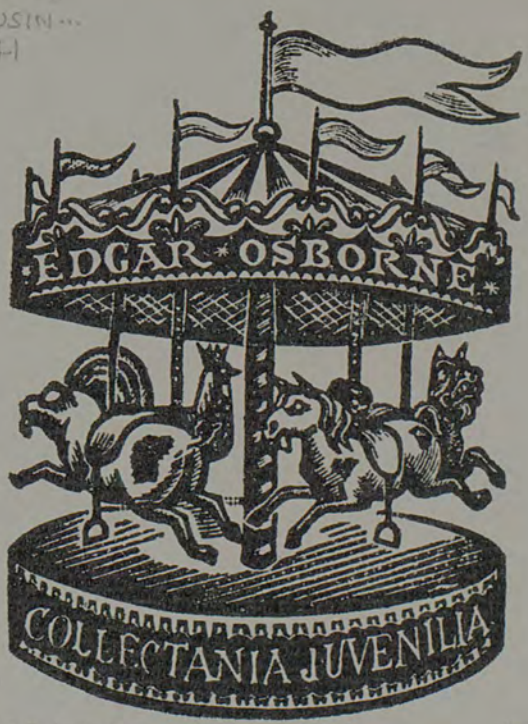
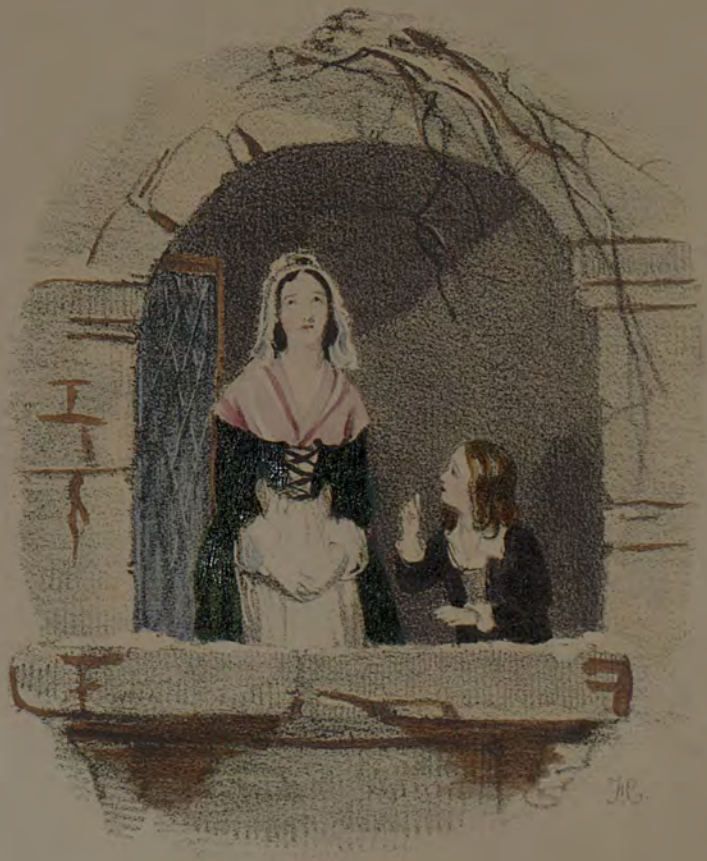
COUSIN NATALIA'S TALES



III

c/co

c/ddd



THE NEW YEAR'S WISH

COUSIN NATALIA'S TALES.

THE LITTLE WOODEN CRUCIFIX.

THE GOLDSMITH.

THE NEW YEAR'S WISH.

BY THE TRANSLATOR OF "LITTLE HENRY."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY MISS FANNY CORBAUX.

LONDON: JOSEPH CUNDALL;
HAILES'S JUVENILE LIBRARY,
12, OLD BOND STREET.
MDCCCXLI.

LONDON:
CLARKE, PRINTERS, SILVER STREET, FALCON SQUARE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Tales are translated from the works of two of the most popular German writers. The first—"The Little Wooden Crucifix"—is from the pen of Christoph Schmidt; "The Goldsmith" and "The New Year's Wish" are the productions of Ernst Von Houwald. It is hoped, that,

with the aid of the pretty illustrations from the pencil of Miss Fanny Corbaux, they will become as well known in England as in their native country.

London,

October, 1841.

THE

Little Wooden Crucifix.

The Little Wooden Crucifix.

INTRODUCTION.

"WHEN will our Cousin Natalia arrive in England?" asked Eliza Goodchild of her grandfather, as she and her sister Mary walked with him beneath the trees in his shrubbery.

"I received a letter this morning," he answered, "telling me that the ship, by which she is expected, anchored yesterday in Yarmouth harbour, and that in all pro-

bability Natalia will be with us to-morrow afternoon."

"How delightful!" cried Mary. "How pleased I shall be to see my German cousin, and hear her talk her own language, and attempt to talk ours — and all about Germany, and what sort of people they are."

"And to hear her sing and play her guitar," added Eliza. "Grandmama says she is quite a proficient in music, and that she has read almost every book in her native language. When we have taught her to speak English, how nice it will be, if she will tell us some of the stories that have not been translated yet."

At that instant grandmama's voice was heard, calling from the porch, asking if her young visitors would like to accompany her

in a walk to Rose Hall. Bidding their grandfather adieu till dinner-time, the sisters readily obeyed the summons, and tripped merrily away.

As the letter had foretold, on the very next afternoon Cousin Natalia arrived. Eliza and Mary had been listening to the sound of every vehicle that had approached since noon-day, and as the noise died away had each time become more and more anxious. When, therefore, a carriage was heard to stop at the door, and a loud knock proclaimed a visitor, they flew out of the parlour, and, without waiting to be made known to their foreign cousin, welcomed her with every expression of pleasure. Grandpapa and grandmama, also, quickly came, and it was as much as Cousin Natalia could do

to find English words enough to reply to all their affectionate enquiries.

With the assistance of her good friends she soon learned to conquer this difficulty. She became a constant companion of her young cousins; and as they took their walk of an evening, many a romantic tale did she tell them of the castles and woods of her native country: — thus passed the autumn. But when winter came, and forbade their wandering along the rural lanes, or upon the meadows by the river's bank, they were glad to sit by the fire-side; and the chief pleasure of the sisters was to hear the voice of their cousin, as, striking her guitar, she sung one of the popular songs of Germany, or in her half-broken English narrated a story from some favourite author.

One evening they were gathered round the fire; their grand-parents were seated one on each side in their own arm-chairs; the day had been bitterly cold; they could hear the snow driving against the windows, and the moaning of the trees as the wind blew among their leafless branches, and the very wretchedness of the night only made them draw still closer to the glowing fire.

"Give us one of your best tales to-night, Natalia," said their grandfather, laying down the book which he had been reading. "We need something to make us cheerful on such an evening as this."

"Do, cousin," said Eliza, "do tell us a long story, and one of the prettiest you can think of."

Cousin Natalia was silent for a few

moments, evidently endeavouring to select the very best tale she knew.

"I will tell you," she said at length, "about the Little Wooden Crucifix."

CHAPTER I.

THE MINSTER.

THE Lady of Lindorf, a rich and noble widow, lived since the death of her husband in retirement in her castle, respected and beloved by the whole neighbourhood on account of her fine understanding, her piety, and her benevolence.

Business of importance once brought her to the capital, where she spent a few weeks. The day before her return, she wished once more to take a walk round the town. It was on a Sunday evening. A lovely afternoon had succeeded to much rain, and the inha-

bitants flocked towards the city gates to enjoy the beautiful fresh air. The lady took the same way, and was on her road to call for a friend to accompany her in her walk, when she felt a sudden wish once again to visit the Minster by which she was then passing. "At this hour," thought she, "I shall behold more conveniently this ancient and marvellous building, without disturbing the devotion of any one, or being myself interrupted in my meditations."

She entered the venerable temple by the principal gate. The vaulted roof and lengthened rows of superb pillars, the high altar in the deep perspective of the choir, the stillness and twilight which reigned in this majestic and consecrated building, filled her mind with wonder, and awakened in her

heart feelings of devotion, and of the presence of the Almighty.

She knelt on the first bench, and remained some time absorbed in prayer; then, she rose, and walking slowly down the principal aisle of the Minster, she sometimes stood still, and thought to herself—"What a memorial of veneration for, and adoration towards, God is this building of past ages! —how powerful, how deeply implanted in the heart of men, must be this feeling, which has enabled them to accomplish so great a work! How many must have joined; what efforts, what costs were required, until, as history tells us, at the end of a century, this building was first completed, and ready to receive those who came in concert to worship their Creator!"

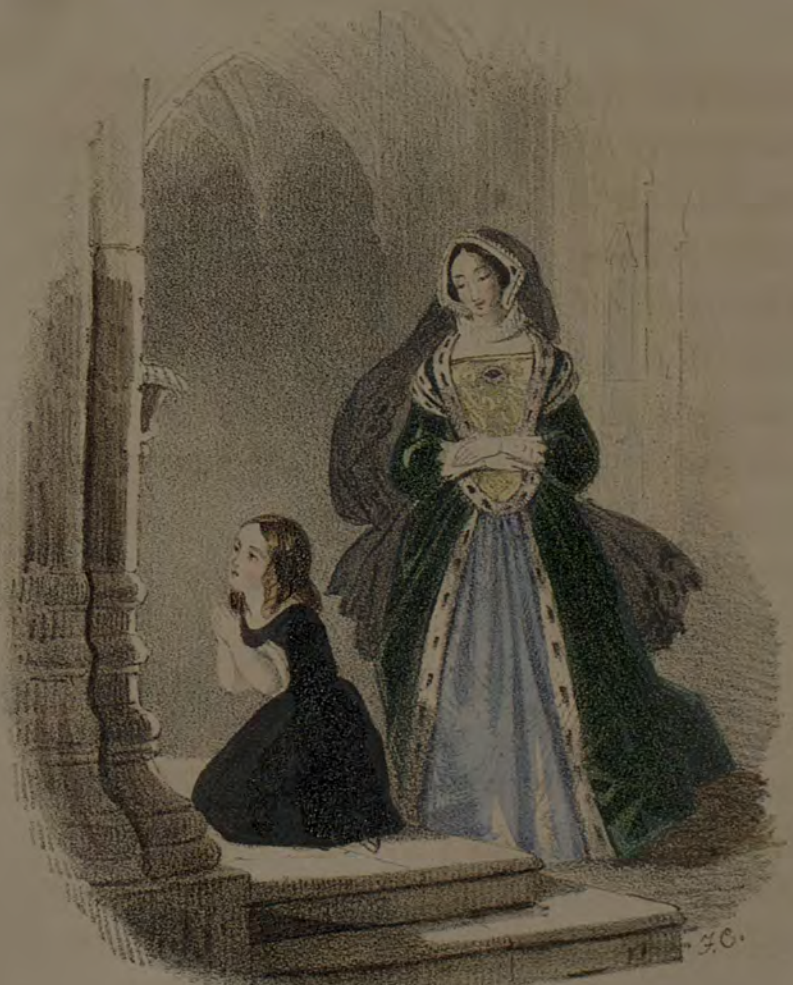
She now examined each remarkable object; visited the adjacent altars and chapels of the great temple, and viewed the old paintings, so full of vigour and expression, representing the Message of the Angel to the Virgin Mary; the Birth and Death of our Saviour — His Resurrection and Ascension; the Holy Apostles and Martyrs; in such lively colours, that they seemed as if present in reality. The principal events of the life of Christ — of the apostles, and of the early church — passed before her imagination, and filled her heart with holy feelings and high resolves.

