

FICTION

Susan Warner

Melbourne House

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FICTION

MELBOURNE HOUSE

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AUTHOR OF "WIDE, WIDE WORLD."

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." - *Prov. xx. 11*

LONDON

WARD LOCK AND C^o LIMITED

1907

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CHAPTER I.

DAISY'S QUESTION.

A little girl was coming down a flight of stairs that led up from a great hall, slowly letting her feet pause on each stair, while the light touch of her hand on the rail guided her. The very thoughtful little face seemed to be intent on something out of the house, and when she reached the bottom, she still stood with her hand on the great baluster that rested on the marble there, and looked wistfully out of the open door. So the sunlight came in and looked at her; a little figure in a white frock and blue sash, with the hair cut short all over a little round head, and a face not only just now full of some grave concern, but with habitually thoughtful eyes and a wise little mouth. She did not seem to see the sunlight which poured all over her, and lit up a wide, deep hall, floored with marble, and opening at the other end on trees and flowers, which showed the sunlight busy there too. The child lingered wistfully. Then crossed the hall, and went into a matted, breezy, elegant room, where a lady lay luxuriously on a couch, playing with a book and a leaf-cutter. She could not be *busy* with anything in that attitude. Nearly all that was to be seen was a flow of lavender silk flounces, a rich slipper at rest on a cushion, and a dainty little cap with roses on a head too much at ease to rest. By the side of the lavender silk stood the little white dress, still and preoccupied as before a few minutes without any notice.

"Do you want anything, Daisy?"

"Mamma, I want to know something."

"Well, what is it?"

"Mamma" Daisy seemed to be engaged on a very puzzling question "what does it mean to be a Christian?"

"*What?*" said her mother, rousing herself up for the first times to look at her.

"To be a Christian, mamma?"

"It means, to be baptised and go to church, and all that," said the lady, turning back to her book.

"But mamma, that isn't all I mean."

"I don't know what you mean. What has put it into your head?"

"Something Mr. Dinwiddie said."

"What absurd nonsense! Who is Mr. Dinwiddie?"

"You know him. He lives at Mrs. Sandford's."

"And where did he talk to you?"

"In the little school in the woods. In his Sunday-school. Yesterday."

"Well, it's absurd nonsense, your going there. You have nothing to do with such things. Mr. Randolph? "

An inarticulate sound, testifying that he was attending, came from a gentleman who had lounged in and was lounging through the room.

"I won't have Daisy go to that Sunday-school any more, down there in the woods. Just tell her she is not to do it, will you? She is getting her head full of the most absurd nonsense. Daisy is just the child to be ruined by it."

"You hear, Daisy," said Mr. Randolph, indolently, as he lounged finally out of the room by an open window; which, as did all the windows in the room, served for a door also. By the door by which she had entered, Daisy silently withdrew again, making no effort to change the resolution of either of her parents. She knew it would be of no use; for excessively indulgent as they both were in general, whenever they took it upon them to exercise authority, it was unflinchingly done. Her father would never even hear a supplication to reconsider a judgment, especially if pronounced at the desire of her mother. So Daisy knew.

It was a disappointment, greater than anybody thought or would have guessed, that saw her. She went out to the large porch before the door, and stood there, with the same thoughtful look upon her face, a little cast down now. Still she did not shed tears about the matter, unless one time when Daisy's hand went up to her brow rather quick, it was to get rid of some improper suggestion there. More did not appear, either before or after the sudden crunching of the gravel by a pair of light wheels, and the coming up of a little Shetland pony, drawing a miniature chaise.

"Hollo, Daisy! come along; he goes splendidly!"

So shouted the driver, a boy somewhat bigger than Daisy.

"Where are you going?"

"Anywhere down to the church, if you'll be quick. Never mind your hat!"

He waited, however, while Daisy dashed into the house and out again, and then stepped into the low chaise beside him. Then the eager intimation was given to the pony, which set off as if knowing that impatience was behind him. The smooth, wide, gravelled road was as good and much better than a plank flooring; the chaise rolled daintily on under the great trees; the pony was not forgetful, yet ever and anon a touch of his owner's whip came to remind him, and the fellow's little body fairly wriggled from side to side in his efforts to get on.

"I wish you wouldn't whip him so." said Daisy, "he's doing as well as he can."

"What do girls know about driving!" was the retort from the small piece of masculine science beside her.

"Ask papa," said Daisy, quietly.

"Well, what do they know about horses, anyhow!"

"I can *see*," said Daisy, whose manner of speech was somewhat slow and deliberate, and in the choice of words, like one who had lived among grown people. "I can observe."

"See that, then!" And a cut, smarter than ordinary, drove the pony to his last legs, namely, a gallop. Away they went; it was but a short-legged gallop after all; yet they passed along swiftly over the smooth gravel road. Great, beautiful trees

overshadowed the ground on either side with their long arms; and underneath, the turf was mown short, fresh and green. Sometimes a flowering bush of some sort broke the general green with a huge spot of white or red flowers; gradually those became fewer, and were lost sight of; but the beautiful grass and the trees seemed to be unending. Then a gray rock here and there began to show itself. Pony got through his gallop, and subsided again to a waddling trot.

"This whip's the real thing," said the young driver, displaying and surveying it as he spoke; "that *is* a whip now, fit for a man to use."

"A man wouldn't use it as you do," said Daisy. "It is cruel."

"That's what *you* think. I guess you'd see papa use a whip once in a while."

"Besides, you came along too fast to see anything."

"Well, I told you I was going to the church, and we hadn't time to go slowly. What did you come for?"

"I suppose I came for some diversion," said Daisy, with a sigh.

"Ain't Loupe a splendid little fellow?"

"Very; I think so."

"Why, Daisy, what ails you? there is no fun in you to-day. What's the matter?"

"I am concerned about something. There is nothing the matter."

"Concerned about Loupe, eh!"

"I am not thinking about Loupe. Oh, Ransom! stop him; there's Nora Dinwiddie; I want to get out."

The place at which they were arrived had a little less the air of carefully kept grounds, and more the look of a sweet wild wood; for the trees clustered thicker in patches, and grey rock, in large and in small quantities, was plenty about among the trees. Yet still here was care; no unsightly underbrush or rubbish of dead branches was anywhere to be seen; and the greensward, where it spread, was shaven and soft as ever. It spread on three sides around a little church, which, in green and gray, seemed almost a part of its surroundings. A little church, with a little quaint bell-tower and arched doorway, built after some old, old model; it stood as quietly in the green solitude of trees and rocks, as if it and they had grown up together. It was almost so. The walls were of native greystone in its natural roughness; all over the front and one angle the American ivy climbed and waved, mounting to the tower; while at the back, the closer clinging Irish ivy covered the little "apse," and creeping round the corner, was advancing to the windows, and promising to case the first one in a loving frame of its own. It seemed that no carriage-road came to this place, other than the dressed gravelled path which the pony-chaise had travelled, and which made a circuit on approaching the rear of the church. The worshippers must come humbly on foot; and a wicket in front of the church led out upon a path suited for such. Perhaps a public road might be not far off, but at least here there was no promise of it. In the edge of the thicket, at the side of the church, was the girl whose appearance Daisy had hailed.

"I sha'n't wait for you," cried her brother, as she sprang down.

"No go I don't want you," and Daisy made few steps over the greensward to the thicket. Then it was, "Oh, Nora! how do you do? what are you doing?" and "Oh, Daisy! I'm getting wintergreens." Anybody who has ever been nine, or ten, or eleven years old, and gone in the woods looking for wintergreens, knows what followed. The eager plunging into the thickest of the thicket; the happy search of every likely bank or open ground in the shelter of some rock; the careless, delicious straying from rock to rock, and whithersoever the bank or the course of the thicket might lead them. The wintergreens sweet under foot, sweet in the hands of the children, the whole air full of sweetness. Naturally their quest led them to the thicker and wilder grown part of the wood; prettier there, they declared it to be, where the ground became broken, and there were ups and downs, and rocky dells and heights, and to turn a corner was to come upon something new. They did not note nor care where they went, intent upon business and pleasure together, till they came out suddenly upon a little rocky height, where a small spot was shaded with cedars and set with benches around and under them. The view away off over the tops of the trees to other heights and hills in the distance was winningly fair, especially as the sun showed it just now in bright, cool light and shadow. It was getting near sundown.

"Look where we are!" cried Nora, "at the Sunday-school!"

Daisy seated herself without answering.

"I think," went on Nora, as she followed the example, "it is the very prettiest place for a Sunday-school that there ever was."

"Have you been in other Sunday-schools?" asked Daisy.

