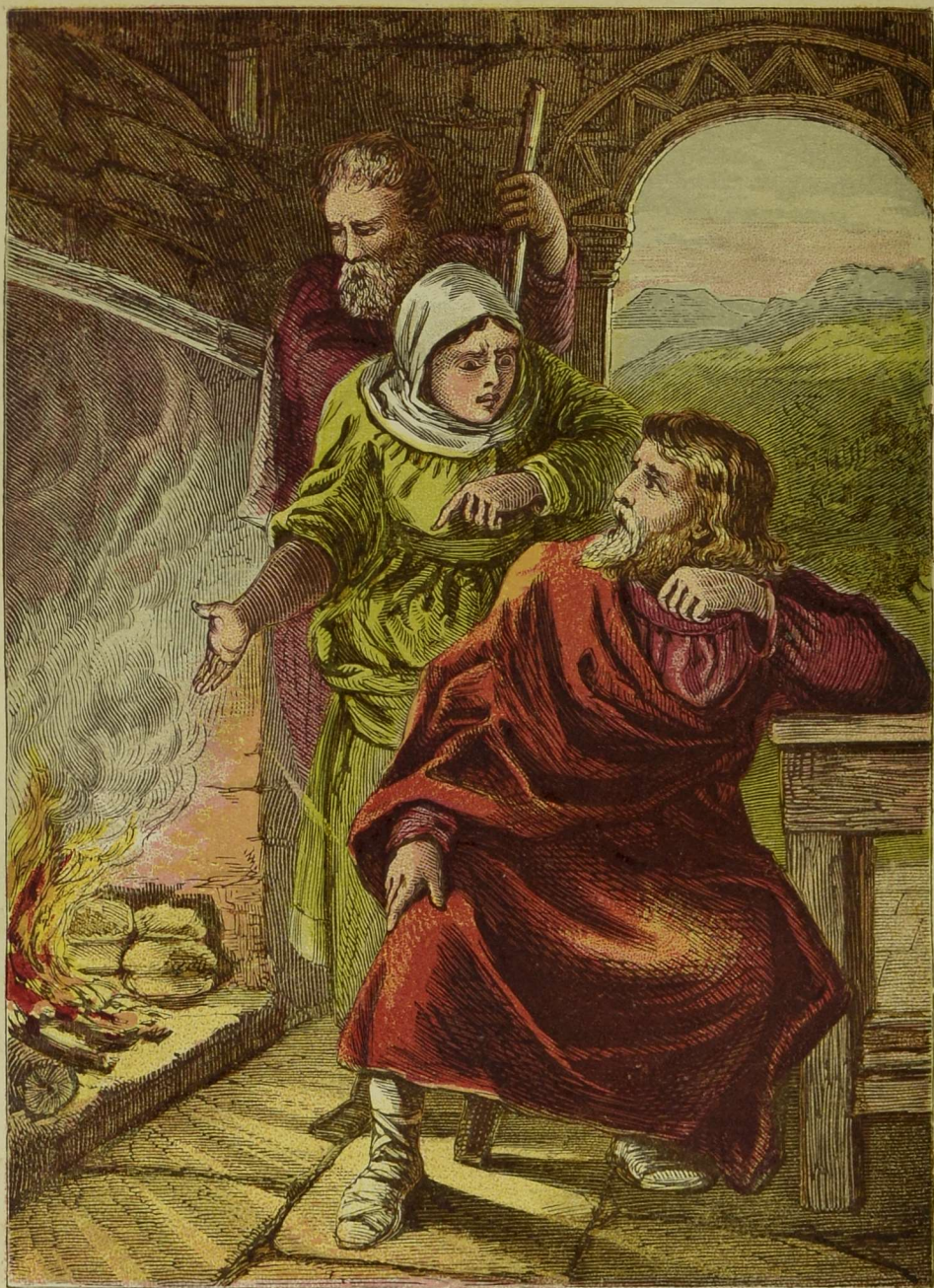
the cakes are done, I will go and stack the wood.

Maud.—Have a care, friend ; do not let the cakes burn, but turn them now and then on the hearth.