She stood before the marble monuments, and read the inscriptions which recorded, in old and unusual characters, the memorable deeds of men, and the virtues of women,

who had existed centuries ago. Nowhere did she behold any living being; silence reigned under these vaulted aisles: — she heard nothing but her own footsteps, and the noise of the streets only reached her as if at a great distance.

A shudder, at the thought of her own mortality passed over her, as she found herself wandering, the only living being, amongst the memorials of the dead, and she thought with pain how vain and transitory are all earthly things — recollected her deceased parents, friends, and relatives; and the thought of her own end made her sorrowful. She soon, however, recovered her calm cheerfulness, in the hopes of immortality recorded upon every inscription she read on the monuments around her, and resolved

to bear with patience the evils of life as long as she had to remain upon earth, and to do as much good as was in her power.



CHAPTER II.

THE CHILD AT PRAYER.

As the Lady of Lindorf again entered one of the side chapels of the Minster, she beheld a little girl, of about eight years old, alone, and dressed entirely in black, kneeling upon the steps of the altar. The child prayed so fervently, with folded hands, and eyes fixed upon the altar, that she paid no attention to what was passing by her. Tears were streaming down her blooming cheeks, and her beautiful and innocent countenance had an expression of melancholy resignation and pious fervour beyond description.

The lady felt the sincerest pity and

greatest good-will towards the praying child. She would not disturb her in her devotions; and only when the little girl arose did the lady approach her: — "You are very sorrowful, dear child," she said softly; "why do you thus cry?"

"Alas!" answered the child, and tears flowed afresh down her cheeks; "a year ago this very day I lost my father, and this day last week they buried my mother."

"And for what have you prayed to God?" asked the lady.

"That he would take pity upon me," answered the child; "I have no refuge but him. True, I am still with the people with whom my parents lodged, but I cannot stay there; the master has told me again that I must go to-morrow. I have a few relatives

in the town, and wish very much that one or the other would take charge of me. The good priest, also, who often visited my mother in her illness, and showed her a deal of kindness, told them plainly that it was their duty to do so, but they cannot agree among themselves which of them is to take the care of bringing me up: nor can I complain, for they have many children, and nothing but what they earn by their daily labour."

"Poor child! it is no wonder that you are sorrowful."

"I came here very sorrowful," replied the child; "but God has suddenly removed all grief from my heart. I now feel comforted, I have no further anxiety than to live ever after his will, so that he may take pleasure in me."

The words of that innocent child, and the sincerity that appeared through her tearful eyes, went to the heart of the noble lady. She looked at her with the tenderness of a mother, and said, "I think that God has heard your prayer, dear little one; keep to your resolution — remain ever pious and good, and be comforted, for you shall find help. — Come with me."

The good child looked at the strange lady with astonishment: — "But where?" asked she. "I must not; I must go home."

"I know the good priest who you said had been so kind to your mother," said the lady. "We will go to him, and I will arrange with him how to help you."

Saying this, she took the child by the hand, who now went joyfully with her.

CHAPTER III.

THE WORTHY PRIEST.

THE excellent curate, a man rather advanced in years, and of a venerable aspect, rose from his writing table on the approach of the lady. She told him how she had just become acquainted with the child; and then desired the little one to leave her with the curate, as she wished to speak to him privately.

"My dear sir," said she, when alone with him, "I have a great desire to take this child, and supply to her the place of a mother. My own children all died at a tender age, and my heart tells me that I can

transfer the love I bore them to this little one. Still, I wished to know whether you, who knew the parents as well, would advise me to do so. — What do you say to it? I wish to mark my short course on earth by some benevolent action. Do you think that the benefits I mean to bestow on that child will be well conferred?"

The good man lifted his eyes to heaven, and tears of joy were glistening in them, as, folding his hands, he said, "the holy providence of God be ever praised! You could not, lady, do a greater act of mercy; neither could you easily find a more pious, well-behaved, and intelligent child, than the little Sophy. Both her parents were honest people, and true Christians. They gave this, their only one, a good education, but, alas! they

did not live to finish it. I shall never forget with what grief the dying mother looked upon this dearly beloved child, who was sobbing upon her death bed; with what confidence, nevertheless, she looked towards heaven, and said: 'Thou Father in heaven wilt also be a father on earth, and wilt give my daughter another mother: I know this, and die comforted.' The words of the good parent are now come to pass, and it is obvious that Almighty God has selected you, gracious and worthy lady, to be this child's second mother — for this you were called to this town — for this, God put it in your mind to visit his temple once more before your departure. It is evidently His work; let His holy providence be gratefully acknowledged!"

The worthy curate now called in the poor orphan, and said, "See, Sophy, this kind and devout lady wishes to be thy mother: — this is a great happiness that God bestows upon thee. Wilt thou go with her, and be to her a good daughter?"

"Yes," answered Sophy gladly, and tears of joy prevented her saying more. She thanked her benefactress with her looks, and kissed her hand in silence.

"See, my child," continued the curate, "how God cares for thee: when thy late mother was lying on her death-bed He had already conducted thy second mother here, unknown to us, nor has he allowed her to depart without having first found thee, and adopted thee. Know, in this, His fatherly care; — love with all thy heart the good and

merciful God who so evidently takes care of thee — trust in him, and keep his commandments. Be as good and obedient a child towards this thy new mother which He has given thee, as thou wast towards thy mother which is now dead, and then this kind lady will rejoice in thee, and thou shalt prosper. One thing remember especially, — in thy future life, sorrow and misfortune cannot be kept entirely aloof; but pray then with the same child-like trust with which thou hast prayed in our church; and as God has helped thee now, he will help thee again."

The child's relatives were now summoned, and made no sort of objection to the arrangement; on the contrary, they were well pleased. Their satisfaction was still more increased by the Lady of Lindorf's declaring

she would take Sophy as she was, and leave her mother's little legacy, together with her own clothes, to them and to their children. Sophy only wished for a few religious books as a remembrance of her mother, and these were willingly granted to her.

Early the next morning the Lady of Lindorf departed for her castle, accompanied by Sophy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KIND FOSTER-MOTHER.

The travellers arrived late in the evening; and as they had been expected for some time, supper was quite ready. The lady ate but little herself, and helped Sophy, who sat near her, plentifully; then, conducting her into a neat little apartment: — "this," said she, "is from henceforth your bed-room, and as this is the first time of your sleeping in it, say your evening prayer with particular devotion, that your dwelling may be consecrated to God. Beg of him to be ever with you, and to bless your abode here. Good night."

Sophy was penetrated with the kindess of the lady, and still more with the goodness of God, who had taken such fatherly care of her. With tears of gratitude in her eyes she said her prayer, and fell asleep with still folded hands.

Next morning, Sophy found more cause to be joyful. In the town she had a narrow dwelling, in a dark street; and in her little bed-room neither the sun nor moon shone throughout the year. Here, in the castle, she awoke, beholding the rising sun.

Sophy immediately got up, went to the window, and saw all the glories of Spring. Underneath she beheld gardens, filled with herbs and flowers of every sort and colour. Sloping down the hills were orchards, quite white and red with blossoms; and on the

other side, the eye wandered over pretty villages, rich corn fields, and flowery meadows, crowned by wooded hills. Sophy fell upon her knees, and thanked God for having led her to so beautiful a spot, and to so good a lady.

The latter showed herself towards Sophy a truly kind mother, and Sophy was attached to her with a filial love. She read her wishes in her eyes; and often before her benefactress could speak, she was already on the way to fetch what she needed. She was so gentle, modest, and truthful, that every day increased the Lady of Lindorf's love for her.

Sophy could read very well, and had also begun to write and cipher, and she now went regularly to the school which, through

the benevolence of the noble lady, was very well provided for. She was likewise, with the other children, instructed in religion by the worthy curate of the village, who visited them almost daily, and was a great friend to them. Sophy was not merely the most attentive girl at school, but at home also she endeavoured to follow the good precepts which she heard there.

Out of school Sophy was required to help both in the kitchen and garden as much as her strength allowed, partly that she might learn early these useful occupations, and partly to accustom her from childhood to a life of industry.

When there was nothing particular to be done, she took her knitting or spinning to the room of the gracious lady, whose kind and

cultivated conversation was to her a constant source of delight and instruction. She also taught her to sew and to embroider, and all things necessary for a good housewife. The sensible lady always had her well and becomingly dressed, but most simply — "for," said she, "an humble girl that dresses above her station has great difficulty in settling herself properly in the world; she is too fine for a man of her own rank, and too low for one above her."

Sophy, in her simple garments, grew, under the guidance and superintendence of such an excellent instructress, the image of an innocent and modest girl. She bloomed as a rose; never had a bad thought found room in her heart; and many a young lady, whose beauty had been injured by anger, too

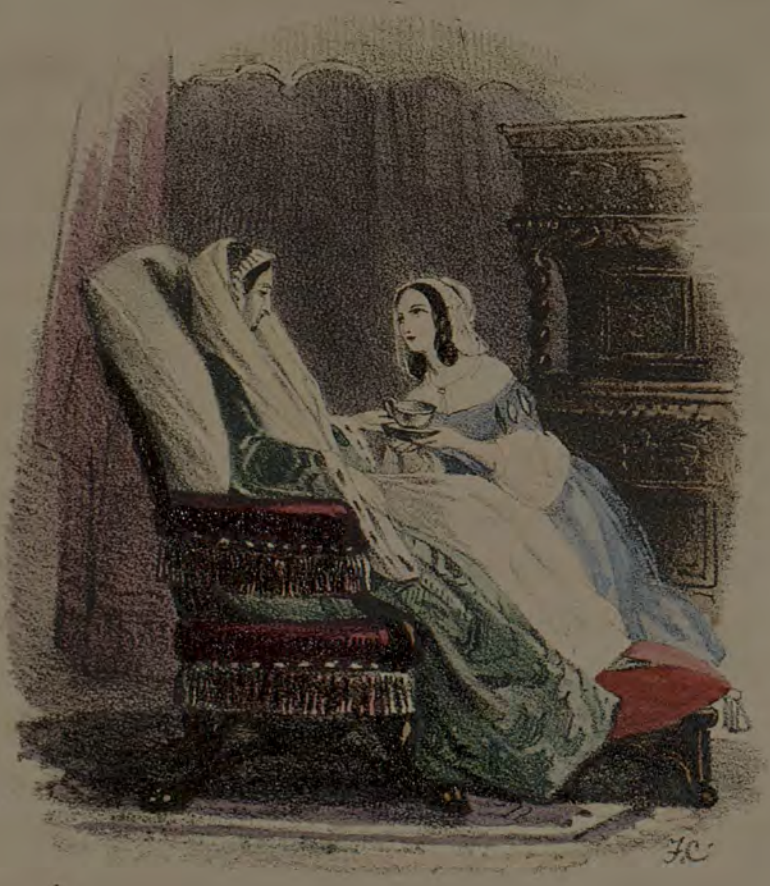
much dancing, or any other bad habit, envied the lovely appearance of the young girl.

CHAPTER V.

THE GRATEFUL CHILD.