"Yes, in two."

"What were they like?"

"Oh, they were in a church, or in some sort of a room. I like being out-of-doors best; don't you?"

"Yes, I think so. But was the school just like this in other things?"

"Oh, yes; only once I had a teacher who always asked us what we thought about everything. I didn't like that."

"What you thought about everything?" said Daisy.

"Yes; every verse and question, she would say, 'What do you think about it?' and I didn't like that, because I never thought anything."

Whereat Daisy fell into a muse. Her question recurred to her; but it was hardly likely, she felt, that her little companion could enlighten her. Nora was a bright, lively, spirited child, with black eyes and waves of beautiful black hair; neither at rest; sportive energy and enjoyment in every motion. Daisy was silent.

"What is supposed to be going on here?" said a stronger voice behind them, which brought both their heads round. It was to see another head just making its way up above the level of their platform; a head that looked strong and spirited as the voice had sounded; a head set with dark hair, and eyes that were too full of light to let you see what colour they were. Both children came to their feet, one saying, "Marmaduke!" the other, "Mr. Dinwiddie!"

"What do two such mature people do when they get together? I should like to know," said the young man as he reached the top.

"Talking, sir," said Daisy.

"Picking wintergreens," said the other, in a breath.

"Talking! I dare say you do. If both things have gone on together, like your answers," said he, helping himself out of Nora's stock of wintergreens, "you must have had a basket of talk."

"*That* basket isn't full, sir," said Daisy.

"My dear," said Mr. Dinwiddie, diving again into his sister's, "that basket never is; there's a hole in it somewhere."

"You are making a hole in mine," said Nora, laughing. "You sha'n't do it, Marmaduke; they're for old Mrs. Holt, you know."

"Come along, then," said her brother; "as long as the baskets are not full the fun isn't over."

And soon the children thought so. Such a scrambling to new places as they had then; such a harvest of finest wintergreens as they all gathered together; till Nora took off her sun-bonnet to serve for a new basket. And such joyous, lively, rambling talk as they had all three, too; it was twice as good as they had before; or as Daisy, who was quiet in her epithets, phrased it, "it was nice." By Mr. Dinwiddie's help they could go faster and further than they could alone; he could jump them up and down the rocks, and tell them where it was no use to waste their time in trying to go.

They had wandered, as it seemed to them, a long distance they knew not whither when the children's exclamations suddenly burst forth, as they came out upon the Sunday-school place again. They were glad to sit down and rest. It was just sundown, and the light was glistening, crisp and clear, on the leaves of the trees and on the distant hill-points. In the west a mass of glory that the eye could not bear was sinking towards the horizon. The eye could not bear it, and yet every eye turned that way.

"Can you see the sun?" said Mr. Dinwiddie.

"No, sir," and "No, Marmaduke."

"Then why do you look at it?"

"I don't know!" laughed Nora; but Daisy said: "Because it is so beautiful, Mr. Dinwiddie."

"Once when I was in Ireland," said the gentleman, "I was looking, near sunset, at some curious old ruins. They were near a very poor little village where I had to pass the night. There had been a little chapel or church of some sort, but it had crumbled away; only bits of the walls were standing, and in place of the floor there was nothing but grass and weeds, and one or two monuments that had been under shelter of the roof. One of them was a large square tomb in the middle of the place. It had been very handsome. The top of it had held two statues, lying there with hands upraised in prayer, in memory of those who slept beneath. But it was so very old the statues had been lying there so long since the roof that sheltered them was gone, that they were worn away so that you could only just see that they had been statues; you could just make out the remains of what had been the heads and where the hands had been. It was all rough and shapeless now."

"What had worn the stone so?" asked Daisy.

"The weather the heat and the cold, and the rain, and the dew."

"But it must have taken a great while?"

"A very great while. Their names were forgotten nobody knew whose monument or what church had been there."

"More than a hundred years?" asked Nora.

"It had been many hundred."

"Oh, Duke!"

"What's the matter? Don't you believe that people died many hundred years ago?"

"Yes; but "

"And they had monuments erected to them, and they thought their names would live forever; but these names were long gone, and the very stone over their grave was going. While I sat there, thinking about them, and wondering what sort of people they were in their lifetime, the sun, which had been behind a tree, got lower, and the beams came striking across the stone and brightening up those poor old worn heads and hands of what had been statues. And with that the words rushed into my head, and they have never got out since, '*Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*'"

"When, Mr. Dinwiddie?" said Daisy, after a timid silence.

"When the King comes!" said the young man, still looking off to the glowing west, "the time when He will put away out of His kingdom all things that offend Him. You may read about it, if you will, in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, in the parable of the tares."

He turned round to Daisy as he spoke, and the two looked steadily into one another's faces; the child wondering very much what feeling it could be that had called an additional sparkle into those bright eyes the moment before, and brought to the mouth, which was always in happy play, an expression of happy rest. He, on his part, queried what lay under the thoughtful, almost anxious, search of the little one's quiet grey eyes.

"Do you know," he said, "that you must go home? The sun is almost down."

So home they went Mr. Dinwiddie and Nora taking care of Daisy quite to the house. But it was long after sundown then.

"What has kept you?" her mother asked, as Daisy came in to the tea-table.

"I didn't know how late it was, mamma."

"Where have you been?"

"I was picking wintergreens with Nora Dinwiddie."

"I hope you brought me some," said Mr. Randolph.

"Oh, I did, papa; only I have not put them in order yet."

"And where did you and Nora part?"

"Here, at the door, mamma."

"Was she alone?"

"No, ma'am Mr. Dinwiddie found us in the wood, and he took her home, and he brought me home first."

Daisy was somewhat of a diplomatist. Perhaps a little natural reserve of character might have been the beginning of it, but the habit had certainly grown from Daisy's experience of her mother's somewhat capricious and erratic views of her movements. She could not but find out that things which to her father's sense were quite harmless and unobjectionable, were invested with an unknown and unexpected character of danger or disagreeableness in the eyes of her mother; neither could Daisy get hold of any chain of reasoning by which she might know beforehand what would meet her mother's favour and what would not. The unconscious conclusion was, that reason had little to do with it; and the consequence, that without being untrue, Daisy had learned to be very uncommunicative; about her thoughts, plans, or wishes. To her mother, that is; she was more free with her father, though the habit, once a habit, asserted itself everywhere. Perhaps, too, among causes, the example of her mother's own elegant manner of showing truth only as one shows a fine picture, in the best light, might have had its effect. Daisy's diplomacy served her little on the present occasion.

"Daisy!" said her mother, "look at me." Daisy fixed her eyes on the pleasant, handsome, mild face. "You are not to go anywhere in future where Mr. Dinwiddie is. Do you understand?"

"If he finds you lost out at night, though," said Mr. Randolph, a little humorously, "he may bring you home."

Daisy wondered and obeyed, mentally, in silence; making no answer to either speaker. It was not her habit either to show her dismay on such occasions, and she showed none. But when she went up an hour later to be undressed for bed, instead of letting the business go on, Daisy took a Bible and sat down by the light and pored over a page that she had found.

The woman waiting on her, a sad-faced mulatto, middle-aged and respectable-looking, went patiently round the room, doing or seeming to do some trifles of business, then stood still and looked at the child, who was intent on her book.

"Come, Miss Daisy," said she at last, "wouldn't you like to be undressed?"

The words were said in a tone so low they were hardly more than a suggestion. Daisy gave them no heed. The woman stood with dressing gown on her arm and a look of habitual endurance upon her face. It was a singular face, so set in its lines of enforced patience, so unbending. The black eyes were bright enough, but without the help of the least play of those fixed lines, they expressed nothing. A little sigh came from the lips at last, which also was plainly at home there.

"Miss Daisy, it's gettin' very late."

"June, did you ever read the parable of the tares?"

"The what, Miss Daisy?"

"The parable about the wheat and the tares in the Bible in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew?"

"Yes, ma'am," came somewhat dry and unwillingly from June's lips, and she moved the dressing-gown on her arm significantly.

"Do you remember it?"

"Yes, ma'am, I suppose I do, Miss Daisy "

"June, when do you think it will be?"

"When will what, Miss Daisy?"

"When the 'Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' It says, 'in the end of this world' did you know this world would come to an end, June?"

"Yes, Miss Daisy "

"When will it be, June?"

"I don't know, Miss Daisy."

"There won't be anybody alive that is alive now, will there?"

Again unwillingly the answer came: "Yes, ma'am. Miss Daisy, hadn't you better "

"How do you know, June?"

"I have heard so it's in the Bible it will be when the Lord comes."

"Do you like to think of it, June?"