King Alfred.—I shall do as you bid me.

(They go out.)

King Alfred.—If all this woe fell on none but me, I could bear it, and hope on. But, land of my birth ! when I think on thee, my heart is wrung with grief ! From Tweed to Thames thy streams run red with blood ; my brave troops are slain ; the poor are cut down on their own hearths ; and I, born to be their guard and shield, strive in vain to save them from these wolves ! Great God ! if I am not fit to save this land from fire and sword, I pray thee, on my knees, to raise up some new king to



take my place, and let him slay the Dane. But here come my hosts.

(Hengst and Maud come in.)

Maud (to the King).—Help me down with the pail, good man. This new milk, with the cakes, will make a good meal. But, lack the day! how they are burnt! Not one turn have they had! You oaf! you dull loon!

King Alfred.—Good dame, I am much to blame; but my mind was full of sad thoughts.

Hengst.—Maud, you must not be so hard on him; it may be he's in love. I know when I was in love with thee—

Maud.—Much you bear that in mind!

Hengst.—Yes, wife, though it is so long since; as I sat by the side of the hearth to watch the—

Maud.—Hold thy tongue, and let us sup.

King Alfred.—How sweet is this new milk, and this brown bread!

Hengst.—Eat thy fill, friend. Where shall we lodge him, Maud?

Maud.—We have but one room, you know; but there is fresh straw in the barn.

King Alfred (turns his face from them).—If I do not lodge like a king, at least I shall lodge as well as my poor troops, who now lie on the bare ground.

Hengst.—What news do I hear? It is the tramp of horse! What can it mean?

King Alfred.—God keep these good folk from harm through my ill fate!

(Hengst comes back, and not far from him Gurth, with his sword drawn.)

Maud.—God help us, a sword!

Hengst.—The Danes! the Danes!
O put us not to the sword! kill us not!

Gurth (kneels).—My liege, my lord,
my king! have I found thee?

King Alfred (in haste to raise Gurth).—My brave Gurth!

Gurth.—I bring you good news, my liege. Your troops that were shut in their forts by the foe, made a bold push, when the Danes were mown down like grass, and their fierce chief now lies dead on the plain.

King Alfred.—My dear land, then, is free, and I am yet her king!

Gurth.—Their well known flag is in our hands, their men are out of heart, and our troops call for King Alfred the Great. There is a scroll which will tell you all, my liege.

Hengst.—Ah, wife! that tongue of thine has done for us.

Maud.—The king will have us hung for it, that's quite sure. But who could have thought that King Alfred the Great would come to our door to beg a meal of us?

Hengst.—Yet, Maud, it was dull of us not to know that he was a king, when he was fit for nought else.

King Alfred.—Bright hope has sprung up out of the depths of gloom. O my friend! am I yet to shine in arms?—fight once more, with my brave troops, and lead them on to win back for my land her hearths and homes?

Gurth.—You will, my liege; for your troops are true as they are bold, and love their king, though he now has to hide in woods and caves, and skulk from hut to hut. But when they hear you live and are in arms, they will flock round you like bees in June.

King Alfred.—My heart yearns to meet them!

(Hengst and Maud fall down at the feet of the King.)

Maud.—My lord, my lord, we knew not that you were our king; and we pray you, on our knees, that the death you put us to may be a mild one.

Hengst.—It was all through my poor wife's tongue, my liege; but blame her not; she meant no harm, poor soul.

King Alfred.—Blame you, good folk! I thank you, from my heart. You gave me food when I was faint, and a roof to shield me; and if I shall sit on the throne once more, my first care will be to prove my thanks. Now I go to fight for you. Come, true Gurth, to arms! to arms! I burn to face the proud Dane once more. And here I

vow I will not sheath my sword till I have brought back peace, and strife and war shall vex my land no more !

Night 24.

THE SWIFT AND THE SNAIL.

ONE damp spring day, a swift saw a snail creep out of his hole. As the swift flew to and fro, so brisk and gay, he said, "Ah! friend snail, how have you been this long while?"