Sophy had spent above ten years contentedly and happily with the Lady of Lindorf, when this excellent woman became ill. She now nursed her with a truly filial love, which extended itself to the smallest things. Her voice was ever so low, and her footstep so soft, that the invalid was never disturbed, and wished for no one so much to be near her. Often did Sophy sit through whole nights in an arm-chair in the dark sick room, only lighted by a dim rushlight, and, even if she dropped asleep, the slightest movement of the invalid was enough to wake her

up. The lady was long ill, and Sophy never got tired of waiting upon her. This filial love was duly appreciated, and the Lady of Lindorf blessed the moment when she had taken the young child to live with her. Once, in a very cold winter night, she felt herself worse, and wished for some tea. Sophy, shivering with cold, made some, and brought it to her bed-side. "Dear Sophy," said the lady, giving back the empty cup, "you do a great deal for me — a daughter could do no more. God reward you for it; neither shall I leave you entirely unrecompensed: — I have thought of you in my will. I know that money cannot pay love, yet I shall not show myself ungrateful by omiting to do the little which I can. I have bequeathed you a sum, which you will hear of



THE ATTENTIVE FOSTER DAUGHTER.

after my death, and which will prevent poverty from being any hindrance to your marrying."

Sophy in tears begged she would not speak of death, but the noble lady continued: "Weep not, dear child, death is not so fearful as it appears. It is a severe friend, but yet a friend who frees us from the prison in which we pine, and opens to us the door of a better world. If you, dear Sophy, walk ever in God's ways, ever avoid evil, and do good, you also will find some day, that death is light to meet. There is nothing dreadful in the thought of being freed from sorrows in a happier state of existence."

She wished to say something more, but her voice broke. Soon after, in a low tone,

she added, "Into Thy hands, I commend my spirit." These were her last intelligible words. She was very weak, and closed her eyes. Sophy woke the people in the castle.

The curate was fetched, and he prayed near her. She once opened her eyes, and made a sign that she understood him. One could see that she still joined in prayer. Another hour, and the excellent lady was no more, and Sophy shed tears as bitter as she had done formerly for her departed mother.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LEGACY.

As the Lady of Lindorf was greatly beloved and respected in the whole neighbourhood, and as the poor especially had lost in her their greatest benefactress, a large number of people attended the funeral, and tears were abundantly shed. Many of her noble relatives, also, were there, dressed in deep mourning.

This sad ceremony being ended, the will was opened, and to Sophy were bequeathed two thousand crowns, the interest of which she might immediately enjoy, but the capital

was destined to be her dowry. Besides this, she was to choose, after due deliberation, one of the most costly things amongst the many valuable ones of her late benefactress, to keep as a remembrance of her.

Some of the nephews and nieces of the departed lady had made long faces at the mention of the two thousand crowns. The young ladies, however, were extremely discontented at the prospect of losing one of the best pieces of her ornaments. They addressed Sophy with feigned friendship, saying to her, "see this dress of superb stuff, with the nicest coloured flowers; take it up —look at it well—the flowers are so rare, that no one has ever seen the like, and every bunch is nearly as large as a plate; and how thick the material is! when one merely lets

the dress stand so, upright, without putting it on, it remains standing. It was the wedding dress of our departed aunt, and nothing can be more beautiful. What a wedding dress it will make for you!"

One of the gentlemen, however, an elderly officer, and very upright man, said, "the dress is not in the least suited to Sophy; do not talk such silly stuff to her; besides, you have nothing whatever to say in the matter. Let her choose for herself."

Upon this the young ladies made a great outcry, called him ill-bred, and gave themselves every possible trouble to force upon Sophy sometimes one piece, sometimes another, of small value, but with exaggerated praises of its worth.

Sophy was almost deafened with so

much talking, and seemed undecided as to what she should choose. At last, the honest professional man who had opened the will, said, "Sophy is a poor orphan, and in virtue of my office I shall take her under my protection. There are here objects of great worth, of gold and precious stones; I know for certain, and the will also plainly indicates it, that the lady had the intention to leave Sophy something of value, which, in case of need, might be a resource to her: for this reason it is wisely said in the will, that Sophy should well consider of it, and not be hurried, therefore I wish her to take time, and to consult sensible friends; and to-morrow she shall decide upon what she wishes to have, when I shall desire it to be delivered to her." Thereupon they all separated;

some of them grumbling, and much discontented.

And now there seemed to be great contentions in store. The cook advised Sophy to choose the ring with the large diamond, or the string of pearls, all of which were real, and valuable. The old gardener was of opinion that his mistress's beautiful little miniature, set in gold and brilliants, was the keep-sake best suited to Sophy. The strange servants maintained that their masters and mistresses would never permit Sophy to choose any thing that could not be worn by any one of her station, for it could never, they said, have been their aunt's meaning to bequeath to her any thing of the kind.

The next morning all had assembled, and the professional gentleman had caused sundry

valuable things, such as gold hair pins, and ear-rings, with precious stones, chains, clasps, the diamond ring, pearls, and the portrait, &c., to be laid out upon a table. Sophy was now to choose. Most of the relatives stood there, as if armed for a fray, and a few young ladies especially threw most threatening looks upon her.

But Sophy said, "honoured ladies, it is of no importance to me to obtain a keep-sake of value. The most insignificant object is of great worth to me, coming from so good a lady.; besides, my kind benefactress has done sufficiently for me by leaving me a sum which I have not deserved. As I am to choose freely, however, I beg to have the little wooden cross which she always wore round her neck, even on the day when she

died, and which was bedewed with her tears. This is to me the dearest keep-sake, and will remind me of her last injunctions, delivered to me with her already pallid lips. If I follow these good admonitions, then I shall be easily enabled to do without gold and jewels, in the belief that there are better things than worldly possessions; and the blessing of the departed lady will rest upon me."

Sophy's request was received with great approbation by all the relations, and they praised her modest choice much, although they laughed at it in their heart. The cook, however, said, in going out, "you are a stupid thing not to have chosen something better. Did you not see me making signs to you, and pointing to the ring and pearls.

The old crucifix you might have taken, and nobody would either have minded it, or asked after it; you are not wise."

But the old gardener said, "God bless you, my child — you are a good, pious, and grateful soul. There will be more blessing in the wooden crucifix, than in gold and silver; it will bring you more comfort in the hour of need, and perhaps in that of death, than jewels and pearls. Think of my words."

Sophy kept the little crucifix in her chest, and it was the most precious thing to her that it contained. The consciousness of having been satisfied with little, for the love of peace gave her the greatest satisfaction. The selfish young ladies, on the contrary, had the greatest contentions among themselves respecting the division of the legacy,

and derived from it more trouble and vexation than pleasure.

"Here, my dear Natalia," said grandmama, "I think you had better stop for this evening; it is time for all of us to be in bed; and to-morrow we shall have the pleasure of looking forward to night-time, that we may hear the conclusion of your pretty story."

Eliza thought that grandmama *might* let them stop a little longer, but as Cousin Natalia said it would be more than an hour before she could finish the tale properly, her opinion was over-ruled.

"Before we retire, there is one subject I wish to draw your attention to," said grandpapa, "namely, that both the Lady of Lindorf and the little Sophy were, no doubt,

Roman Catholics, who pay much more devotion to anything in the form of the cross than we think it proper to do. This will explain why the young girl made choice of 'the little wooden crucifix.'"

THE

Little Wooden Crucifix.

PART II.

THE HAPPY MARRIAGE.

THE PRAYER IN NEED.

JOYS AFTER SORROWS.

THE BLESSINGS OF AFFLICTION.

The Little Wooden Crucifix.

MANY were the wishes, during the cold, dreary day that succeeded, that night would soon come, and with it Cousin Natalia's story: and somehow it happened, that it was pronounced to be quite dark, the window shutters were closed, and candles brought into the parlour at least half an hour earlier than had been known before during the whole winter. Even grandpapa and grandmama, with a smile, acquiesced in it; and

when they were all seated *comfortably*, Natalia proceeded.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HAPPY MARRIAGE.

About a year before the death of the Lady of Lindorf, the gardener's son, a well-behaved, honest, and good-looking young man, had wished to obtain Sophy for his wife. As his mother was dead, he spoke on the subject to his father; and as the latter fully approved of his son's choice, he had mentioned it to his mistress, who, knowing Sophy's mind, had thus answered:—"Your desire, my good gardener, and that of your son, is mine also. You have brought him

up in the fear of God, and with probity, and accustomed him from childhood to order and industry, therefore as he has always behaved with the propriety of an honourable young man, I have not the least objection to the marriage. On the contrary, your proposition gives me great pleasure; I think it, however, too soon for you to leave your place, good man, for your William must remain some time longer in town to learn the art of gardening in the perfection we now require it. When he returns in a couple of years, and if he still retains the same sentiments, as well as my foster-daughter, I shall, if I live, attend Sophy's wedding as her foster-mother."

The old gardener, as well as William and Sophy, were well pleased with this answer. The Lady of Lindorf had some travelling

clothes made for William, and furnished him with money for his journey. She also provided him with a letter of introduction to the court gardener; and thus did William leave his home.

After the good lady's death, when Sophy knew not where to go, the gardener took her to him, and she kept his house. A twelvemonth afterwards, William returned; and great was both his and Sophy's regret that the lady could not be at their wedding. They visited her grave (upon which William had planted flowers) on their leaving church; and both brought to it the tribute of grateful tears for all her benefits.

As William and Sophy were from their heart virtuous and pious, loved each other sincerely, and had learnt from childhood

to conquer caprice, obstinacy, ill humour, passion, and all such evil propensities; they lived together contented and happy, and doated upon their old father. The aged man was delighted to see his little grandchildren; and the first boy was christened Frederick, after him. The second child, a little girl, was named Theresa, after the good Lady of Lindorf.

It was the old man's delight to have the young ones on his knees, or to carry them about; and the little family lived together in the greatest harmony.

Alas! their life, as life is ever here below, was soon overshadowed with sorrow. The honest old man enjoyed not the happiness of living long with his children and grandchildren; he died after a short illness.

William and Sophy were greatly grieved, and many were the tears they shed at his funeral.

A twelvemonth after this, William fell from a tree and broke his left arm, besides receiving several other injuries; his life was saved, but he could no longer use his arm to work, or mind his business as gardener. He had notice given him to quit his situation; and as his new masters were not very liberal, he obtained but a very small pension, with a little corn and wood.

William was very low spirited to lose both his place and lodging. "With what shall we live and keep our children?" said he, and could not see the end of his misery. Sophy sought every means to console and cheer him. "I will tell you something," said she,

one day; "look at our canary in the cage given me by our good lady; in her last illness its song was too loud, and she told me to take it in my room, and asked me daily if I had not forgotten to feed the bird; and even in the last day of her life, she told me to take the bird after her death, and to take great care of it. I was then very uneasy about my fate after my good lady's death, but thought suddenly, how careful this dear lady was for a bird, and shall not God care for us? I have often thought of this; yes, as often as in our narrow circumstances I feed this bird, do I think that God will never allow us and our little children to want bread. Be comforted, dear William, He will never forget us."

They now deliberated upon what was to

be done, and soon agreed to buy a house in the village. As there was no shop in the place, they determined to set up one for the sale of such things as would be most useful to the inhabitants. "I hope that, nothwithstanding my bad arm, I shall easily be able to mind the shop," said William; "and it is good that I am expert at writing and ciphering. I thank my father in his grave, that he sent me so regularly to school." "And I," answered Sophy, "hope, that besides doing my household work, I shall be able to earn something by sewing and embroidery, in which I have been instructed by my kind lady."

There was a house in the village to be let, cheap. They resolved to take it, although it was rather out of repair, and to have it put

in good condition. To do this, and also to set up the shop, they stood in need of a considerable sum of money, besides which, the expenses of William's illness amounted to a great deal, which must be paid first of all. Sophy's two thousand crowns were placed with a merchant in the town, and William went there in order to give notice that he would draw out the half of this capital, and receive it as soon as possible; but the merchant declared the condition of payment to be a year's previous notice, at the expiration of which he would be ready to refund it, but refused to give back a penny of it before that time.