The child's searching eyes were upon her. The woman half laughed, half answered, and turning aside, broke down and burst into tears.

"What's the matter, June?" said Daisy, coming nearer and speaking awedly; for it was startling to see that stony face give way to anything but its habitual formal smile. But the woman recovered herself almost immediately, and answered as usual: "It's nothing, Miss Daisy." She always spoke as if everything about her was "nothing" to everybody else.

"But, June," said Daisy, tenderly, "why do you feel bad about it?"

"I shouldn't, I s'pose," said the woman desperately, answering because she was obliged to answer; "I hain't no right to feel so if I felt ready."

"How can one be ready, June? That is what I want to know. Aren't you ready?"

"Do, don't, Miss Daisy! the Lord have mercy upon us!" said June under her breath, wrought up to great excitement, and unable to bear the look of the child's soft grey eyes. "Why don't ye ask your papa about them things? he can tell ye."

Alas, Daisy's lips were sealed. Not to father or mother would she apply with any second question on this subject. And now she must not ask Mr. Dinwiddie. She went to bed, turning the matter all over and over in her little head.

CHAPTER II.

THE PONY-CHAISE.

For some days after this time, Mrs. Randolph fancied that her little daughter was less lively than usual; she "moped," her mother said. Daisy was not moping, but it was true she had been little seen or heard; and then it was generally sitting with a book in the Belvedere or on a bank under a rose-bush, or going out or coming in with a book under her arm. Mrs. Randolph did not know that this book was almost always the Bible, and Daisy had taken a little pains that she should not know, guessing somehow that it would not be good for her studies. But her mother thought Daisy was drooping; and Daisy had been a delicate child, and the doctor had told them to turn her out in the country and "let her run;" therefore it was that she was hardly ever checked in any fancy that came into her head. But therefore it was

partly, too, that Mrs. Randolph tried to put books and thinking as far from her as she could.

"Daisy," she said one morning at the breakfast-table, "would you like to go with June and carry some nice things down to Mrs. Parsons?"

"How, mamma?"

"How what? Do speak distinctly."

"How shall I go, I mean?"

"You may have the carriage. I cannot go, this morning or this afternoon."

"Oh, papa, mayn't I take Loupe and drive there myself?"

If Daisy had put the question at the other end of the table, there would have been an end of the business, as she knew. As it was, her father's "yes" got out just before her mother's "no."

"Yes she may," said Mr. Randolph "no harm. John, tell Sam that he is to take the black pony and go with the pony-chaise whenever Miss Daisy drives. Daisy, see that he goes with you."

"Well," said Mrs. Randolph, "you may do as you like, but I think it is a very unsafe proceeding. What's Sam? he's a boy."

"Safe enough," said Mr. Randolph. "I can trust all three of the party; Daisy, Loupe, and Sam. They all know their business, and they will all do it."

"Well! I think it is very unsafe," repeated Mrs. Randolph.

"Mamma," said Daisy, when she had allowed a moment to pass "what shall I take to Mrs. Parsons?"

"You must go and see Joanna about that. You may make up whatever you think will please her or do her good. Joanna will tell you."

And Mrs. Randolph had the satisfaction of seeing that Daisy's eyes were lively enough for the rest of breakfast-time, and her colour perceptibly raised. No sooner was breakfast over than she flew to the consultation in the housekeeper's room.

Joanna was the housekeeper, and Mrs. Randolph's right hand; a jewel of skill and efficiency; and as fully satisfied with her post and power in the world, at the head of Mr. Randolph's household, as any throned emperor or diademed queen; furthermore, devoted to her employers as though their concerns had been, what indeed she reckoned them, her own.

"Mrs. Randolph didn't say anything to me about it," said this piece of capability, "but I suppose it isn't hard to manage. Who is Mrs. Parsons? that's the first thing."

"She's a very poor old woman, Joanna; and she is obliged to keep her bed always; there is something the matter with her. She lives with a daughter of hers who takes care of her, I believe; but they haven't much to live upon, and the daughter isn't smart. Mrs. Parsons hasn't anything fit for her to eat, unless somebody sends it to her."

"What's the matter with her? ain't she going to get well?"

"No, never she will always be obliged to lie on her bed as long as she lives; and so, you see, Joanna, she hasn't appetite for coarse things."

"Humph!" said Joanna. "Custards won't give it to her. What does the daughter live upon?"

"She does washing for people; but of course that don't give her much. They are very poor, I know."

"Well, what would you like to take her, Miss Daisy?"

"Mother said you'd know."

"Well, I'll tell you what *I* think sweetmeats ain't good for such folks. You wait till afternoon, and you shall have a pail of

nice broth, and a bowl of arrowroot with wine and sugar in it; that'll hearten her up. Will that do?"

"But I should like to take something to the other poor woman, too."

"How are you going?"

"In my pony-chaise I can take anything."

Joanna muttered an ejaculation.

"Well then, Miss Daisy, a basket of cold meat wouldn't come amiss, I suppose."

"And some bread, Joanna?"

"The chaise won't hold so much."

"It has got to hold the basket," said Daisy in much glee, "and the bread can go in. And, Joanna, I'll have it ready at half-past four o'clock."

There was no air of moping about Daisy, when, at half-past four she set off from the house in her pony-chaise, laden with pail and basket and all she had bargained for. A happier child was seldom seen. Sam, a capable black boy, was behind her on a pony not too large to shame her own diminutive equipage; and Loupe, a good-sized Shetland pony, was very able for more than his little mistress was going to ask of him. Her father looked on, pleased, to see her departure; and when she had gathered up her reins, leaned over her and gave her with his kiss a little gold piece to go with the pail and basket. It crowned Daisy's satisfaction; with a quiet glad look and word of thanks to her father, she drove off.

The pony waddled along nicely, but as his legs were none of the longest, their rate of travelling was not precisely of the quickest. Daisy was not impatient. The afternoon was splendid, the dust had been laid by late rains, and Daisy looked at her pail and basket with great contentment. Before she had gone a quarter of a mile from home, she met her little friend of the wintergreens. Nora sprang across the road to the chaise.

"Oh, Daisy, where are you going?"

"I am going to carry some things for mamma, to a house."

"All alone?"

"No, Sam is there to take care of me."

Nora looked back at the black pony, and then at Daisy. "Isn't it nice!" she said, with a sort of half-regretful admiration.

"It's as nice as a fairy tale," said Daisy. "I'm just as good as a princess, you know, Nora. Don't you want to go, too? Do come."

"No, I mustn't there are people coming to tea Mrs. Linwood, and Charles and Jane I wish I could go! How far is it, Daisy?"

"About five miles. Down beyond Crum Elbow, a good nice way; but I shan't go through Crum Elbow."

"It's so splendid!" sighed Nora. "Well, good-bye. I can't go."

On went the pony. The roads were good and pleasant, leading through farm fields and here and there a bit of wood, but not much. It was mostly open country, cultivated by farmers; and the grain fields not yet ripe, and the grass fields not yet mown, looked rich and fair and soft in bright colours to Daisy's eyes, as the afternoon sun shone across them and tree shadows lay long over the ground. For trees there were, a great many, growing singly about the fields and fences, and some of them very large and fine. Daisy was not so busy with her driving but that she could use her eyes about other things. Now and then she met a farm wagon, or a labourer going along the road. The men looked at her curiously and pleasantly, as if they thought it a pretty sight; but once Daisy, passing a couple of men together, overheard one say to the other

"It's Randolph's folks they stick themselves up considerable."

The tone of the voice was gruff and coarse, and Daisy marvelled much in her little mind what had displeased the man in her or in "Randolph's folks." She determined to ask her father. "Stick ourselves up?" said Daisy thoughtfully "we *never* do!"

So she touched the pony, who was falling into a very leisurely way of trotting, and in good time came to Mrs. Parsons' door.

Daisy went in. The daughter was busy at some ironing in the outer room; she was a dull, lack-lustre creature, and though she comprehended the gifts that had been brought her, seemed hardly to have life enough to thank the donor. That wasn't quite like a fairy tale, Daisy thought. No doubt this poor woman must have things to eat, but there was not much fun in bringing them to her. Daisy was inclined to wonder how she had ever come to marry anybody with so lively a name as Lark. But before she got away, Mrs. Lark asked Daisy to go in and see her mother, and Daisy, not knowing how to refuse, went in as requested.

What a change! Another poor room to be sure, very poor it looked to Daisy; with its strip of rag carpet on the floor, its rush-bottomed chairs, and paper window-shades; and on the bed lay the bed-ridden woman. But with such a nice pleasant face; eyes so lively and quiet, smile so contented, brow so calm, Daisy wondered if it could be she that must lie there always and never go about again as long as she lived. It had been a matter of dread to her to see anything so disagreeable; and now it was not disagreeable. Daisy was fascinated. Mrs. Lark had withdrawn.