"Thank you," said the snail, "I have slept in my hole as snug as could be, and did not so much as put my head out of my shell in the dead months, till all the frost and snow were gone."

“And I,” said the bird, “who love the cold no more than you do, took my flight to a sweet warm clime, through miles of sea and land, to chase flies and gnats all day long. And here I am back at the call of spring!”

“Bless me,” said the snail, “what a toil! and what is the good of it? Why not take a snug nap like me, as long as the cold lasts?”

“May be I might like to sleep for months,” said the swift, “if I had lost my wings and my eyes, but till such time I would as lief be in my grave as doze out my days as you do; for I count life to be just worth the joy there is in it.”

Night 25.

HALF A CROWN'S WORTH.

HUGH, a boy of twelve years old, was sent to one of the great schools. He was a good sort of boy, but thought it hard that he should not have half a crown a week to spend in play as the rest of the boys had, and he went to his aunt (who had brought him up) to ask if she would let him have it. His aunt did not choose to do so, yet did not like to say so in a way that would hurt him, and she thought that the best thing she could do was to make known to him what sort of a sum half a crown was, and the good use which might be made of it.

“A grown man,” said she, “may be kept in health and fit for work on a pound and a half of good bread a day; well, add to that a quart of milk, and half a crown will keep him nine days in this way. A man, his wife, and a child or two may live on two half crowns a week, with food, house, clothes, and wood for their fire.

“If a man was out of work and his wife ill, the town in which he might live would think half a crown a week quite as much as was fit for them. It would pay the full rent of two cots for the poor to lodge in for a week, and for the same sum you might get half a score of boys and girls taught at a dame's school for the same space of time. All these are ways in which half a crown might be made to do a great deal of good to those round you. Now, I don't grudge

that sum for you to lay out in the way you like best, but I could not have it spent in nuts and tarts, which to my mind is worse than waste."

Night 26.

THE WAY TO WALK THROUGH LIFE.

Do you know what it is to walk through the streets of a great town? What shoals pour in from all parts of it, like streams that meet in the vales! You would think it must be by a mere chance that a man could walk through them; yet all pass on their way, and meet with no stop or hitch. Were each man to go in the same line in which he set out, he could not move more than a

pace or two but he would fall in with some one full in his track. They would soon strike, fall back, brush on once more, block up their own path and that of those who came the same way, and throw the whole street wrong. All this may be put a stop to if each man yields.

He who knows how to walk the streets, glides, keeps his arms close, at times leaves now an inch or two on this side, now on that, so as to pass and let those round him pass. If the stones of the street should be up, or if a horse in a cart should fall, he checks his pace and waits till the way is clear.

Such, too, is the march of life. As we go through the world, scores of things stand in our way from morn till night. Some folk meet us full in the face, and with blind zeal thwart us.

Some stand in our way, let us go in search of what we may; and some keep close on our heels. At the same time we must bear in mind that it would be vain in us to wish that all should think and do just as we do; for we have no more right to this than they have to make us think and do just as they do.

If a slight move is not made by each of us, as we wend our way on the high road of life, it is clear we must all stand still or come to a crush at last. On the whole, we are bound to move on; yield to this man's zeal and that man's whim, as we may find it. He who does this, and at the same time takes good heed to keep God's laws, makes the broad road of life, for those round him, as smooth and free from ruts as his own.

Night 27.

THE YOUNG SAGE.

ONE day Mr. Lee took a ride, and when he got down to pick some herb that grew on a bank, his horse gave him the slip, and went off at a brisk trot. A boy in a field who saw this ran in the road, so as to get in front of the horse, took him by the rein, and held him till Mr. Lee came up. "Thank you, my good lad," said he; "you have caught my horse with much skill. What shall I give you for your pains?"

"I want nought, sir," said the boy.

Mr. Lee.—Don't you? That's right. Few men can say as much. But, pray, what do you do in the fields?

Boy.—I root up weeds, and mind the cows and pigs.

Mr. Lee.—And do you like this sort of work ?

Boy.—Yes, I do, on these fine days.

Mr. Lee.—But don't you want to play ?

Boy.—This is not hard work, it is well nigh as good as play.