Sophy and William were now much perplexed. A rich peasant, however, offered to advance them the required sum for a year

at the usual interest, and they thankfully accepted his offer. The house was taken and repaired, and looked quite pretty and cheerful. William was delighted to find a little garden attached to it, for although he was no longer able to keep the large castle garden in order, he found it easy to manage his small one, which he soon filled with good vegetables and fine flowers.

They now found themselves very happy in a house of their own: their little sitting room was very simple, but cheerful and comfortable. It contained only the most necessary furniture, a table, chairs, and benches were of oak, but as useful as if of the choicest foreign wood; instead of an elaborate gilt clock with alabaster columns, they had a common wooden dial, yet it always

went well, was always regularly set, and, better still, its stroke regulated the work and time of every inhabitant of the house. A looking-glass was wanting; instead of it, a few good books filled a shelf on the wall. William used to read aloud in the long winter evenings whilst Sophy was spinning; the flax hung against the wall was a sign of her industry, and was of more use in the house than the most superb looking-glass in a gilt frame would have been. Instead of costly pictures, there was only a little profile of William's father, which served to remind them of the good man's virtues; the little room was a pattern of cleanliness—Sophy never suffered the slightest dust, and the mop was always at hand. William had also a few flower-pots with green or blooming plants

growing, and which were more ageeable to see than the most costly articles of mere luxury.

Their shop was furnished with wares both good and beautiful; and as William and Sophy were always pleasant and friendly towards every one, and sold their goods at a moderate price, rather giving more weight and measure than less, and often making their customers, especially children, a little present, they soon obtained a very great trade. They were persuaded that honesty is the best policy, and that a small but frequent gain is more sure to answer in the end, than a great advantage, promising much, but which is not again repeated.

How happy they felt after the many troubles occasioned them by William's fall—the

loss of his situation and the house, and the removal! They could not thank God enough that he had again placed them in such good circumstances with their two children. Though they could see the castle from which they had been sent away, from their window, they did not wish themselves back into it. Peace and harmony, the pleasure they took in their children, content, and constant occupation, made their little dwelling and garden a true paradise to them.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRAYER IN NEED.

THERE is no permanent happiness on earth, but a constant alternation of joy and grief; this William and Sophy soon experienced again. Before the year was over, news arrived that the merchant with whom Sophy's little fortune was placed was a bankrupt. The peasant who had lent his money was very obliging when something was to be gained: it was not out of love to his fellow-creatures, but out of love of self. As soon as he heard of Sophy's loss, he came like a madman, and demanded his thousand crowns on the spot. William and Sophy proposed

making over to him, house, garden, and shop, but he maintained that this was not sufficient security. He swore fearfully at William and Sophy, though they were innocent of this loss, and, moreover, quite stunned by it. He gave them notice, that unless he were paid by a certain day, he should, without farther delay, have the house and all its contents, as well as the shop, and even their beds, sold. So saying, he violently struck the table, and foamed for very rage.

Now had sorrowful days broken in upon William and Sophy. They were both very sad. Hardly three weeks more, and the terrible day was at hand. They knew not where to find so much money; yet they trusted in God, though they saw no immediate help. Sophy's heart was heavy beyond

expression, from her love for her husband and children, but she also felt the greatest confidence in God.

The evening preceding the day when they were to pay, she went up into a little chamber under the roof, in order to hide her tears from her husband and children. Whilst she sat, overwhelmed with grief, her eyes fell upon the little wooden cross, which she had hung up, in order to be constantly reminded of her dear benefactress. She thought how different her fate would be were she now alive to help, comfort, and support her. She took down the cross, and, laying it in her lap, suffered her tears to fall fast and long upon it, being completely lost in thoughts of the past, and prayers for the future.

At last she felt calm and relieved, as,

THE CROSS OF DIAMONDS.

formerly, when a child, she had been kneeling at the foot of the altar, shortly after her mother's death, in the cathedral. She thought of the words of the good curate, who had said in taking leave of her, that God would ever be her deliverer, as He had been in that instance.

She was now going to replace the little crucifix, when she remarked that, at its side, a little piece of wood had become unglued, and had fallen upon the floor. The crucifix had been formerly injured and repaired, but the glue had got softened by her abundant tears, and the warmth of her hands. She approached the small window, through which the evening sun was making its way, and wished to see how to remedy this accident. But, behold! from the crucifix darted a

brilliant ray. Sophy started, and looked closer, and found that it was hollow inside, and contained something sparkling. She discovered at the sides, small openings, but made with so much care and art, that they looked like the carving itself. She succeeded in drawing the pieces out, and found in the hollow cross, lined with crimson satin, a diamond crucifix, mounted in gold.

She took it out, and, contemplating it nearer, saw that it flashed so brilliantly in the evening sun, that the eye could hardly bear the variety of its colours. She had often seen diamonds at the castle, and recognised these as real ones.

Who shall now tell Sophy's emotions? Surprise and thankfulness filled her heart. The past was already vanishing like a bad dream,

and a future of peace and joy arose before her. Her tears still fell, but were no longer bitter tears of despondency. They were tears of gratitude, and her uplifted eyes showed them to be an offering to that God of mercy who accepts them, whilst diamonds, and all earth's treasures, are valueless in His sight.

CHAPTER IX.

JOYS AFTER SORROWS.

Whilst Sophy was in the upper chamber, William was sitting sorrowfully down stairs upon the bench. The thought of being put out of the house with his children was dreadful to him. His anxiety was very great; he opened a window to have a little air, and allowed tears to flow which he had held back before Sophy.

The two children played about the room, and seemed not to take any notice of him. Still, the little Frederick saw that his father was weeping. He sprang forward, leaving

his little cart overturned half way, and asked in a pitiful tone, "Father, why do you cry?"

"Dear child," answered William, "you know our neighbour Caspar wants to send us out of the house, and sell it, with every thing in it, to other people. You have seen and heard how angry he was. He wants to force us to go away, and beg. Pray God, with me, dear child, that He will not allow this to happen."

The little boy began to cry very much, folded his little hands together, looked up to heaven, and said, "Father in heaven, the wicked Caspar will take the house from us; suffer it not, I pray thee."

As the little Theresa heard this, and saw her brother in tears, and her father also with

tears in his eyes, she began to cry and scream. William took her upon his knees to console her, but the child continued to clap her little hands and cry.

The father had put an apple upon the window-sill, together with a knife. He intended to divide it between the children. He took it up to give it them, in order to silence them; but little Frederick said to his sister, "be quiet, Theresa, and I will leave the whole apple to you; cry no more," added he, himself crying; "and, believe me, God will certainly help."

At this moment the mother entered with the cross in her hand, and called out with great joy, "Now God has helped — join me all in thanking Him." She showed her husband the crucifix in which the diamond cross

was lying, and told him how she had discovered the hidden treasure.

William threw a glance upon the cross, and joining his hands, called aloud, "What a wonderful deliverance! This cross is of great value — we can now pay our debts, and shall not be obliged to beg with our children."

The little Frederick, who knew the crucifix, and now only saw it from underneath, could see nothing remarkable in it; he stretched out his little hand, and called out, "how is it, dear mother? Let me see the cross nearer. Why are you and father so wonderfully glad?"

The mother showed him the cross, and said that these brilliant stones were worth more than a thousand crowns. "They please

me well enough, these little shining things," answered the child, "but what is their use?" "They are only for show," my child. "Oh, dear!" continued he, "then people will hardly give so much money for them; the little stones shine very prettily, but not more so than the dew drops, which one may see for nothing every morning on the grass and flowers."

The father could hardly recover from his astonishment, and said, breaking out in tears of joy, "Oh! my dear children, you do not know or understand what a great benefit God has shewn you; but believe me, with the money which I shall get for these stones I can pay our neighbour; we may remain in our house, and keep our garden and all belonging to us." "We have not indeed

prayed to God in vain," added little Frederick, "He is very good to have helped us immediately."

"He is indeed," replied the father, "therefore let us thank Him."

CHAPTER X.

THE BLESSINGS OF AFFLICTION.

With the dawn of the following morning, Sophy rose to go to the town and consult the worthy curate, to whom as a child she had looked up with respect and confidence. He was now an aged, venerable, and greatly respected man, with snow-white hair. She told him her story, and showed him the crucifix, "And so," added she at the end, "the words that you told me, in taking leave of me as a child, are come to pass,—'Pray to God in all afflictions and misfortunes, with child-like confidence, and He will ever deliver you.'"

"So you have not forgotten these words," said the good old man, "that is well. You now see that I spoke the truth. Yes, God is a true helper in need; no one ever addresses Him in vain. It is true, He does not always help so quickly at the moment as He has helped you. Your deliverance in your need is one of rare occurrence; still one thing remains for ever certain, He never abandons those who put their trust in Him. He pours consolation in their hearts, and remains near to support them in their afflictions, and to direct their trials to the best end. This you have often experienced; from your childhood until now, He has been with you and supported you in all your trials; remain, therefore, immoveable in His faith and in that of His beloved Son. Do His will,

confide all your griefs to Him; bring your children up in the same holy way, and He will also remain with you and them, and will again save you from troubles, until He shall end them all by taking you unto Himself."

Sophy had still a doubt at her heart, and was on that account come to consult this good man. "Can I," said she, "consider this precious cross as my property? and do I not commit an injustice towards the heirs of the Lady of Lindorf by retaining it for my advantage? It is of greater value than every other object left by the good lady." "The cross is yours," replied the aged man. The departed lady, it is true, knew not herself, perhaps, the treasure hid in this family relic. It probably has descended to her from an

uncle who held a high rank in the church, but her meaning, as expressed in her will, was decidedly to leave to you the most costly piece amongst her jewels. From the love of peace, of your contentedness of mind, you chose only this little wooden cross, which seemed to you to possess no pecuniary value; but God blessed your choice, and under his guidance the most precious article of the good lady's inheritance has fallen to your share, as it was her desire that it should. This cross is a treasure given you by God." Then examining it, he added, "The diamonds are very large, and can be worth from two to three thousand crowns. Sell it, and with a part of the money put an end to your present wants; put aside the other part for a case of need, and enjoy your good fortune with mode-

ration and thankfulness; but keep the wooden crucifix as a memorial to your grandchildren and great grandchildren of the beneficence of the Lady of Lindorf to you, and of the still greater beneficence of God."

The pious old man hereupon put the diamond cross into the crucifix, closed the aperture, and said, "Who would think upon looking at this piece of wood of the treasure it contains! Yet believe me, like this piece of wood, every grief is to us Christians, symbolically speaking, our cross. Outwardly it is nothing, but inwardly it contains a great treasure, more valuable than gold and jewels, for sorrows lead us nearer to God, teach us to see the wisdom of His ordinances on earth, cleanse us from weakness and imperfections, exercise us in faith,

patience, and humility, and are alone capable of fitting us for the joys of heaven. Think of this in every trial, and consider it not as a misfortune, but on the contrary as a blessing, when God visits you with afflictions; for the hour will come when the rough covering will fall off, and the precious treasure, of more worth than gold and jewels, will then appear. And, even if this should not always be made manifest here on earth, be assured that in another world you will find every sorrow to have been a secret blessing, making you rich for eternity, and affording you joy, when the whole world, with all its contents, jewels, and gold, shall be reduced to dust and ashes."

The good curate knew a jeweller in the town, who was his friend, and a very upright

man. He sent to him to beg he would come for a few moments to the parsonage. The merchant, whose commerce in precious stones was very extensive, soon arrived, looked at the cross carefully, and said he would give three thousand crowns for it, one thousand on the spot, and the remainder at a stated time. Sophy was overjoyed, and received the money.