"Is your mother with you, dear?"

"No ma'am, I came alone. Mamma told me to ask Mrs. Parsons if there is anything she would like to have, that mamma could do for her."

"Yes; if you would come in and see me sometimes," said the old lady, "I should like it very much."

"Me?" said Daisy.

"Yes. I don't see young faces very often. They don't care to come to see an old woman."

"I should like to come," said Daisy, "very much, if I could do anything; but I must go now, because it will be late. Good-bye, ma'am."

Daisy's little courtesy it was pleasant to see, and it was so pleasant altogether that Mrs. Parsons had it over and over in her thoughts that day and the next.

"It's as nice as a fairy tale," Daisy repeated to herself, as she took her seat in the chaise again and shook up her reins. It was better than a fairy tale really, for the sunshine coming between the trees from the sinking sun, made all the world look so beautiful that Daisy thought no words could tell it. It was splendid to drive through that sunlight. In a minute or two more she had pulled up her reins short, and almost before she knew why she had done it or whom she had seen, Mr. Dinwiddie stood at her side. Here he was. She must not go where he was; she had not; he had come to her. Daisy was very glad. But she looked up in his face now without speaking.

"Ha! my stray lamb," said he, "whither are you running?"

"Home, sir," said Daisy, meekly.

"Do you know you have run away from me?"

"Yes, Mr. Dinwiddie."

"How came that?"

"It was unavoidable, sir," said Daisy, in her slow, old-fashioned way. But the bright eye of the young man saw that her eye fell and her face clouded over; it was not a slight nor a chance hindrance that had been in her way, he was sure.

"Then you don't mean to come to me any more."

It was a dreadful question, but Mr. Dinwiddie's way of speaking was so clear and quick and business-like, and he seemed to know so well what he was talking about, that the answer was forced from Daisy. She looked up and said, "No, sir."

He watched the soft thoughtful face that was raised towards him.

"Then if this is the last time we are to talk about it, Daisy, shall I look for you among those that will 'shine as the sun' in the Lord's kingdom?"

"Oh, sir, Mr. Dinwiddie," said Daisy, dropping her reins and rising up, "that is what I want to know about. Please tell me!"

"Tell you what?" said Mr. Dinwiddie, gathering up the reins.

"Tell me how to do, sir, please."

"What have you done, Daisy?"

"Nothing, sir only reading the Bible."

"And you do not find it there?"

"I find a great deal, sir; but I don't quite understand. I don't know how to be a Christian."

Daisy thought it might be her last chance; she was desperate, and spoke out.

"Do you love the Lord Jesus, Daisy?"

"I don't know, Mr. Dinwiddie."

"You know how He loves you? You know what He has done for you?"

"Yes I know "

"He died to save you from death and sin. He will do it if you trust Him. Now what He wants is that you should love Him and trust Him. 'Let the little children come to me,' He said a great while ago, and says now. Daisy, the good Lord wants you to give Him your heart."

"But suppose, Mr. Dinwiddie "

"Yes. What?"

"Suppose I can't. I don't know how."

"Do you want to do it?"

"Yes, sir. Indeed I do."

"Very well; the Lord knows just what your difficulty is; you must apply to Him."

"Apply to Him?" said Daisy.

"Ask Him."

"How, sir?"

"Pray to Him. Tell the Lord your trouble, and ask Him to make it all right for you. Did you never pray to Him?"

"No, sir not ever."

"My lamb," said Mr. Dinwiddie, "He will hear you, if you never prayed to Him before. I will show you the word of His promise." And he opened a pocket-Bible and found the place of these words which he gave Daisy to read : "I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God."

"Now is that what you want, Daisy?"

"Yes, sir; only I don't know how."

"Never mind; the Lord knows. He will make it all right, if only you are willing to give yourself to be His little servant."

"I will give Him all I have got, sir," said Daisy, looking up.

"Very well; then I will show you one thing more it is a word of the Lord Jesus. See 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments.' Now I want you to keep those two words, and you can't remember where to find them again I must let you take this book with you." And Mr. Dinwiddie folded down leaves in the two places.

"But Mr. Dinwiddie," said Daisy softly "I don't know when I can get it back to you again, sir."

"Never mind keep it, and when you don't want it, give it to some poor person that does. And remember, little one, that the good Lord expects His servants to tell Him their troubles and to pray to Him every day."

"Thank you, sir!" was Daisy's deep ejaculation.

"Don't thank me. Now will your pony get you home before dark?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Dinwiddie! Loupe is lazy, but he can go, and I will make him."

The chaise went off at a swift rate accordingly, after another soft grateful look from its little driver. Mr. Dinwiddie stood looking after it. Of a certain woman of Thyatira it is written that "the Lord opened her heart, that she attended to the things which were spoken." Surely, the gentleman thought, the same had been true of his late little charge. He went thoughtfully home. While Daisy, not speculating at all, in her simplicity sat thinking that she was the Lord's servant; and rejoiced over and over again that she had for her own and might keep the book of her Lord's commandments. There were such things as Bibles in the house, certainly, but Daisy had never had one of her own. That in which she had read the other night, and which she had used to study her lessons for Mr. Dinwiddie, was one belonging to her brother, which he was obliged to use at school. Doubtless Daisy could also have had one for the asking she knew that but it might have been some time first; and she had a certain doubt in her little mind that the less she said upon the subject the better. She resolved her treasure should be a secret one. It was right for her to have a Bible; she would not run the risk of disagreeable comments or commands by in any way putting it forward. Meanwhile she had become the Lord's servant! A very poor little beginning of a servant she thought herself; nevertheless, in telling Mr. Dinwiddie what she had, it seemed to Daisy that she had spoken aloud her oath of allegiance; and a growing joy in the transaction and a growing love to the great Saviour who was willing to let her be His servant, filled her little heart. She just knew that the ride home was lovely, but Daisy's mind was travelling a yet more sunshiny road.

She was intelligent in what she had done. One by one Mr. Dinwiddie's lessons had fallen on a willing and open ear. She knew herself to be a sinner and lost; she believed that the Lord Jesus would save her by His death; and it seemed to her the most natural and reasonable and pleasant thing in the world, that the life for which His blood had been shed, should be given to Him. "If ye love me, keep My commandments." "I wonder," thought Daisy, "what they are."

CHAPTER III.

THE BIRTHDAY.

"What sort of an expedition did you have, Daisy?" her father asked at breakfast next morning. Company the evening before had prevented any talk about it.

"Oh, very good, papa! It was as good as a fairy tale."

"Was it?" said Mr. Randolph. "I wonder what pitch of excellence that is. I don't remember ever finding a fairy tale very good to me."

"Did you ever read any, papa?"

"I don't know! Were you not tired with your long drive?"

"Oh, no, papa!"

"Would you like to go again?"

"Yes, papa, very much."

"You may go as often as you like only always let Sam be along."

"Did you find out what Mrs. Parsons wants?" said Mrs. Randolph.

"No, mamma she did not look as if she wanted anything, except to see me. And yet she is very poor, mamma."

At this speech Mr. Randolph burst into a round laugh, and even Mrs. Randolph seemed amused.

"Did she *look* as if she wanted to see you, Daisy?"

"Papa, I think she did," said Daisy, colouring; "she said so at any rate; but I could not find out what else she would like."

"Daisy, I think she showed very good taste," said Mr. Randolph, drawing his little daughter into his arms; "but it would be safe to take something else with you when you go."

"Your birthday is next week, Daisy," said her mother; "and your aunt Gary and your cousins will be here. What would you like to have, to celebrate the day?"

"I don't know, mamma," said Daisy, returning her father's kisses.

"You may have what you please, if you will think and tell me."

"Mamma, may I talk to Nora Dinwiddie about it?"

"Nonsense! What for?"

"Only to consult, mamma."

"Consult Ransom. He would be a much better help to you."

Daisy looked sober, and said nothing.

"Why not?" said Mr. Randolph. "Why not consult your brother?"

"Papa," said Daisy slowly, "Ransom and I do not understand each other."

"Don't you," said her father, laughing; "what is the cause of that, Daisy?"

Daisy was not very willing to answer, but being pressed by both father and mother, she at length spoke. "I think, papa, it is because he understands so many other things."

Mr. Randolph was excessively amused. "Ransom!" he called out to the hall.

"Please, papa, don't!" said Daisy.