Mr. Lee.—Who sets you to work ?

Boy.—My dad, Sir.

Mr. Lee.—Where does he live, my boy ?

Boy.—Close by, just where the trees are, down there.

Mr. Lee.—What is his name ?

Boy.—Joe Miles.

Mr. Lee.—And what is yours ?

Boy.—Tom, Sir.

Mr. Lee.—How old are you ?

Boy.—I shall be eight in June.

Mr. Lee.—How long have you been out in this field?

Boy.—Since it was light, Sir.

Mr. Lee.—And don't you want some food?

Boy.—I shall go home soon, and then I shall get a good meal.

Mr. Lee.—If you had half a crown now, what would you do with it?

Boy.—I don't know, for I have not had so much as that in all my life.

Mr. Lee.—Have you no toys?

Boy.—Toys! What are those?

Mr. Lee.—I mean bats, balls, tops, and kites.

Boy.—No, sir, but our Jack makes foot balls to play with in the cold time of the year, and we set traps for birds, and then I have a pole to leap with, and a pair of stilts to walk through

the dirt with, and I had a hoop, but I broke it.

Mr. Lee.—And is there no one thing you want then?

Boy.—No, I have not much time to play with those I have got, for I ride the horse to field, and bring up the cows, and run to fetch things from the town, and that is as good as play, you know.

Mr. Lee.—Well, but you could buy pears and cakes in the town, I make no doubt, if you had some pence.

Boy.—O! I can get pears at home, and as for cakes, they give me pie now and then, and that is as good.

Mr. Lee.—Would you not like a knife to cut sticks?

Boy.—I have one; here it is, Jack gave it me.

Mr. Lee.—I see your shoes are full of holes.

Boy.—I have a new pair for best.

Mr. Lee.—But these let the wet in.

Boy.—Oh, I don't care for that.

Mr. Lee.—Your hat too is all torn.

Boy.—I have a new one to go to church in, but I would as lief have none at all, for it hurts my head.

Mr. Lee.—What do you do when it rains?

Boy.—If it rains hard I keep close to the hedge till it stops.

Mr. Lee.—What do you do if the time has not come for your meal, and you feel in want of food?

Boy.—Just as well as I can, I work on and don't think of it.

Mr. Lee.—Why my boy, you are quite a sage!

Boy.—Sir?

Mr. Lee.—I say you are quite a young sage, but I am sure you do not know what that means.

Boy.—No, sir, no harm I hope.

Mr. Lee.—No, no! (he laughs.) Well my boy, you do not seem to have a want, so I shall not give you pence to make you find one. But do you go to school?

Boy.—No, sir, but dad says I shall go, when the hay is in.

Mr. Lee.—You will want books then.

Boy.—Yes, the boys all have three or four.

Mr. Lee.—Well then, I will give you them; tell this to your dad, and that I thought you a dear, good lad. So now go back to your sheep.

Boy.—I will, sir. Thank you.

Mr. Lee.—Good bye, Tom.

Boy.—Good bye, sir.

Night 28.

SHOW AND USE; OR, THE
TWO GIFTS.

ONE day Lord Rich was told the news that his fine mare had brought a foal, and just at the same time an ass which he kept for the sake of her milk had a young one. It made him smile to think of the worth of the two young things when set side by side. "As for the foal," said he to the groom, "that you know I mean for a gift to the squire; the young ass you may do as you please with." The groom gave him to poor Job who cut wood.

In due time the foal of the fine mare was sent to Squire Chase, and

he gave him the name of "The Peer;" he was brought up with at least as much care as the Squire's own sons, was kept in a small stall, fed with the best corn and hay, and led out for a run from day to day.

This foal was of a bright bay, with a white star on his head, and his coat was sleek and shone like silk. So fine a colt could not of course be put to work, but was sent to train for the Turf, and had a groom to wait on him; and in all points he bid fair to be a first rate race horse, both in shape and speed.

The Squire, who could not well bear the cost of all this, found the means to pay for it out of cash which he ought to have spent on his son's school bills.