She made no secret of the story, and it soon spread all over the town. The relatives of the Lady of Lindorf, who lived there, heard of it, and immediately assembled to hold a council. They determined to bring Sophy before a court of justice, in order to get the cross restored to them; "for," said they, "it would be madness to bestow a keepsake of the value of three thousand

crowns upon such a beggar as Sophy; it would be impossible to imagine any thing more absurd."

But the officer who once before had taken Sophy's part came in, and asked what they were about. Having heard it, he said with great emphasis, "remain at home, you, and your complaints, and be glad if nothing more is said respecting the business. If your exasperation has not taken away the possibility of your hearing a sensible word, listen to what I have to say to you.

"If, at the reading of the will, you had known what a treasure the despised crucifix contained, and Sophy had insisted upon choosing it, you covetous people would have been obliged to allow her to have it, in accordance with the testament, and you could

have made no objections; remain, therefore, satisfied now: besides, it serves you right to be deprived of this splendid inheritance, on account of your want of piety, your little respect for the memory of the Lady of Lindorf, and your hardness of heart towards an orphan.

"You have always laughed at Sophy's wooden choice, as you contemptuously called it, now you are punished, and it is your turn to be laughed at. Keep your complaints to yourselves, that you may not be more and more the laugh and talk of people."

However angry those were to whom this was addressed, still they were obliged to acknowledge the justice of it, and forbore to make any farther remark.

Before Sophy departed with her money

for her home, she once more visited the little chapel in the cathedral, where her prayer as a child had been granted as wonderfully twenty years back, as lately in the lonely chamber.

Over and over again was Cousin Natalia thanked when she had completed her tale, which every one was glad to find ended so happily; and many were the entreaties that she would endeavour to recollect just such another pretty story for the next night.

She promised them she would. "But," added Natalia, "I ought to inform you, that in several places I have purposely omitted or altered parts of the original tale. I did not think they were very well adapted to your English tastes, and therefore in one or two places I have left out whole paragraphs."

"Of course you must be the best judge," observed Grandpapa, in reply; "and as the story tells very well as you have given it to us, we must be content to abide by your decision."

The Goldsmith.

THE MILK-BOY.

THE ROBBERY.

THE TRIUMPH OF INNOCENCE.

The Goldsmith.

"I THINK I recollect a tale that will please you," said Natalia, when, after the duties of the day were concluded, the little party of the preceding evenings had again met together; "it is by one of our best German authors, and is very popular."

CHAPTER I.

THE MILK-BOY.

"Is the gold snuff-box maker here, sir?" asked a young peasant boy, hastily entering

the richly stored shop of the court jeweller, Hartwell, and addressing the book-keeper, who with a care-worn face was at that moment busy in unpacking some wares of great value.

"What's thy business, sirrah, and whom dost thou want? Be off—no begging here," gruffly returned the book-keeper.

"Softly, softly," answered the boy, "I am not come to beg; I want nothing of you, but to speak to the master."

"Here is the gentleman himself," said the book-keeper, pointing to Hartwell, who was at that moment coming in by a side door. On perceiving him the boy went up to him laughing, and said, "Look ye, Mr. Goldsmith, you are a bit of a coward. Who but you would so soon take fright at a dog's growl?"

"Ha! boy. I suppose those two savage hounds that are fastened to that little milk car, are yours?"

"Aye, to be sure, they belong to me," replied the boy; "and they are a pair of very good dogs, are Wolf and Fox, and do no harm to any one; but if any one stumbles and runs against them, as if going to overthrow my little car, then truly they shew their teeth, because they cannot speak; then a coward thinks of mad dogs, and wants to jump over to the opposite side of the street, almost falls upon his nose, and loses his things from fright. I, however, picked this up, and bring it back to you;" and so saying, he handed to the jeweller a valuable gold snuff-box, which the latter had lost.

Hartwell had been sent for by a rich man,

living not far from him, who wanted to buy several things of value, and he had therefore taken some of these with him. On his return he had been frightened by the dogs in the milk car, and wanting to avoid them by a jump, had lost the gold snuff-box. Looking steadfastly at the boy, he said to him, "Youngster, thou probably dost not know the value of the box thou art bringing me back?" "Neither do I want to know it," replied the boy, for it does not belong to me, it is shining enough, but my dear grandmother says, 'Do not let the devil dazzle thee.'"

Astonished and delighted at the boy's honesty, the jeweller thanked him in the most friendly manner, and wished to give him three shining half-crowns as a reward; but

shaking his head at this, he said, "Yes! my dear grandmother would make me feel the stick finely if I were to take this. She might think I had begged or stolen it. No, Mr. Goldsmith, you've got your snuff-box now, keep your money too; but if you wish to do me and my dogs a service, buy all my milk quickly, so that we may the sooner get home and back to dear grandmother."

The jeweller granted the boy's request, and bought the milk, the whole value of which hardly amounted to half-a-crown, and caused a great part of it to be poured in a dish and given to the dogs, whilst the boy would only accept from him a piece of bread and butter.

"You are a very kind man," said the latter, as he was preparing to return home,

and as it is such a pleasure to you to feed the dogs, every day that I cannot get rid of my milk I shall come to you, and then Wolf and Fox will get a rare treat."

The next day in the afternoon the boy duly made his appearance again, sought the jeweller, and said sorrowfully, "We can't have any more fun with feeding the dogs. I told grandmother the whole story, and she says it was certainly very right not to take your present; but she has scolded rarely that we gave the milk to the dogs, for says she, 'It is a pity to give milk to dogs, and it would have been better to sell it cheaper to poor people than to let a rich man buy it for dogs;' and said she, 'if thou art such a fool as to want to cram thy animals with everything, the gentleman ought to have been wiser.'"

"Your grandmother is right," replied the jeweller, "and you shall conduct me to her." Then he took his hat and stick, and with a quick step followed the boy, who joyfully rode before him on his little milk wagon to shew him the way.

At about half an hour's distance from the town, and quite away from the great road, there were several vineyards situated close together, with little cottages, which were inhabited by the labourers, and there also, at the foot of a vine hill, stood the dwelling of the boy's grandmother; the nearer the lad came to it with his car, the faster ran the hounds; and as an impatient horse snorts and neighs on approaching his home, so these dogs began to bark with eagerness and joy on beholding theirs.

"Grandmother, dear grandmother!" called

out the boy from afar, "come and see — the rich man is with me, and the dogs have had nothing to eat to day."

"That is well, thou milk-waster," said the old woman, standing at the door, and shading her eyes with her hand to look down the road which the jeweller was pacing up with rapid strides, then she added thoughtfully to herself, "So, this is the rich man, is it? God grant that it may not prove the wicked one coming to mislead us!"

Whilst Maurice (so the boy was called) was taking the dogs out of the car, the old woman bid Hartwell welcome, and showed him into her humble apartment. He found in it the greatest order and cleanliness, and learnt that the little vineyard was the property of the old woman, and that, together

with her grandchild, who had early lost both his parents, she lived upon its produce. She superintended it with the help of a maid and a day labourer, and Maurice had to go with the dogs in the town to sell the milk and fruit; and as much as the small profit of his sale would allow, was employed in sending him to school.

Simplicity, contentment, and piety dwelt in this little habitation, and the jeweller felt more comfortable in it than he ever had in the midst of his gold and silver. He was refreshed with the finest fruit, which Maurice went to gather for him in the vineyard, and was not allowed to utter a word about payment. As he complained of this, the old woman said to him, "I know well, sir, that you are a rich man, and have no need of any

presents from us. You may, perhaps, think that one good turn deserves another, and there you are right; but I take no money. If you wish to make some return, you may give my young boy a good school book, and come and eat your grapes from my vineyard."

The jeweller did both; he took care that Maurice should have many good school books, and often visited the old woman in her solitary abode. He also took with him his little daughter, Matilda, whose mother had died when she was yet an infant, and whilst the old woman was recounting to the goldsmith many circumstances of her life, which shewed her to possess a mind that had overcome severe trials with patient submission, Maurice led the little Matilda to the finest grapes and fruit trees, let her gather

the ripest; and when he wanted to give her a very great treat, he took her a ride all over the vineyard, the dogs drawing her in the little car.

"But my dearest little Matilda, where does papa take you to so often?" asked once the jeweller's book-keeper of the child. "He goes out every afternoon now, and formerly papa could not be made to stir from the house."

"We visit the milk-boy and his grandmother," replied Matilda; and she recounted to the inquisitive book-keeper everything concerning her walks with her father. Mr. Shepherd (such was his name), who watched every step and look of his master, and was jealous when he suspected that any one besides himself possessed the confidence and

favour of Hartwell (a confidence which he knew but too well how to turn to his own purpose), soon sought the vineyard, in order to make the acquaintance of the old woman also: the simple grandmother, and insignificant peasant boy, however, appeared to him anything but dangerous, and he even persuaded Hartwell to visit them oftener, in order that he might be the more at liberty to have entirely his own way both in the house and shop, where, since the death of Matilda's mother, everything had been left under his superintendence.

Unfavourable weather had now for several weeks prevented the jeweller from taking his accustomed walk, when one morning Maurice entered his room, with eyes red and swollen, and said with a tremulous voice, "Dear

grandmother sends her best respects to you, sir, and I am to say that she died last evening."

"Is grandmother dead?" exclaimed Hartwell, sorrowfully; and seizing his hat and stick he followed the weeping boy to the vineyard. The maid then told him that the old woman had ailed a few days, and had died the evening before; that upon her deathbed she had mentioned him, and had especially recommended the boy to his protection.

Hartwell determined to take that care upon himself. He bought the vineyard, which was offered cheap, and took the boy into his house in order to bring him up carefully, and to instruct him in his trade.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROBBERY.

MAURICE was good and upright; he did all in his power to deserve Hartwell's kindness. He was diligent at school, and intelligent in his new calling, but the more he gained the approbation and favour of his master, the more he became hated by the book-keeper, who saw well that Maurice would soon stand in the way of his rogueries, should he not succeed in shaking the boy's honesty.

To accomplish this, he used to trust him with the key of the store-room, having put in it several dainties, which he had made him

taste previously ; for he thought that Maurice would not withstand the temptation, but would pilfer in secret, and he said to himself, "Should the boy begin to pick at these, he will soon go farther in stealing;" but he deceived himself—Maurice had not forgotten the lessons of his grandmother upon honesty and conscientiousness, and the dainties might have spoiled sooner than that Maurice would have touched them. The book-keeper now tried another method: he opened the store-room with his master's key, and took out several things. Upon their being missed, he sharply accused the boy, and then pretended that out of kindness to him, he would for this time keep it a secret and not mention it to his master, in order that Maurice, depending upon such indulgence, should lose

the fear of punishment, relax from his principles, and commit such deeds boldly.

But the honest Maurice was thinking much more of the manner in which to expose the thief and bring him to light; and as he really imagined it must be cats or rats, he asked Mr. Hartwell to allow him to fetch one of his faithful dogs, (they no longer drew the milk car, but guarded the vineyard) to discover the thievery, of which he secretly informed his master.

Maurice obtained leave, and rushing to the vineyard took home his faithful Wolf, and as it was already dark when he returned, he did not delay to shut himself up with him in the store-room, in order to await the thief in a dark corner.