"Ransom! come here. What is this? your sister says you do not understand her."

"Well, papa," said Ransom, an exceedingly handsome and bright-looking boy, and a great pet of his mother, "there are things that are not deep enough to be understood."

Daisy's lips opened eagerly and then closed again.

"Girls always use magnifying glasses where themselves are concerned!" went on Ransom, whose dignity seemed to be excited.

"Hush, hush!" said his father, "take yourself off, if you cannot maintain civility. And your mother does not like fishing-tackle at the breakfast-table go! I believe," he said as Ransom bounded away, "I believe conceit is the normal condition

of boyhood."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Randolph, "girls have enough of it and women too."

"I suppose it would be rash to deny that," said Mr. Randolph. "Daisy, I think I understand you. I do not require so much depth as is necessary for Ransom's understanding to swim in."

"If you do not deny it, it would be well not to forget it," said Mrs. Randolph; while Daisy, still in her father's arms, was softly returning his caresses.

"What shall we do on your birthday, Daisy." said her father, without seeming to heed this remark.

"Papa, I will think about it. Mamma, do you like I should talk to Nora about it?"

"By all means!" said Mr. Randolph; "send for her and hold a grand council. Your mother can have no objection."

Daisy did not feel quite so sure of that; but at any rate she made none, and a messenger was sent to ask Nora to come that afternoon. All the morning Daisy was engaged with her mother, going to make a visit to some friends that lived a long way off. It was not till the afternoon was growing cool and pleasant that she was released from dinner and dressing and free to go with her Bible to her favourite reading place; or rather one of her favourites; a garden seat under a thick oak. The oak stood alone on a knoll looking over a beautiful spread of grassy sward that sloped and rolled away to a distant edge of thicket. Other noble trees dotted the ground here and there; some fine cattle showed their red and white heads, standing or lying about in the shade. Above the distant thicket, far, far away, rose the heads of great blue mountains. The grass had just been mown, in part; and a very sweet smell from the hay floated about under the trees around the house. Daisy's tree however was at some distance from the house. In the absolute sweet quiet, Daisy and her Bible took possession of the place. The Bible had grown a wonderful book to her now. It was the book of the commandments of the Great King whose servant she felt herself. Now every word would tell her of something she must do, or not do; all sweet to Daisy; for she felt she loved the King, and His commandments were good to her. This time she got very much interested in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, in the parable of the talents. But she wished she could have had Mr. Dinwiddie to tell her a little better exactly what it meant. Some of its meaning she understood; and remembering Mr. Dinwiddie's words, she prayed with clasped hands and a very earnest little heart, that the Lord would "make her know what all her talents were and help her to make good use of them." Then Daisy went on studying.

In the midst of her studies, a light step bounded down through the shrubbery from the house, and Daisy had hardly raised her head when Nora was at her side. There was room for her on the seat, and after a glad greeting the children sat down together, to talk much joyful talk and tell childish news, in the course of which Daisy's perplexities came out, for which she had wanted Nora's counsel. She explained that she could have precisely what she chose, in the way of merry-making for her birthday. Daisy spoke about it seriously, as a weighty and important matter; and so Nora took it up, with a face of great eagerness.

"You can have *just* what you like, Daisy?" Daisy nodded. "Oh, what have you thought of, Daisy?"

"What would be nicest, Nora?"

"I'll tell you what *I* should have I should have a party."

"A party!"

"Yes, that is what I should have."

"I never thought of that. Who would you ask, Nora? I thought of a pic-nic; and of a great journey to Schroeder's Mountain; that would be nice; to spend the whole day, you know."

"Yes, that would be nice: but I should have a party. Oh, there are plenty to have. There is Kitty Marsden."

"I don't know Kitty Marsden, much" said Daisy.

"And Ella Stanfield."

"I like Ella Stanfield" said Daisy, sedately.

"And there are the Fishes."

"I don't like Mrs. Fish's children very well; when Alexander and Ransom get together, they make a great deal of disturbance!"

"Oh, we needn't mind their disturbance," said Nora; and she went on discussing the plan and the advantages of the party. Suddenly Daisy broke in with a new subject. "Nora, you know the story of the servants with the talents, in the New Testament?"

"Yes" said Nora, with open eyes; "I know."

"Do you know what it means? the talents, I mean; of course I know what the rest means; but do you know what the talents are? Is it just money? because then you and I have very little indeed; and all the servants had something."

"Why, Daisy, what made you think of that just now? we were talking about the party."

"I have been thinking of it all the while," said Daisy. "I was reading it do you know what it means, Nora?"

"But we were talking about the party!" said Nora.

"Yes, but I want to understand this; and then we will go on about the party. If you know what it means."

"I have heard Duke explain it," said Nora, unwillingly coming to the graver subject.

"Well, what does he say it is? the talents, you know."

"Duke says it is everything anybody has. Not money, *everything* Now don't you think we can make up a nice party?"

"Everything, Nora? Just wait a little I want to know about this. What do you mean by 'everything'?"

"Are you studying for Sunday-school, Daisy? that isn't the lesson."

"No," said Daisy sorrowfully; "if I was, I could ask Mr. Dinwiddie. That's why I want you to help me, Nora; so think, and tell me what he said."

"Well, that," said Nora, "he said that; he said the talents meant everything God has given people to work with for Him."

"What could they work with besides money?" said Daisy.

"Why, *everything*, Duke says; all they've got; their tongues and their hands and their feet, and all they know, and all their love for people; and even the way we do things, our studies and all, Marmaduke says. What do you want to know for, Daisy?"

"I was thinking about it," answered Daisy, evasively. "Wait a minute, Nora, I want to write it down, for fear I should forget something."

"What *are* you going to do?" exclaimed Nora. "Are you going to teach a class yourself?"

Daisy did not answer, while she was writing down with a pencil what Nora had said, and making her repeat it for that purpose. When she had done she looked a little dubiously off towards the woods, while Nora was surprised and disappointed into silence.

"I think perhaps I ought to tell you," was Daisy's slow conclusion. "I want to know what this means, that I may do it, Nora."

"Do it?"

"Yes," said Daisy, turning her quiet eyes full upon her companion "I want to try to please God. I love the Lord Jesus."

Nora was very much confounded, and looked at Daisy as if a gap in the ground had suddenly separated them.

"So," Daisy went on, "as I have talents to use, I want to know what they are, for fear I shouldn't use them all. I don't understand it yet, but I will think about it. Now we will go on about the party if you like."

"But, Daisy," said Nora.

"What?"

"Are you in earnest?"

"Certainly I am in earnest," said Daisy gravely. "What makes you ask me? Don't you think your brother is in earnest?"

"Marmaduke! oh yes, but you never told me of it before."

"I didn't know it till yesterday," said Daisy simply, "that I loved the Lord Jesus; but I know I do now, and I am very glad; and I am going to be His servant."

Her little face was very sweet and quiet as she looked at her little neighbour and said these words; but Nora was utterly confounded, and so nearly dismayed that she was silent; and it was not till several invitations in Daisy's usual manner had urged her, that she was able to get upon the subject of the party again, and to discuss it with any spirit. The discussion then did not come to any determination. Daisy was at least lukewarm in her fancy for that mode of spending her birthday; and separate plans of pic-nics and expeditions of pleasure were taken up and handled, sure to be thrown aside by Nora for the greater promise and splendour of the home entertainment. They broke up at last without deciding upon anything, except that Nora should come again to talk about it, and should at all events have and give her share in whatever the plan for the day might be.

Perhaps Daisy watched her opportunity, perhaps it came; but at all events she seized the first chance that she saw to speak with her father in private. He was sauntering out the next morning after breakfast. Daisy joined him, and they strolled along through the grounds, giving here and there directions to the gardener, till they came near one of the pleasant rustic seats, under the shade of a group of larches.

"Papa, suppose we sit down here for a moment and let us look about us."

"Well, Daisy," said her father, who knew by experience what was likely to follow.

"Papa," said Daisy as they sat down, "I want to ask you about something."

"What is it?"

"When I was in the chaise, driving Loupe the other day, papa, I heard something that I could not understand."

"Did you?"

"It was two men that passed me on the road; I heard one say to the other as I went by, that it was your carriage, and then he said that 'Randolph's folks were a good deal *stuck up*;' what did he mean, papa?"

"Nothing of any consequence, Daisy."

"But why did he say it, papa?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"I did not understand it nor like it, papa; I wanted to know what he meant."

"It is hardly worth talking about, Daisy. It is the way those who have not enough in the world are very apt to talk of others who are better off than themselves."

"Why, papa?"

"They were poor men, I suppose, weren't they?"