When "The Peer" was two years old he ran a race for the first time, and

came in third. Then he won a piece of plate and a large stake, which was a source of great pride to the Squire, who now thought of but one thing, which was the Turf. He was known to bet high, and make large sums at first, but step by step he grew so rash as to stake all he could raise on one great match, when "The Peer" ran on the wrong side of the post, which threw him out of the race, and the Squire lost all.

In the mean while, Ned (the foal of the ass) was sent to poor Job, who left him to pick up what he could in the lanes and heaths, and when the wind blew cold he was glad to stand on the lee side of Job's small house. As soon as he could bear their weight, the boys got on the colt's back, now and then two of them at a time; and

if he did not go to their mind, a stick or a bunch of furze was put in use. Still he grew up, like the boys and girls, strong and well; and though he was more or less bare in the ribs, his shape was good and his limbs firm.

By and by Job put him to work, and took him to the wood to strap a load of chips on his back, and sent him to the next town, where Tom sold the chips, and then got on Ned's back to ride him home; and he found this a good trade.

Job had a small plot of ground by his house which would not yield much as the soil was so poor, but now he thought of a plan to make it yield by means of Ned, who was to bring back a load of good earth when he came from the town day by day; and thus,



though he did not bring much at once, in the course of a year, the plot of land grew to be rich, and was a source of great gain to the poor man.

Job now felt the worth of his ass, and so took all the more care of him ; he built him a small shed made of boughs and mud, and would let no one use him ill. When Ned had done his day's work, he was left to roam at his own free will, and now and then was made trim, so that by this means his coat grew thick and smooth.

Job took in more and more land from the waste, till at last he had a farm, and kept a horse and a cart, a cow, and two or three pigs. This made him a rich man, and he spoke of Ned as the cause of all his gains ; while the Squire on his part was prone to look on his colt as the source of all his woe, and learnt to

rue the day on which it had been sent to him.

Night 29.

TO FLY AND TO SWIM.

“How I wish I could fly!” said Charles when he saw his doves mount up to the sky. “How fine it would be to soar so high, and to dash through the air with so swift a flight!”

“I doubt not,” said his friend John, “that it gives the doves great joy, but we have our joys as well as they.”

Charles.—But do you think that men could not learn to fly?

John.—I do not think they could,

for they have not the right shape for it.

Charles.—Could they not tie wings on ?

John.—May be they might, but how could you make them move ?

Charles.—Why could not a man move them as well as a bird ?

John.—Of course God could have made wings on man if He had had the will to do so. Now, you who long so much to fly, just think if you have made use of all the gifts which the Great God gave you at your birth. You wish to fly ; but do you know how to swim ?

Charles.—No, not yet.

John.—Your friend Tom I think can swim well.

Charles.—Yes.

John.—Just think then if you two

were in a boat on a deep stream, you would lose your life at once, while Tom would rise like a cork, dart off, and reach the shore with ease. So if the bull in our field were to run at you both, and you both came to the side of a stream, your friend would jump in and cross it, and you would lose your life if you were to try to cross it, yet the bull would toss you if you did not. How much the best off is your friend! Yet you have the means to do the same thing if you did but use them. How is this?

Charles.—Why, he has been taught, and I have not.

John.—True, but the art is soon learnt, and you want no more than your friend can teach you when you two go to bathe. It was said of old, at Rome, that a man must be a fool

who could not read or swim. You have no doubt heard of the man who learnt to swim from a frog which he put in a dish while he lay on the floor, and struck out with his arms and legs as he saw the frog do.

Night 30.

OLD FRIENDS.

HUGH.—This is the spot ; here is the Green on which I was wont to play in the days of my youth ; there are the birds' nests, and that is the pond on which I set my boats made of the shells of nuts. What a crowd of thoughts rush on my mind ! What joy ! what grief ! Yes, there is that

in the place in which a man is born which makes him feel what he feels nowhere else.

Ben.—In your case it must be but the place, for I think you could not have much love for those you knew here, as you have so long left it, and all your friends must have left it too.

Hugh.—It is true there are none here that are of my kith and kin, nor can it be said that I had friends here at all. My own race are dead and gone, and the small sum that they left to be paid for me was spent in a few years' time.