Shepherd knew nothing of the boy's

return, thought himself quite secure, and sneaked into the room. As Maurice heard the door open softly, and could not distinguish in the dark the form which was creeping in towards the eatables, he set on his dog. At one spring of the animal at the book-keeper's throat, the latter was thrown on the ground. His cries soon revealed him to Maurice, who hastened to call back the dog; and as Shepherd, who soon perceived the state of the case, not only sought to deceive him by all sorts of excuses, but also assailed him with threats and reproaches, he promised at last not to reveal the circumstance, and on that condition the book-keeper was to forgive him.

But he forgave him not; he had firmly resolved upon the ruin of Maurice, and

whereas he had sought to sow the seeds of discontent against him in the bosom of his master, he now laid a more artful plan, in order to see him wholly expelled.

For some time past the jeweller had missed things of value; he knew as a certainty that he had seen them on the preceding day carefully locked up in the glazed recesses in his warehouse, yet they disappeared without any sign of violence, or of anything having been broken open.

A few months afterwards a similar theft recurred, and so it went on, without the possibility of discovery. The master was much shocked to find himself no longer secure in his own house; yet, upon the advice of his book-keeper, he kept the circumstance a secret, in order to increase the security of

the thief, and by that means to facilitate his being discovered.

Hartwell had just finished a costly bridal ring for a rich countess, and had ordered Maurice, who was now out of his apprenticeship, to take it to her on the following day, when he would most likely receive a handsome reward from her; but alas! on the next morning the ring also had disappeared, and Hartwell, sending for the book-keeper, declared in great anger that the thief must be in the house, and that he was determined to have a search made, from which the book-keeper himself should not be exempted. A police-officer known to Hartwell was already there, and undertook the search whilst all in the house were present. They began by visiting Shepherd's effects, but nothing was

found, neither in those of the rest of the household, and at last they came to Maurice's little chamber—there also everything was searched through and through, and the only trinkets found were a little gold cross, left him by his grandmother, and a hair locket, on the wrapper of which the name of Matilda was written. Maurice, who was now a youth of eighteen, cast down his eyes, as Hartwell looked at him severely, at the same time that he retained the locket. Hartwell was on the point of leaving the room, when Shepherd whispered the police-officer; "It seems to me," said he, "that the drawers of this writing desk are very short, and do not quite fill up the vacant spaces; there might be some hidden room behind, and as the young man ordered the desk himself at the car-

penter's, he ————." The officer nodded a willing assent, looked more carefully at the desk, caused it to be moved from the wall, and found at last, not without trouble, on one side of it a small spring, which, upon being pressed, disclosed a hidden compartment, containing all the lost trinkets carefully wrapped up, and directed in Maurice's own handwriting!

Who can describe the surprise and consternation of the master! "So, we have caught the thief at last!" called out the police-officer, seizing hold of Maurice. "Ungrateful wretch! thou shalt not escape that prison for which thou art so well fitted." Maurice could not utter a word, and stood as if annihilated. Hartwell giving him for a little while in charge to the sneering book-

keeper, stept into another room with the police-officer, in order to arrange what had better be done. In the course of an hour he sent for Maurice, and informed him, that in consideration for the memory of his grandmother, he would not give him up to justice, but had entreated his friends to remain silent upon this affair; Maurice, however, must not only immediately leave his house, but the country also, and never more appear before him.

In this manner was he cast forth in the wide world, notwithstanding his protestations of innocence. He was not allowed to take leave of any one, much less of Matilda; the book-keeper thrust him out of doors, and ordered him to leave the town.

Maurice indeed hastened out of it, and ran towards the vineyard, where he had been

brought up, in order to take with him his faithful dogs, as his companions in exile in a strange land. As they joyfully sprang to meet him, he threw himself down on the grass, and wept plentifully; he then quitted the country.

Hartwell was the more cut up, as this bitter circumstance concerning Maurice destroyed his favourite plan. He had but one daughter, and had thought to bring up in this boy a grateful and faithful son; but his love had been wasted upon unworthiness — his benefits rewarded with ingratitude. Many of his acquaintances indulged in remarks upon the folly of taking up with such beggars' children, and could have foretold long ago that Maurice would turn out to be a good-for-nothing vagabond. The book-keeper found

always more and more to relate of his wicked tricks, which he had until then kept to himself from too much kindness.

Matilda only, believed in his innocence. She knew his love for, and fidelity towards her father. She had been in the room next to that in which he sent forth Maurice, when the latter had called out in a loud voice, "Mr. Hartwell, master, father! so true as God lives, I am not guilty." These were the last words she had heard from him; she believed them firmly, and seized upon everything which might tend to shew his innocence.

Alas! It was but seldom that she met with any one who would take the part of Maurice, and she was rather forced to hide her reliance in him, that she might not become the

laughing-stock of others. Once, in her way to the vineyard (where she wished to indulge her sorrow alone) she met a carpenter from the town, who thus addressed her:—

"It is a pity, though, miss, that your papa should have packed off poor Maurice in such a hurry. I have heard that all this fuss came from a hidden drawer in his writing desk, and I feel certain the poor youth never knew anything about this secret place, for the book-keeper ordered this desk of me, and I was obliged, according to his directions, to contrive the drawer in such a manner, that no one should know anything about it except he and I; if, therefore, anything suspicious was found in it, it may, perhaps, be accounted for by these circumstances."

Then, the labourer in the vineyard told her

how Maurice had taken leave, and gone away with his faithful dogs. He had heard him say to them, "You are the only things that still love me; you knew me from my childhood, but men do not know me; perhaps you may yet bring my innocence to light."

These discourses were in one respect a great consolation to Matilda's heart, for they convinced her more and more that Maurice was not guilty; but, on the other hand, she was only the more uneasy about him, as no one could tell which road he had taken, or where he then was. Her father also became more and more grave and reserved, and when Matilda seized hold of a happy moment to communicate what she had learnt respecting Maurice, and thus to assert her belief in his innocence, the information only increased her

father's moroseness. The thing was *done*. Who could the guilty person be? and even if in Hartwell's mind the thought arose that he might have treated the youth with injustice, it became a fresh cause of sorrow, as he could see no possible means of clearing up the past. He had tried underhand to get at some knowledge of Maurice, for he could never forget him, but no one could tell him anything certain. A traveller had said that as he was lately passing the confines of the province to get into the neighbouring one, he met a young huntsman, with two dogs, who stopt the coach. The traveller had taken him for a robber, but the hunter required nothing more than news from the little town where Hartwell lived, and, after having obtained that, he advised the merchant to take any other

road than the one he was then going, as it had become insecure, from a wandering band of robbers.

The description of the huntsman, and especially that of the dogs, answered perfectly to that of Maurice; and the book-keeper did not fail to draw from these reports the conclusion that the ill-disposed youth who had been a thief with them, had now become a highwayman.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRIUMPH OF INNOCENCE.

Two years had now passed away, and the jeweller was become still more silent and grave. He had almost entirely given up his business to his book-keeper, and was oftener to be seen in the vineyard than in the town. He felt a repugnance to associate frequently with Shepherd, for he always traced in his countenance a degree of that maliciousness which he had displayed on the occasion of Maurice's being turned away. He had hoped to find a young man experienced in his trade, to whom he could give the hand of his daughter, and continue with him his pro-

fitable business. Neither was there any lack of applicants, but Matilda had no heart for any of them, and insisted on remaining unmarried.

Her father then determined to give up the business altogether, that he might at once get rid of his hateful book-keeper, and retire to his vineyard. Matilda had induced this arrangement; but the book-keeper was not a little alarmed when he heard of this plan, and at the same time that his services were no longer required. Yet he recovered himself soon; and promised his master that he would help him to sell off his warehouse of valuable goods, when the approaching fair in the capital of the neighbouring province should afford them the best of opportunities for that object.

The jeweller thanked him, and considering the offer as a proof of his old attachment, thought it advantageous, and promised to reward well this last service. The jewels were all carefully packed up, and laid in the hidden recesses of the carriage.

Hartwell took leave of the sorrowing Matilda, promised to bring her back a rich present from the fair, and set off, in company with his book-keeper, who had armed himself with an old sabre, and two loaded pistols, in order, as he said, to secure himself against the band of robbers which infested the mountain passes through which they must go, and whose bold leader always had two dogs with him; whence he doubted not, he said, that Maurice himself must be that leader.

At the end of the first day's journey they

stopped for the night at a small frontier town. The jeweller felt tired, and soon went to bed. The book-keeper seemed to have found acquaintances ; at least he was seen in a corner of the room, sitting over a bottle of wine till late in the night with some very suspicious-looking people, with whom he seemed in earnest conversation.

" Who can these saucy-looking fellows be with whom our book-keeper has taken up ? " asked Hartwell's coachman of the landlady, following her into the kitchen ; " They are smugglers," replied the landlady ; " they are bad, bold men, who, like robbers, risk their life upon every chance. They have been here almost two days, as if they expected some one, and showed great joy upon getting sight of the gentleman there."

Next morning our travellers set off early, in order to pass through the difficult mountain passes in the broad day-light. Shepherd seemed very anxious, and expressed several times great apprehension respecting Maurice's band of robbers. Nothing suspicious, however, appeared, and they got deeper into the mountains upon a narrow path on the declivity of a rock, at the bottom of which a mountain stream was roaring. On a sudden a cry of "Stop!" was heard, and several men appeared from out of the recesses in the rock, and began attacking the carriage. The book-keeper screamed for help, jumped out of the carriage, and tried to fire the pistols, which, however, did not go off — they were not loaded.

The robbers took little notice of him, but

pulled the old coachman from his seat, who recognised in them the smugglers of the preceding day, and belaboured them well with his whip. One of the robbers mounted the horse, in order to go on with the carriage, and whilst the book-keeper made no longer any defence, but, on the contrary, himself opened the secret places to deliver the jewels up to the robbers, one of them was dragging Hartwell out of the carriage towards the precipice, in order to throw him into the stream. Hartwell begged and prayed in vain—he saw certain death before his eyes, and at his side the malicious countenance of Shepherd.

At this moment of greatest need, a gun was fired from the top of the pass; a bullet whistled, and, instead of Hartwell, the robber

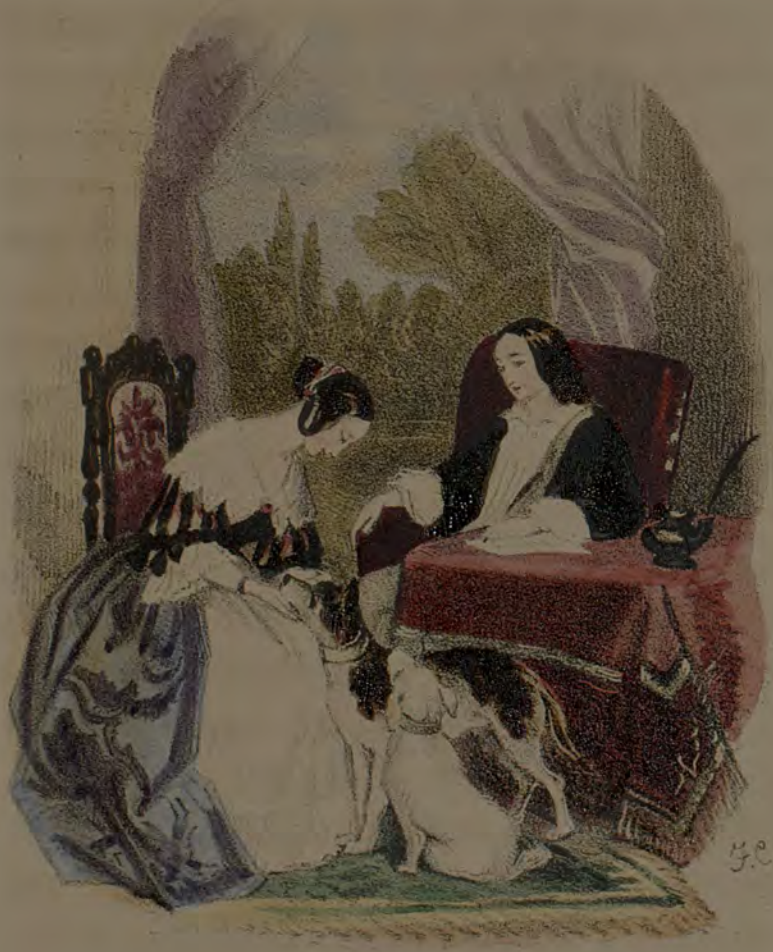
was precipitated into the chasm below, and out of the fissures of the rock sprang two dogs, which tore down the book-keeper to the ground. A hardy huntsman followed them, and both Hartwell and the old coachman recovering themselves, the robbers were some of them killed and some taken prisoners, and the helper in need, the strong happy hunter, was — Maurice!