"Yes; papa working men."

"That class of people, my dear, are very apt to have a grudge against the rich."

"For what, papa?"

"For being able to live better than they do."

"Why, papa! do poor people generally feel so?"

"Very often, I think. They do not generally speak it out aloud."

"Then, papa," said Daisy, speaking slowly, "how do you know? What makes you think they feel so?"

Her father smiled at her eagerness and gravity.

"I see it, Daisy, when they do not speak it. They show it in various ways. Besides, I know their habit of talking among themselves."

"But papa, that is very bad."

"What?"

"That poor people should feel so. I am sure rich people are their best friends."

Her father stroked her head fondly, and looked amused.

"They don't believe that, Daisy."

"But *why* don't they believe it, papa?" said Daisy, growing more and more surprised.

"I suppose," said Mr. Randolph, rising, "they would be better satisfied if I gave them my horses and went afoot." A speech which Daisy pondered and pondered and could make nothing of.

They walked on, Mr. Randolph making observations and giving orders now and then to workmen. Here a man was mowing under the shrubbery; there the gardener was setting out pots of greenhouse flowers; in another place there were holes digging for trees to be planted. Daisy went musing on while her father gave his orders, and when they were again safe out of hearing she spoke. "Papa, do you suppose Michael and Andrew and John, and all your own people, feel so about you?"

"I think it is likely, Daisy. I can't hope to escape better than my neighbours."

"But, papa, they don't look so, nor act so?"

"Not before me. They do not wish to lose their places."

"Papa, couldn't something be done to make them feel better?"

"Why, Daisy," said her father laughing, "are you going to turn reformer!"

"I don't know what that is, papa."

"A thankless office, my dear. If you could make all the world wise, it would do, but fools are always angry with you for trying it."

The conversation ended, and left Daisy greatly mystified. Her father's people not liking him? the poor having ill-will against the rich, and a grudge against their pleasant things it was very melancholy! Daisy thought about it a great deal that day; and had a very great talk on the subject with Nora, who without a quarter of the interest had much more knowledge about it than Daisy. She had been with her brother sometimes to the houses of poor children, and she gave Daisy a high-coloured picture of the ways of living in such houses and the absence of many things by Daisy and herself thought the necessaries of life. Daisy heard her with a lengthening face, and almost thought there was some excuse for the state of feeling her father had explained in the morning. The question, however, was too long a one for Daisy; but she arrived at one conclusion, which was announced the next morning at the breakfast-table. Mrs. Randolph had called upon her to say what was determined upon for the birthday.

"Papa," said Daisy, "will there be a great plenty of strawberries next week?"

"Yes, I believe so. Logan says the vines are very full. What then?"

"Papa, you gave me my choice of what I would have for Wednesday."

"Yes. Is it my strawberry patch?"

"Not for myself, papa. I want you to have a great table set out of doors somewhere, and give a feast to all your work people."

"Daisy!" exclaimed Mrs. Randolph. "I never heard anything so ridiculous in all my life!"

Daisy waited with downcast eyes for her father to speak. He was not in a hurry.

"Would that give you pleasure, Daisy?"

"Yes, papa."

"Did Nora Dinwiddie put that scheme in your head?" asked Mrs. Randolph.

"She didn't like it at all, mamma. I put it into her head."

"Where did you get it?"

Daisy looked troubled and puzzled, and did not answer till her father said "Speak." Then, nestling up to him with her head on his breast, a favourite position, she said, "I got it from different sources, I think, papa."

"Let us hear, for instance."

"I think, partly from the Bible, papa and partly from what we were talking of yesterday."

"I wish you would show me where you found it in the Bible. I don't remember a strawberry feast there."

"Do you mean it in earnest, papa?"

"Yes."

Daisy walked off for a Bible not her own and after some trouble found a place which she showed her father; and he read aloud, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Mr. Randolph closed the book and laid it on the table, and drew his little daughter again within his arms.

"That child is in a way to get ruined!" said Mrs. Randolph, energetically.

"But Daisy, our work people are not lame or blind how will they do?" said her father.

"They are poor, papa. I would like to have the others too, but we can't have everybody."

Mr. Randolph kissed the little mouth that was lifted so near his own, and went on.

"Do you think then it is wrong to have our friends and neighbours? Shall we write to your aunt and cousins, and Gary McFarlane and Captain Drummond, to stay away?"

"No, papa," said Daisy, smiling, and her smile was very sweet, "you know I don't mean that. I would like to have them all; but I would like the feast made for the other people."

"You will let the rest of us have some strawberries?"

"If there are enough, papa. For that day, I would like the other people to have them."

Mr. Randolph seemed to find something as sweet as strawberries in Daisy's lips.

"It is the very most absurd plan I ever heard of!" repeated her mother.

"I am not sure that it is not a very good thing," remarked Mr. Randolph.

"Is it expected that on that day we are to do without servants in the house, and wait upon ourselves? or are we expected to wait upon the party!"

"Oh, mamma," said Daisy, "it isn't the servants it's only the out-of-door people."

"How many will there be, Daisy?" said her father; "have you numbered them up?"

"Not yet, papa. There is Logan, and Michael, and Mr. Stilton, and the two under-gardeners "

"And four hay-makers."

"Hay-makers, papa?"

"Yes there will be four of them in the fields next week. And there is the herdsman and boy."

"And there is old Patrick at the gate. That is all, papa."

"And are the ladies of all these families to be invited?"

"Papa! What do you think?"

"I have no doubt there will be strawberries enough."

"But I am afraid there would be too many children. Logan has six, and Michael has four, and I believe the herdsman has some; and there are four at the Lodge. And Mr. Stilton has two."

"What shall we do with them, Daisy?"

"Papa, we can't have them. I should like to have the men and their wives come, I think, and send some strawberries home to the children. Wouldn't that do best?"

"Admirably. And you can drive over to Crum Elbow and purchase some suitable baskets. Take the chaise and Sam. I expect you to arrange everything. If you want help, come and consult me."

"If mamma will tell Joanna," said Daisy, looking somewhat doubtfully towards the other end of the table.

"I have nothing to do with it," said Mrs. Randolph. "I have no knowledge how to order such parties. You and Joanna may do what you please."

Daisy's eye went to her father.

"That will do, Daisy," said he. "You and Joanna can manage it. You may have carte-blanche."

The earliest minute that she knew Joanna could attend to her, found Daisy in the housekeeper's room. Joanna was a tall, rather hard-featured woman, with skill and capacity in every line of her face however, and almost in every fold of her gown. She heard with a good deal of astonishment the project unfolded to her, and to Daisy's great delight gave it her unqualified approbation.

"It's a first-rate plan," said Joanna. "Now I like that. The men won't forget it. Where are you going to have the table set, Miss Daisy?"

"I don't know yet, Joanna. In some pretty, shady place, under the trees."

"Out-of-doors, eh!" said Joanna. "Well, I suppose that'll be as good a way as any. Now what are you going to have, Miss Daisy? what do you want of me?"

"Mamma and papa said I was to arrange it with you."

Joanna sat down and folded her arms to consider the matter.

"How many will there be?"

"I counted," said Daisy. "There will be about seventeen, with their wives, you know."

"Seventeen, wives and all?" said Joanna. "You'll have to get the carpenter or Mr. Stilton to make you a table."

"Yes, that's easy," said Daisy; "but Joanna, what shall we have on it? There will want to be a good deal, for seventeen people; and I want it handsome, you know."

"Of course," said Joanna, looking as if she were casting up the multiplication table "it'll have to be that, whatever else it is. Miss Daisy, suppose you let me manage it and I'll see and have it all right. If you will give orders about the strawberries, and have the table made."

"I shall dress the table with flowers, Joanna."

"Yes well " said Joanna, "I don't know anything about flowers; but I'll have the cake ready, and everything else."

"And tea and coffee, Joanna?"

"Why, I never thought of that! yes, to be sure, they'll want something to drink who will pour it out, Miss Daisy?"

"I don't know. Won't you, Joanna?"

"Well I don't know " said the housekeeper, as if she were afraid of being taken on too fast by her little counsellor "I don't know as there's anything to hinder, as it's your birthday, Miss Daisy."

Away went Daisy delighted, having secured just what she wanted. The rest was easy. And Daisy certainly thought it was as promising an entertainment as she could have devised. It gave her a good deal of business. The table, and the place for the table, had to be settled with Mr. Stilton, and the invitations given, and many particulars settled; but to settle them was extremely pleasant, and Daisy found that every face of those concerned in the invitations wore a most golden glow of satisfaction when the thing was understood. Daisy was very happy. She hoped, besides the pleasantness of the matter, it would surely incline the hearts of her father's work-people to think kindly of him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HAM.