Ben.—Then what had you to live on?

Hugh.—The poor man and his wife in whose charge I was put, were most kind to me, and, poor as they were, they took care of me as if I

had been their own child, and did all they could to have me taught so as to suit the rank of life in which I was born. They put me to a dame's school, gave me clothes to wear, and took care to keep me from vice. I hope I shall not cease to thank them for all that I owe them, and to tell you the truth, it is for this cause that I have come here.

Ben.—How long did you stay with them?

Hugh.—Till I was twelve years old, and at that time I felt a great wish to fight for the land of my birth. And as I heard by chance that a man of my own kin would take me out to sea with him, I left the dear old folk who had brought me up, and set off to the port where the ship lay. As long as I live I shall bear in

mind the kind way they took leave of me. And though it is twelve years or more since I left them, I feel my love for these dear old folk as strong as it was at the first, and I could not rest till I had found them out. (Hugh comes up to the cot.) How my heart beats! That can't be my nurse? Yes, I know her now. But how old and sick she looks!

Ben.—Ten years in her life, it may be with some cares, must of course tell on her looks.

Hugh (goes to the door of the cot).—Good day, good wife. Will you fill our cup from your well?

Ann Beech—Yes, sir, sure I will.

Ben.—Thank you, the day is hot and we shall prize it.

Ann Beech.—Will you please to walk out of the sun? Ours is but a

poor house, but I can find you a seat if you will come in and rest while I fill a jug from the pump.

Hugh.—She is the same good soul I see that she was at the first! Let us go in.

Scene.—The Cot. An old man sits by the hearth.

Ben.—We have made bold to ask your wife to fill our cup from your well.

John Beech.—Sit down, sirs, sit down. I would get up to give you a chair, but I am lame, and all but blind too.

Hugh.—Lame and blind!

John Beech.—Ay sir, old age will come on! And God knows we have but small means to fence with it.

Ben.—What, have you nought but what you get by your work?

John Beech.—We made that do, sir, as long as we could; but now I have no strength for work, and my poor wife, though she can spin, does not earn much, so we have at last come to out door pay from the House.

Hugh.—From the Work House! well I hope they give you all you want.

John Beech.—These are hard times for a man to make half a crown serve him for food for two weeks.

Hugh.—And is that all they give you?

John.—It is, sir, and we are not to have that long, for they say we must go in the House.

(Ann Beech comes in with a jug.)

Ann.—Here, sirs, the jug is clean, if you can drink out of it.

Hugh.—Did you say you must go to the Work House?

Ann Beech.—Yes, sir, it is that which makes my poor man so sad, that we should end our days in the House. We were well off once, I can tell you, that is, if you set our lot then by the side of what it now is; but the great man in this part, whose house is near the church, sent us out of our farm, and since that time we have got more and more low in the purse, sir, and more and more weak, so that we can't hold on long.

John Beech (with sobs).—To die in the Poor House! I can scarce bear the thought of it. Yet God knows best, and we must yield to His will.

Hugh.—But, my good folk, have you no child or friend to help you?

John.—We had some boys, sir, but they are all dead save one who has

gone a long way off and is as poor as we are.

Ben.—Nay, but it must needs be that such good folk as you have some one in the world to help you.

Ann Beech.—No, sir, we know of none save those who live round us, and they think the Work House is the best place for the poor.

Hugh.—Pray were there not some folk of the name of Ford who had a big house near here?

John Beech.—Yes, sir, there were, a long time since, but they are all dead and gone, or else a long way off.

Ann.—The young one was the best child of them all, sir, that I will say, for we brought him up. He was with us till he was twelve years old, and a sweet boy he was. How I did love him! Ay, as well as I did my own young ones.

Hugh.—Where is he now?

John Beech.—Why, sir, he was a fine bold boy, and last war he would go to sea, and fight the French; so off he went, for we could not stop him, and we have not heard a word of him since.

Ann.—Ay, he is dead I am quite sure, else no one thing on earth would have kept him from us. Some nights I have not had a wink of sleep, for I lie and think of him for hours, and feel sure that he is dead and gone, and no more will his dad and mam (as he would call us) see him in this world.