Whilst Shepherd was calling piteously out for mercy from under the dogs' teeth, the youth threw himself on Hartwell's breast, saying, "My father! oh, my father!" in a voice broken by sobs.

Shepherd and the robbers were bound and laid in the carriage, and, under the escort of Maurice, made to return, in order that the prisoners might be given up to justice.

The jeweller did not prosecute his intended journey, but remained in the little frontier town until Maurice, who was in the service of a forest-keeper, in the capacity of huntsman, had taken leave of him, in order to return with Hartwell.

As, in the examination that took place concerning Shepherd and the robbers, Maurice's innocence came also to be clearly proved, Hartwell restored to him a double share of his fatherly love, gave him Matilda for a wife, and lived amongst his children happily to the last day of his life. The two dogs were also held in great esteem as long as they lived, and Maurice often said, "Their faithfulness has been the foundation of my happiness. Had they not growled at the master, he would not have lost the golden



THE REWARD OF INTEGRITY

snuff-box; and had they not followed me in my misery, and helped me to discover the wicked book-keeper, my father's life might have been lost, and my innocence never discovered."

"There is an excellent lesson to be learned from this story," said Grandpapa, as Natalia concluded. "How seldom it is that the best laid schemes of wickedness succeed; whilst we frequently find that the innocent man receives ample recompense for his unmerited sufferings."

"You did not tell us what became of the hateful book-keeper, said Mary. "I hope he was well punished for his base treachery; it is a pity, I think, Maurice did not throw him over the precipice after the smuggler."

"He richly deserved such a fate," replied

Natalia. "The tale does not say what became of him, but we are left to suppose that he received a just recompence for his crimes."

Here Grandmama interposed her authority, saying that it was already too late for sober, quiet people to be sitting up.

THE

New Year's Wish.

THE OBEDIENT SON.

THE ADOPTED CHILD.

The New Year's Wish.

CHAPTER I.

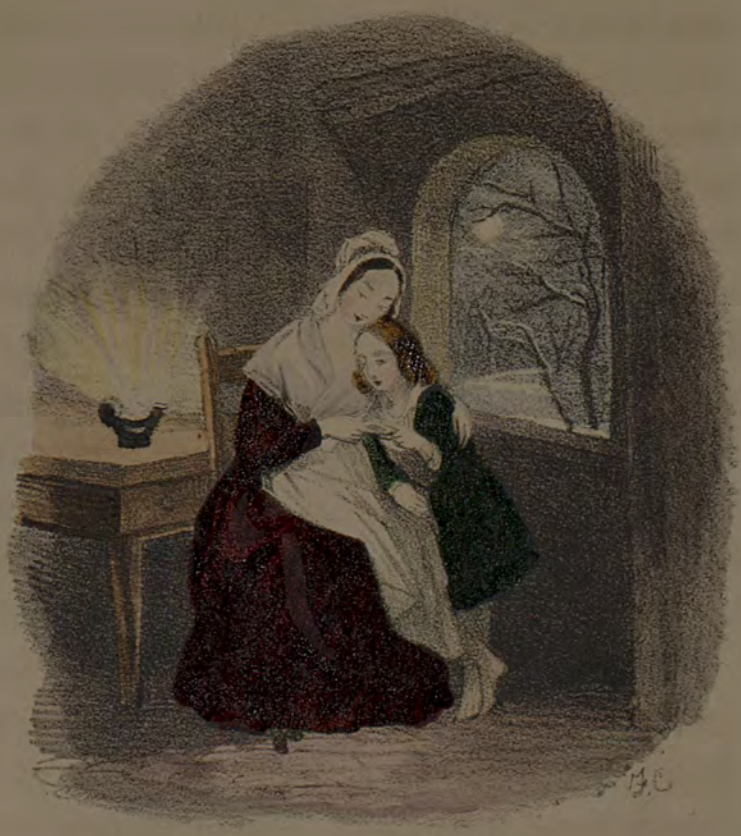
THE OBEDIENT SON.

"THERE is another little story, by the same author as the last, that I should like to tell you about," said Cousin Natalia, when she was again requested to amuse her kind friends; "it is called 'The New Year's Wish.' I ought to inform you that in Germany it is the custom on Christmas-eve to load large boughs of fir-trees with wax-lights,

fruit, and every kind of present, for the children of the family."

Merry Christmas had again brought its joys and blessings into every house. The children stood once more under the Christmas-tree to receive with joyful hearts the presents provided for them by their parents' love, and upon every table was seen the cake which the careful housewife had prepared for her husband and children.

Only, in one small room, at the back part of a house in the suburbs of the town, was no Christmas-tree to be seen, and there no cake had been baked, although the apartment contained a mother and her little boy. An inquisitive neighbour, — to whom the silent, sorrowing woman was an object of mystery,



CHRISTMAS EVE.

because, notwithstanding all enquiries and questions, nothing could be learnt respecting her, — had, it is true, crept to the window to see in what way the unknown was spending the evening of Christmas-day with her little boy, but she could only see that the young mother sat with her little one at a table, and by the light of a small lamp was shewing him a picture, about which, as it appeared, she had much to say. So, that the boy did not seem to be thinking of any Cristmas-tree, but was only intent upon every word his mother said.

That which the curious neighbour could not learn, you, my dear readers, shall hear from me; for I am a friend of the woman who was too poor to bake a cake, and I am very fond of the boy, who forgot all about the

Christmas-tree in looking at the picture which his mother shewed him of his absent, and, perhaps, long since dead father.

In a town, situated at the base of a mountain, lived a rich manufacturer, whose name was Samuel Volkmar. By degrees, he increased his business to such an extent that he was obliged almost yearly to add to his buildings, in order to take in the work, which he afterwards sold again with a great profit. Many hundred people got their bread through his means, and the very children of his labourers found a reward, proportionate to their strength and ability. The large household of Volkmar with all his workmen, resembled a large family of the olden time, when all who got bread by their labour considered their master no less than as a father.

Old Volkmar was not merely a most intelligent and experienced man in his business, who brought out the finest goods from his manufactories, but he was also generally esteemed on account of his great integrity, and his goods found speedy purchasers, because every one gladly dealt with him.

His only son, Otto, was to succeed to his business, and inherit his large fortune. He was the hope and joy of his parents, not less on account of his love and dutifulness towards them, than because of his well-cultivated abilities. He assisted his father in his many labours, filled himself the place of an overseer in the manufactories, and was an example of order and industry to all those under him. However strictly he dealt with others and himself, yet towards his parents

he remained a model of filial love and submission.

His father, conscious of having through his own industry worked himself up to be a rich manufacturer from an insignificant citizen that he was, and also to have earned all that he purposed to leave to his son, thought himself possessed of the right to determine upon the future fate of the latter, and required, on this point also, his entire obedience. "See, my son," he used to say, "five-and-twenty years ago, on this wide green space, stood merely the little house in which you were born. The arm of my industry, however, has stretched itself forth, and converted this little house into a series of buildngs, now resembling palaces. Large and commodious apartments, well-filled warehouses, great machinery, al-

ways at work to produce new merchandise, all this have I built and founded, and all this shall I some day leave to you, therefore do I require of you unlimited obedience in all things, for I am your father, and the only founder of your fortunes."

The good young man agreed to this fully, and owned to the obligations he owed his father; he was never more happy than when he could obey him, and did not fear that he should ever do otherwise.

Otto had now reached the age, when, according to the law of the land, he was obliged to enrol himself in the standing army of his country; and being strong and healthy, and his father maintaining as a principle that his son ought not to withdraw himself from the duty he owed to his country, he entered

as volunteer a regiment of dragoons; but before he left the paternal house, his father informed him of the plans he had laid for the future respecting him, in order that he might act accordingly.

Amongst others, he told him of having already selected a young girl destined to be his wife. She was the daughter of a rich merchant, with whom old Volkmar had been many years connected, and with whom he had come to an agreement upon the union of their children — partly to cement more closely the bands of their old friendship, partly to join together their severally large incomes.

The young man listened to his father in silence, and modestly enquired, whether his father knew the young girl, or had at least seen her; but old Volkmar answered with

irritation that he knew her father and his large possessions, that she had been well brought up, and understood good housekeeping, and that nothing more was necessary. Whether her face was of a sufficiently good complexion, or her eyes large or small, was of no consequence, he would get used to the one as well as to the other; and that the proper accordance of disposition was best secured by plenty of occupation, and no care for the means of living; "for my part," continued he, "I have fulfilled my duty as a father, and chosen for you a girl suitable to your circumstances, and it remains for you to make her acquaintance, and to seek to become agreeable to her."

"You are now entering the very regiment quartered in the place of her abode, and can

take this opportunity of making yourself known in the house of your future father-in-law."

Otto now left his father's house, and was enlisted as volunteer in the cavalry regiment. He sought to gain admittance in the house of his future father-in-law, without, however, making himself known, for in spite of every filial duty, he had it at heart to see first, without being known, the person who was to be his future partner in life. He gave himself out to be a relative of the Volkmar's, and under that plea obtained a welcome reception from the friend of his family. Both father and daughter often wished to hear a description of Volkmar's family, and especially of his son, and shewed much partiality towards Volkmar's house; yet Otto could not but

perceive that Alceste (thus was the daughter called) always looked very grave when he spoke to her of the young Otto, and did not shew any desire of making his acquaintance. She remained quite cold when he was described as a good-hearted lively youth, who was very anxious to become known to his future bride.

Had Alceste been a girl to displease him, this indifference on her part would have been acceptable to him — he would then have returned it, and felt convinced that they did not suit one another. But Alceste was pretty and good; an excellent daughter, and modest girl. He felt that he would have been glad to have won her, that he could have lived very happily with her, and he was almost grieved that she shewed so little inclination

to know her future husband, who was at that moment standing unknown before her.