It happened that one cause and another hindered Daisy from going to Crum Elbow to fetch the strawberry-baskets, until the very Tuesday afternoon before the birthday. Then everything was right; the pony chaise before the door, Sam in waiting, and Daisy just pulling her gloves on, when Ransom rushed up. He was flushed and hurried.

"Who's going out with Loupe?"

"I am, Ransom."

"You can't go, Daisy I'm going myself."

"You cannot, Ransom. I am going on business. Papa said I was to go."

"He couldn't have said it! for he said I might have the chaise this afternoon, and that Loupe wanted exercise. So, I am going to give him some. He wouldn't get it with you."

"Ransom," said Daisy trembling, "I have got business at Crum Elbow, and I must go, and you must not."

"Fiddlesticks!" said Ransom, snapping his fingers at her. "Business! I guess you have. Girls have a great deal of business! Here, Sam ride round mighty quick to Mr. Rush's, and tell Hamilton to meet me at the cross road."

And without another word to Daisy, Ransom sprang into the chaise, cracked his whip over Loupe's head and started him off in a very ungraceful but very eager waddling gallop. Daisy was left with one glove on and with a spirit thoroughly disordered. A passionate child she was not, in outward manner at least; but her feelings once roused were

by no means easy to bring down again. She was exceedingly offended, very much disturbed at missing her errand, very sore at Ransom's ill-bred treatment of her. Nobody was near; her father and mother both gone out; and Daisy sat upon the porch with all sorts of resentful thoughts and words boiling up in her mind. She did not believe half of what her brother had said; was sure her father had given no order interfering with her proceedings; and she determined to wait upon the porch till he came home, and so she would have a good opportunity of letting him know the right and the wrong of the case. Ransom deserved it, as she truly said to herself. And then Daisy sorrowed over her lost expedition, and her missing strawberry baskets. What should she do? for the next morning would find work enough of its own at home, and nobody else could choose the baskets to please her. Ransom deserved

In the midst of the angry thoughts that were breaking one over the other in Daisy's mind, there suddenly came up the remembrance of some words she had read that day or the day before. "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." This brought Daisy up short; her head which had been leaning on her hands suddenly straightened itself up. What did those words mean? There could be no doubt, for with the question came the words in the Lord's Prayer which she knew well, but had never felt till then. Forgive Ransom out and out? say nothing about it? not tell her father, nor make her grievance at all known to Ransom's discomfiture? Daisy did not want to yield. He *deserved* to be reprov'd and ashamed and made to do better. It was the first time that a real conflict had come up in her mind between wrong and right; and now that she clearly saw what was right, to her surprise she did not want to do it! Daisy saw both facts. There was a power in her heart that said, "No, I will not forgive," to the command from a greater power that bade her do it. Poor Daisy! it was her first view of her enemy; the first trial that gave her any notion of the fighting that might be necessary to overcome him. Daisy found she could not overcome him. She was fain to go, where she had just begun to learn she might go, "to the Strong for strength." She ran away from the porch to her room, and kneeled down and prayed that the King would give her help to keep His commandments. She was ashamed of herself now; but so obstinate was her feeling of displeasure against her brother, that even after she thought she had forgiven him, Daisy would not go downstairs again nor meet him nor her father, for fear she should speak words that she ought not, or fail of a perfectly gentle and kind manner.

But what to do about her baskets? A bright and most business-like thought suddenly came into her head. The breakfast-hour was always late; by being a little earlier than usual she could have plenty of time to go to Crum Elbow and return before the family were assembled. Splendid! Daisy went down the back stairs, and gave her orders in such a way that they should not reach Ransom's ear. If not put on the alert he was sure to be down to breakfast last of anybody. So Daisy went to bed and to sleep with her mind at rest.

It was so pleasant when she came out at half past six the next morning, that Daisy almost thought it was the prettiest time of all.

The morning air smelt so fresh, with the scent of the trees and flowers coming through the dew; and the light, was so cool and clear, not like the hot glow of later hours, that Daisy felt like dancing for very gladness. Then it was such a stroke of business to go to Crum Elbow before breakfast!

The pony and the chaise came up presently, and Sam and the black pony, all right, and every one of them looking more brisk and fresh than usual. And off they went; under the boughs of the dew-bright trees, where the birds seemed to be as glad as Daisy, to judge by the songs they were singing; and by and by out from the beautiful grounds of Melbourne, into the road. It was pleasanter there, Daisy thought, than she had ever seen it. The fields looked more gay in that clear early light, and the dust was kept down by the freshness in the air. It was delightful; and Loupe never went better. Daisy was a very good little driver, and now the pony seemed to understand the feeling in her fingers and waddled along at a goodly rate.

Crum Elbow was not a great many miles off, and in due time they reached it. But Daisy found that other people kept earlier hours than her father and mother at Melbourne. She saw the farmers were getting to work as she went on; and in the houses of the village there were signs that everybody was fully astir to the business of the day. It was a scattering village; the houses and the churches stood and called to each other across great spaces of fields and fences between; but just where the crossing of two roads made a business point, there was a little more compactness. There was the baker's, and the post-office, and two stores and various other houses, and a blacksmith's shop. Up to the corner where the principal store stood, came the pony and his mistress, and forthwith out came Mr. Lamb the storekeeper, to see what the little pony chaise wanted to take home; but Daisy must see for herself, and she got out and went into the store.

"Baskets," said Mr. Lamb. "What sort of baskets?"

"Baskets to hold strawberries little baskets," said Daisy.

"Ah! strawberry-baskets. That, ma'am, is the article."

Was it? Daisy did not think so. The storekeeper had showed her the kind of baskets commonly used to hold strawberries for the market; containing about half a pint. She remarked they were not large enough.

"No, ma'am? They are the kind generally used regular strawberry-baskets we have sold 'em nearly all out, but we've got a few left."

"They are not large enough, nor pretty enough," repeated Daisy.

"They'll look pretty when they get the strawberries in them," said the storekeeper, with a knowing look at her. "But here's a kind, ma'am, are a little neater maybe you would like these What do you want, child?"

There had come into the store just after Daisy a little poor- looking child, who had stood near, watching what was going on. Daisy turned to look at her as Mr. Lamb's question was thrown at her over the counter, in a tone very different from his words to herself. She saw a pale, freckled, pensive-faced little girl, in very slim clothing, her dress short and ragged, and feet bare. The child had been looking at her and her baskets, but now suddenly looked away to the shopkeeper.

"Please, sir, I want "

"There! stop," said Mr. Lamb; "don't you see I'm busy. I can't attend to you just now; you must wait. Are these baskets better, ma'am?" he said, coming back to Daisy and a smooth voice.

Daisy felt troubled, but she tried to attend to her business. She asked the price of the baskets.

"Those first I showed you, ma'am, are three pence apiece these are sixpence. This is quite a tasty basket," said Mr. Lamb, balancing one on his forefinger. "Being open, you see, it shows the fruit through. I think these might answer your purpose."

"What are those?" said Daisy, pointing to another kind.

"Those, ma'am, are not strawberry baskets."

"But please let me see one. What is the price?"

"These fancy baskets, ma'am, you know, are another figure. These are not intended for fruit. These are eighteen pence apiece, ma'am."

Daisy turned the baskets and the price over. They were very neat! they would hold as many berries as the sixpenny ones, and look pretty too, as for a festival they should. The sixpenny ones were barely neat they had no gala look about them at all. While Daisy's eye went from one to the other, it glanced upon the figure of the poor, patient, little waiting girl who stood watching her. "If you please, Mr. Lamb," she said, "will you hear what this little girl has to say? while I look at these."

"What do you want, child?"

The answer came very low, but though Daisy did not want to listen she could not help hearing.

"Mother wants a pound of ham, sir."

"Have you brought the money for the flour?"

"No, sir mother'll send it."

"We don't cut our hams any more," said the storekeeper. "Can't sell any less than a whole one and that's always cash. There! Go, child I can't cut one for you."

Daisy looked after the little ragged frock as it went out of the door. The extreme mystery of some people being rich and

some people poor, struck her anew, and perhaps something in her look as it came back to the storekeeper made him say,

"They're very poor folks, Miss Randolph the mother's sickly, and I should only lose my money. They came and got some flour of me yesterday without paying for it and it's necessary to put a stop to that kind of thing at once. Don't you think that basket'll suit, ma'am?"

Baskets? and what meant those words which had been over and over in Daisy's mind for the few days past?

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Her mind was in great confusion.

"How much does a ham cost, Mr. Lamb?"