Hugh (to Ben).—I can't hold out long Ben!

Ben (to Hugh).—Nay, wait a bit. (To the old folk.) Well, my friends, as you have been kind to us I will

tell you some news that will please you ; this same Hugh Ford——

Ann.—Yes, that was his name, my own dear Hugh. What of him, sir ? Does he still live ?

Beech.—Let him speak, my dear.

Ben.—Hugh Ford still lives and is well, and there was none in the war more brave than he.

John.—I hope you do not jest with us, sir.

Ben.—I do not.

Ann.—I thank God ; I thank God !
(She folds her hands.)

John.—Oh, if I could but see him !

Hugh (goes up to them).—Well, here he is. Yes, my dear, my best friends, I have come to pay in part the great debt I owe to both of you. (Clasps Ann round the neck to kiss her.)

Ann.—What, this tall man my Hugh! Ay it is, it is; I see it.

John Beech.—Oh, my old blind eyes! but I know his voice now. (Gives his hand, which Hugh grasps.)

Hugh.—My good old man! Oh, that you could see me as well as I do you!

John.—Nay, nay, it is you, and that is all I care for.

Ann.—O day of joy to me! O day of joy!

Hugh.—Did you think I could cast you from my thoughts John, and that when you were out of sight you were out of mind?

John Beech.—Oh, no; I knew you too well for that. But what a long while it is since you left us.

Ann.—Twelve long years come next month.

Hugh.—It is but three weeks past that I set foot on these shores for the first time since I left them.

Ann.—What a great strong man you have grown! But there's the same soft smile on your face.

John Beech.—Oh, if I could but see him. But what is the odds! He is here and I hold him by the hand. Where is his friend who came with him?

Ben.—Here I am, right glad to see you both.

Hugh.—He has been my best friend for some years, and I owe him as much as I owe you.

Ann.—God bless him then for it!

Hugh.—It grieves me to think what a hard life you must have had. But that is all at an end. No Work House now!

John Beech.—Bless you, bless you!

but you must not let us rob you of too much of your pay.

Hugh.—Talk not of that. As long as I have ten pence it is but right that I should give you half. Did you not take me in when there was none to care for me, feed me, clothe me, and treat me as your child? And shall I turn from you and leave you in your old age? No, John, no!

Ann.—Ah, yours was a warm heart when you were a child.

Hugh.—You must leave this poor hut, for it does not so much as keep out the rain, and we must get you a snug cot near.

John Beech.—I pray of you to let me die in this place, where we have spent so large a part of our lives. And there is Dick's house on the Green, if it is not too good for us.

Hugh.—What the white cot to the right? I know it, it is just the thing. You shall move to it this week.

Ann.—Sir, this is far more than we could wish or hope for.

Hugh.—There you shall have a field to keep a cow in, a girl to milk her, and take care of you both, a yard for your pigs and fowls, and a soft bed, with chairs and such like for your house.

John Beech.—Oh, this is too much, too much!

Ann.—What is it that makes me cry so when all this good is come to us?

Hugh.—Who owns that house?

John Beech.—The man who lives next door.

Hugh.—I'll go at once and speak to him. God bless you both once more! (Hugh and his friend leave.)

Night 31.

THE LOST ONE FOUND.

IT was a bright day at the end of June, and the sun which set in a pure sky, lit up the top of the hills, and gave a gold tint to the trees.

A man with a face burnt by the sun, a coat of dust on his shoes, and a bag at his back, stood at the top of a high hill to gaze on the plain at the foot. This was a wild tract, with here and there a small town with a church spire which was seen to peep from the trees that stood round it. A bright stream wound through the plain on the sides of which

were fields of grass, where herds of cows were seen to move with a slow pace to meet the maids with their pails on their heads. On the side of the hill there was a wood which rose from the stream, and through it might be seen a house.