He had now frequented the house for several months, and become intimate in it. He was loved and trusted, but the bridegroom Otto was seldom mentioned — he determined, therefore, to broach the subject, and told the father of Alceste that he was going on leave to visit his uncle Volkmar, and that his friend Otto had commissioned him to bring him some positive information respecting the proposed nuptials. Alceste was present, and silently left the room, but the father, holding out his hand to the young man, said; "We have placed great confidence in you, my dear Volkmar, and have therefore chosen you as mediator between young Otto and ourselves. It is true, that I

did formerly agree with old Volkmar that our children should marry one another, for I did not doubt that my daughter would agree to, and enter into my views, but I have since discovered that parents must not decide entirely, before-hand, upon the affections of their children, but only assist them with their advice and experience. My daughter, it is true, would as a good child obey me, if I should desire her to give her hand to young Volkmar; but how could I decide with the harsh authority of a father upon the happiness of her life, when she has confidently opened her heart to me. Alceste loves a young man whom I also love and respect, and I know not what objections to make to her when she entreats me to consent to her union with him, and to annul that hateful contract with an

unknown bridegroom. However willingly I might consent to my daughter's wishes, yet there are great obstacles in the way. Old Volkmar has my word, and my commercial affairs rest chiefly upon my connection with him. It would therefore be greatly to my prejudice should he draw back from me, and change the friendship he has hitherto entertained for me into enmity. I know not in what way the matter can best be arranged, for I would as little break the heart of my child as my friendship with him. I only see one way, and that is — if you, my dear Volkmar, would persuade your friend Otto to break with my daughter, as if from himself — tell him as much of what I have confided to you as you think fit, only take care that old Volkmar never learns that the occa-

sion of our children's separation arose with me, and remember that I leave in your hands not only the happiness of my daughter, but that of our whole house."

Otto listened in silence, and with a heavy heart. It pained him to give up hopes that had already become dear to him, but he did not remain thoughtful long. "If Alceste will confirm all this in person," he said, "I dare say I can find means to free her from her hateful tie."

The father now calling his daughter, told her what he had agreed upon with the young man, and Alceste did not hesitate modestly to confirm all her father had said, and Otto, holding out his hand to the old man, said composedly, "It is well, and the thing is settled. You shall have your word back

again. Be you happy, Alceste; and you, father, fear nothing from Otto, he will take all upon himself, will value your confidence, and remain silent — this I can solemnly promise you in his name, for *I am* Otto!" and, so saying, he quickly left the room.

Everything was now ended to the satisfaction of Alceste, but not so in the home of Otto. He had promised to take all upon himself; and as he therefore could give his father no other reason for his refusal, except that he did not like Alceste, he received from him the harshest treatment, and was obliged to hear himself called an ungrateful and undutiful son; indeed, the old Volkmar went so far that as Otto would in no manner consent to this union, he forbade him the house, and thrust him out in the world with a small

sum of money, swearing to disinherit him in case of his not marrying Alceste.

The unhappy Otto left his home broken-hearted, and with his regiment went to the wars. His mother was in despair, but the father remained inexorable.

CHAPTER II.

THE ADOPTED CHILD.

TEN years passed away. Alceste was happily married, but the name of Otto was never mentioned; and his father believed, from news clandestinely obtained, that he had perished in the wars. Old Volkmar had not yet determined concerning his property, but he felt more and more that he was childless, and had lately promised his still sorrowing wife to bring her an adopted child, who should inherit his best property. He also wished for such a child about him, but where was he to choose it from? everywhere some obstacle stood in his way, and often was he obliged to

give up some choice he had already made; he therefore determined now to leave it entirely to chance.

At this time of the new year, a great fair was to be held, and Volkmar, amongst many others, prepared to attend it. On taking leave of his wife, he said to her, "Keep in good health, good mother, and get the nursery ready again, for I feel as if I should bring you back a lovely new year's gift, which you may bring up in the room of our children," and so he departed for the great town, where numberless merchants were to assemble to do business at the fair.

The father of Alceste was there also, and as it was long since the friends had met, and they had much to relate of the history of their lives, the discourse naturally turned upon their

children. The old man related how happily married his daughter was, and learnt from Volkmar that on account of this broken up marriage he had disinherited and rejected his only son. His friend, horror-struck, owned that himself and his daughter were the sole cause of this, and no longer hesitated to acquaint Volkmar with the whole story, and to make him sensible of Otto's delicacy, who submitted to the hardest fate entirely out of consideration for them.

Old Volkmar put down the wine-glass which he was carrying to his lips, with a crash that broke it into atoms, and exclaiming, "You have deceived me and my good son," ran instantly out of the room.

It was on the morning of New Year's Day; people dressed in their best were seen con-

gratulating one another, and hastening to church; and cheerful faces were to be seen everywhere, for every one believed in the good which the new year would bring him. Old Volkmar alone was without hope. To him the new year could bring nothing, for he had driven his son away — perhaps, to death. He therefore would not listen to any good wishes, for there was no happiness left for him. Wrapped in his mantle, he walked hastily through the town, into the snow-covered fields. Here he perceived a boy, of about eight years old, standing before an old house. His hands were folded, and he was looking intently upon an almost effaced inscription, cut in the stone over the house door. The old man was struck with the boy, and

lifting up his eyes to the inscription, read thus:—

"In thy need, call to the Lord,
Pray to him in faith and trust.
And gracious aid he will afford."

"Why dost thou read this sentence over and over again in this manner?" asked Volkmar; "it would be better to go home and warm thyself, for it is very cold to-day, and thou art but thinly clad."

"It is not much warmer at mother's," answered the boy, "and I must learn that verse by heart first."

"And wherefore?" enquired Volkmar.

"Because to-day is New Year's Day, and everybody is wishing happiness to each other, and making fine presents; only my poor mother has nobody to wish her happy, and

therefore I will do so; and, as I cannot buy her anything, I have learnt that verse for her. It suits my poor mother, for in her need she often folds her hands and looks up to heaven." And hereupon the boy sprung away, after having once more read the inscription through.

But Volkmar followed him. His lovely features and blooming countenance, shaded by long fair curls, his childish simplicity, and pious love to his mother, attracted the old man irresistably. He saw him enter a little back room, in a building in the suburb of the town; and, following him, he gently lifted the latch of the door. He saw a young woman, meanly dressed, but with great cleanliness, standing by the window. Her eyes were directed towards heaven, and she held down her folded hands; near her stood the little boy,

and close by him a faithful and aged dog. He was repeating aloud to his mother the verse he had learnt: —

> "In thy need, call to the Lord,
> Pray to him in faith and trust,
> And gracious aid he will afford."

The young woman began to cry bitterly, and pressed the boy to her bosom. Volkmar shut the door gently, not to disturb the mother and child. After a pause, he gave a loud knock, and entered the room as if he had not witnessed what had taken place between them.

The boy, jumping up and holding out his hand, said to him, "You come too late, old gentleman; I have just finished saying my wish to my mother, and have said it well by

heart." "Therefore" answered Volkmar, "I will bring you my good wishes too, and shall stay to dinner with you, for I am a stranger in this town, and would be glad to eat my bread on the first day of the year where maternal and filial love are found.

The young woman remained silent, but the confiding boy said, "Listen, old gentleman: I should be very glad that you stayed here with us, but you had better go away, for a few potatoes and a bit of bread will certainly not satisfy you, and you will only eat up my mother's and my poor dinner." But Volkmar, drawing his purse and giving the young woman a crown, desired her to get a good dinner, for he felt pleased, and wished to remain where he was. The room was very clean and orderly, although poor; both mo-

ther and child were badly clothed, but both had great beauty and grace, and Volkmar felt a sort of presentiment that he should find there what he had been long and vainly searching for.

Anna, the young woman, now soon found the means of making everything comfortable. She lit a fire in the stove to make the room warmer, and soon cooked a good dinner. She then laid a fine white cloth on the table, and shewed so much activity and neatness in these domestic preparations, that Volkmar could hardly take his eyes off from her. In the mean while the boy was telling him all about his father; how he had been a soldier, and fought many battles in the last wars. In one of them, where he had bravely fought, he was so severely wounded that he was left on

the field as killed. The burial of the dead devolved upon the parish of the adjoining village, and the daughter of the school-master, conquering all fear and disgust, had carefully looked over amongst the dead and wounded, to discover if by chance there remained not in some a spark of life which might be rekindled. She found some little signs of life in one wounded man, and caused him to be taken to her parents' house, where through good nursing and tender care his life was saved. At the end of the campaign she became his wife and she lived happily with him for a twelve-month. The young soldier had successfully helped the old man in his avocations, and was to succeed him in his business, but the war breaking out afresh called him away from wife and child. He fought bravely for

his king and country, and died the death of a hero on the field of battle. His wife's parents soon died also, and the young widow, left alone, had wandered with her little boy to this town, where, poor and unknown, she supported herself by the labour of her hands.

It was long since old Volkmar had enjoyed a meal so much as the one he was now eating in this poor apartment; and when it was ended, and the boy had said grace, he took the young woman by the hand, and proposed to her to leave the town, and follow him with her child to his home; "for," he added, "I will consider you, good pious woman, as a daughter, and your little Otto, as a son."

Anna acknowledged with grateful emotion the kindness of the man who for the future

was to be to her as a father; and the boy, skipping joyfully about the room, said, "See, mother, my New Year's Wish was good. You called to the Lord in your need, and he sent help."

Volkmar took the boy with him to his inn, and had him measured for new clothes. To Anna he sent a sum of money, that she might also provide herself with proper clothing and other necessaries before the journey. He could hardly wait for the end of the fair, and had already written to his wife, what a charming daughter he was bringing her, and also what a lovely boy, whose name was Otto, and whom he was sure she would take to her heart.

Every day he visited them and loved them better and better, and the little boy also loved

him every day more. The time of departure thus approached, and everything was prepared, when early one morning the little Otto, looking graver than usual, came to him, and, beginning with his "Listen, old gentleman," said, "I should have much liked to be your son, but my true father returned last night, and my mother now will not hear of any journey with you. I have just slipped out to tell you this."

"Is this last hope to fail me also?" exclaimed Volkmar. "The supposed dead must arise to deprive a bereaved old man of those he had taken in the place of children! No. I will see if I cannot buy thee, at least, my young one, from thy parents."

So saying, he took his hat and cane, and followed the boy in great agitation to his

mother's. Otto often looked up timidly to the old man, from whose eyes tears would make their way down his cheeks, and as they passed the old house upon which was the inscription, he said to him softly, "See there; up here is my New Year's Wish. If you have some sorrow, do pray, as the little verse bids us do."

They were now arrived at Anna's lodging, and sorrowfully did Volkmar open the door. Anna flew to meet him, and in a low voice acquainted him with her happiness. She begged him not to speak loud, because her husband, extremely exhausted from his long journey, was not yet awake. She took him by the hand, and conducted him to the young man, whom she had thought dead so long, and who was now in a deep slumber. He

seemed as if dreaming, and, pressing his heart with his hand, was anxiously saying, "My father! oh, my father! I am not guilty."

Volkmar threw himself towards the bed, and rousing him from his painful dream, cried out, "Wake! oh, wake up, my Otto! thy father is here!" for he recognised in him his long-lost son.

What a meeting! what happiness! Everything was cleared up by mutual explanations.

Otto had served in the army under a feigned name, and had, under the same name, married Anna. He had kept his former fate secret from her. In the last war he was made a prisoner, and had thus passed a long and tedious time in a remote part of the enemy's land; he was now liberated, and happy enough to find his wife and child again, together with his reconciled father.

The house of Volkmar is still in great repute; the family is extended, and carries on business with great activity. Over the door of their superb dwelling-house may be seen a marble tablet, with the following inscription: —

"In thy need, call to the Lord,
Pray to him in faith and trust,
And gracious aid he will afford."

It was Anna and her little boy who were sitting together on the evening of Christmas-day, at the time my story opened, when the inquisitive neighbour was so anxious to ascertain in what manner they were occupied.

For some few moments after the conclusion of this tale, no one spoke; each was too

deeply occupied in thinking of the happiness of the Volkmars. At length Eliza exclaimed, "Thank you! thank you, Natalia; this is the very prettiest story I have heard for a long, long time."

All joined in asserting the same, and cousin Natalia herself felt and looked as happy as any of whom she had been speaking.

THE END.

LONDON:
CLARKE, PRINTERS, SILVER STREET, FALCON SQUARE.