Leigh Thorpe (for that was the name of the man) sank down on one knee, and said, "Dear land of my birth! I have seen sweet spots in climes far off, rocks and lakes which boast of charms that are no where else to be met with, but of all the scenes that have come in my view since I left thee, not one was half so fair as thou! Thou art bright as the dawn of day, soft as the morn of spring. Thy sweet form went with me, let me go which way I would. And now with what joy do I trace all thy

charms! Oh take me back, no more to leave thee!"

As Leigh Thorpe thus spoke he fell on the turf to kiss it, and then rose up and went his way.

When he came down to the plain he saw a group of boys and girls full of mirth whose gay laugh would seem to suit the bright spot they trod on.

"To what place does this path lead?" said he.

"It takes us home."

Thorpe.—And where is that?

"Why to Bourne, that place with the trees, just in front of us. Don't you see it?"

Thorpe's eyes were just then too wet with tears of joy to see at all.

Thorpe.—Yes, I see it now, and pray tell me your name, and yours, and yours?

They all told their names, but two.

“And what is your name, my dear?” said he to a young girl who held the hand of a child, and hung back with shy looks.

“It is Maude Thorpe, and this is Seth.”

“Thorpe!” said the man, and he threw his arms round Maude’s neck and gave her a kiss. Then he caught Seth up in his arms and gave him such a hug that it took the breath out of his lungs, and Seth felt a great wish to be set down, but Thorpe told him he must take him home in his arms.

“And will you tell me where the house is that you live in?” said he.

“Yes, it is just by the pond with the swans on it,” said Maude.

Thorpe.—Will you take me home with you?

“If you please,” said Maude, with a blush.

Thorpe did not say much as they went, but he gave a kiss on the plump red cheeks of Seth at each step.

They came at length to a stile, when Maude said, “This is the way to our house.” The boys and girls ran off, all save the young one, for Thorpe kept tight hold of his hand as he took a wild gaze round him.

When they drew near to the house an old dog ran to meet them. At first he gave a low growl at Thorpe, but soon set to work to lick his hand, and leap on him with great glee. While he gave the old dog a pat on the head he said, “Poor Bruce, so you are still here!”

Maude could not make out how

Bruce and the strange man should be such friends.

At last they came up to the house, which stood in its own park, and round it were the beds of the pink and the rose in full bloom which gave a great charm to it in the eyes of Thorpe, for he had not seen such a sight for years.

They then went up to Mrs. Thorpe, who sat at her work with the grown up girl at her side. She spoke to the young ones as they came in, and when she cast a look at Thorpe she bade him say what he had come there for?

For some time Leigh Thorpe spoke not a word; at length he said with a voice that shook, "Do you not know me?"

"O Leigh, my son, my son!" said Mrs. Thorpe, and she threw her arms round his neck.

The grown up girl now took her turn for a kiss. Young Seth gave a long gaze at him, but spoke not a word.

The news that Leigh had come home soon spread, and by and by in came a tall man with two more of his sons, who fell on Leigh's neck to greet him with joy.

The time had now come for them to dine, and when the meal was brought to an end, Leigh told them of the hard life he had led, and all that he had gone through since he had left home. This took up a long time. Then he spoke of the ship on board which he had made his way back to the dear group round him.

"The 'Flag of Peace' was her name," said he, "and when she shook out her reefs to the wind and left her port, the hearts of her brave crew were

free from care and a smile sat on each cheek; the hat was off, a shout rent the sky, and all was life and joy. But by and by a change came on the scene; fierce winds split the sails to rags, and we heard the storm howl round us, and the waves boil. There was no smile of joy now on our lips, for we thought we could see pale Death ride up to our ship, and that our hour was come.

“But the helm was in the grasp of one of the crew who knew how to steer, and each eye was now seen to turn, as its last hope to him. Well, this man’s skill saves the ship, the keen shafts of Death light not on our crew, but we ride through the storm, and are brought home by the help of God, who rules the sea, and can say to it, in

its wild rage, 'Peace, be still,' and it is calm.

"Life is a sea, and each soul that is born is a frail bark which has to push its way, by the help of God, to the port of Rest and Peace."

THE END.

I wish for May

I wish the wealth

I wish the health

I wish the gold mine

I wish the Heavens

After death What! Can I wish
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