"Sixteen pence a pound, ma'am," said the storekeeper rather dryly, for he did not know but Daisy was thinking a reproof to him.

"But how many pounds are there in a ham?"

"Just as it happens, ma'am sometimes twenty, and from there down to ten."

"Then how much does a whole ham cost?" said Daisy, whose arithmetic was not ready.

"A ham of fifteen pounds, ma'am, would be about two dollars and forty cents."

Daisy stood looking at the baskets, and thinking how much money she would have over if she took the sixpenny ones. She wanted twenty baskets; she found that the difference of price between the plain and the pretty would leave her twenty shillings in hand. Just enough! thought Daisy, and yet, how could she go to a strange house and offer to give them a ham? She thought she could not. If she had known the people; but as it was Daisy bought the pretty baskets and set off homewards.

"Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them" Daisy could see nothing along the road but those words. "That is my King's command to me and those poor people have got no breakfast. If I was in that little girl's place, I would *like* to have it given to me. But those other baskets would they do? I could make them do somehow Nora and I could dress them up with greens and flowers!"

The pony chaise stopped. Sam came up alongside.

"Sam, take those baskets back to the store. I am going back there."

Round came the chaise, and in five minutes more they were at the Crum Elbow corner again, for Daisy's heart-burning had not let her go far. Mr. Lamb was exceedingly mystified, as it was very unusual for young ladies like this one to come buying whole hams and riding off with them. However, he made no objections to the exchange, being a gainer by ten cents; for Daisy had asked for a ham of fifteen pounds.

Then Daisy enquired the way to the girl's house, and her name, and set off in a new direction. It was not far; a plain little brown house, with a brown gate a few yards from the door. Daisy got out of the chaise and opened the gate, and there stood still and prayed a little prayer that God would help her not to feel foolish or afraid when she was trying to do right. Then she went up to the door and knocked. Somebody said in a very uninviting tone of voice, "Come in!"

It was hard for Daisy; she had expected that somebody would open the door, but now she must go in and face all that was there. However, in she went. There was a poor room to be sure, with not much in it. A woman was taking some hot bread, just baked, out of a little cooking stove. Daisy saw the little girl standing by; it was the right place.

"Well!" said the woman, looking up at Daisy from her stove oven "what is it?" She looked pale and unhappy, and her words were impatient. Daisy was half afraid.

"I am Daisy Randolph" she began, gently.

"Go on," said the woman, as Daisy hesitated.

"I was in Mr. Lamb's store just now, when your little girl came to buy some ham."

"Well! what then?"

"Mr. Lamb said he would not cut any, and she was obliged to go without it."

"Well, what have you to do with all that?"

"I was sorry she was disappointed," said Daisy, more steadily; "and as Mr. Lamb would not cut one for her I have brought a whole one if you will please accept it. It is at the gate, because the boy could not leave the horses."

The woman set her bread on the floor, left the oven door open, and rose to her feet.

"What did you tell her, Hephzibah?" she said, in a threatening voice.

"I didn't tell her nothing," said the girl hurriedly "I never spoke to her."

"How did she know what you came for?"

"I was so near," said Daisy, bravely, though she was afraid, "that I couldn't help hearing."

"Well, what business was it of youm?" said the woman, turning upon her. "If we are poor, we don't throw it in anybody's face; and if you are rich, you may give charity to those that ask it. *We* never asked none of you and don't want it."

"I am not rich," said Daisy, gently, though she coloured and her eyes were full of tears; "I did not mean to offend you; but I thought you wanted the ham, and I had money enough to get it. I am very sorry you won't have it."

"Did Mr. Lamb tell you we were beggars?"

"No, not at all."

"Then what put into your head to come bringing a ham here? who told you to do it?"

"Nobody told me," said Daisy. "Yes there did, though. The Lord Jesus Christ told me to do it, ma'am."

"What do you mean?" said the woman, suddenly sobering as if she was struck.

"That's all, ma'am," said Daisy. "He had given me the money to buy the ham, and I heard that your little girl wanted it. And I remembered His commandment, to do to others what I would like they should do to me I didn't mean to offend you."

"Well, I ain't offended," said the woman. "I s'pose you didn't mean no harm; but we have some feelings as well as other folks. Folks may work, and yet have feelings. And if I could work, things would be well enough; but I've been sick, miss, and I can't always get work that I would like to do and when I can get it, I can't always do it," she added with a sigh.

Daisy wanted to go, but pity held her fast. That poor, pale, ragged child, standing motionless opposite her! Daisy didn't venture to look much, but she saw her all the same.

"Please keep the ham this time!" she broke out, bravely, "I won't bring another one!"

"Did nobody send you?" said the woman, eyeing her keenly.

"No," said Daisy, "except the Lord Jesus He sent me."

"You're a kind little soul!" said the woman, "and as good a Christian as most of 'em I guess. But I won't do that. I'd die first! unless you'll let me do some work for you and make it up so." There was relenting in the tone of these last words.

"Oh, that will do," said Daisy, gladly. "Then will you let your little girl come out and get the ham? because the boy cannot leave the horses. Good-bye, Mrs. Harbonner."

"But stop!" cried the woman "you hain't told me what I am to do for you."

"I don't know till I get home and ask there. What would you like to do?"

"My work is tailoring I learnt that trade; but beggars mustn't be choosers. I can do other things plain sewing, and washing, and cleaning, and dairy work; anything I *can* do."

Daisy said she would bring her word, and at last got off; without her ham, and in glee inexpressible. "They will have some for breakfast," she said to herself; for there had been something in little Hephzibah's eye as she received the great ham in her arms, that went through and through Daisy's heart and almost set her to crying. She was *very* glad to get away and to be in the pony chaise again, driving home, and she almost wondered at her own bravery in that house. She hardly knew herself; for true it was, Daisy had considered herself as doing work not of her own choosing while she was there; she felt in her Master's service, and so was bold where for her own cause she would have shrunk away. "But they have got something for breakfast! I think mine will be good when I get it," said Daisy.

Daisy, however, fell into a great muse upon the course of her morning's experience. To do as she would be done by, now seemed not quite so easy as she had thought; since it was plain that her notions and those of some other people were not alike on the subject. How should she know what people would like? When in so simple a matter as hunger, she found that some would prefer starving to being fed. It was too deep a question for Daisy. She had made a mistake, and she rather thought she should make more mistakes; since the only way she could see straight before her was the way of the command, and the way of duty, therefore; and she was very much inclined to think, besides, that in that way her difficulties would be taken care of for her. It had been so this morning. Mrs. Harbonner and she had parted on excellent terms and the gleam in that poor child's eyes!

CHAPTER V.

STRAWBERRIES.

Daisy was so full of her thoughts that she never perceived two gentlemen standing at the foot of the hall steps to receive her. Not till Loupe in his best style had trotted up the road and stopped, and she had risen to throw down her reins. Then Daisy started a little. One gentleman touched his cap to her, and the other held out his hands to help her to alight.

"You are just in time for breakfast, Miss Randolph. Is that the coach that was made out of a pumpkin?"

Daisy shook hands with the other gentleman, and made no answer.

"I had always heard," went on the first, "that the young ladies at the North were very independent in their habits; but I had no idea that they went to market before breakfast."

"Sam," said Daisy, "take the baskets to Joanna."

"What is in the baskets? eggs? or butter? or vegetables?
Where do you go to market?"

"To New York, sir," said Daisy.

"To New York! And have you come from there this morning? Then that is certainly also the pony that was once a rat! it's a witchcraft concern altogether."

"No sir," said Daisy, "I don't go to market."

"Will you excuse me for remarking, that you just said you did?"

"No, sir, I didn't mean that *I* went."

"How are gentlemen to understand you, in the future experience of life, if you are in the habit of saying what you do not mean?"

"I am not in the habit of it," said Daisy, half laughing, for she knew her questioner. He was a handsome young man, with a grave face and manner through all his absurd speeches; dressed rather picturesquely; and altogether a striking person in Daisy's eyes. To her relief, as they reached the hall her mother appeared.

"Come in to breakfast, Gary Daisy, run and get yourself ready."

And Daisy went, in great glee on various accounts. When she came down, everybody was at table; and for a little while she was permitted to eat her breakfast in peace. Daisy felt wonderfully happy. Such a pleasant breakfast, for the

talk among the elders went on very briskly; such pleasant work done already, such pleasant work to do all through the day; nothing but joy seemed to be in the air.

"And what did you get at market, Daisy?" suddenly asked the gentleman whom her mother called "Gary."

"I went to buy baskets," said Daisy, concisely.

"What else did you get at market?"

"I didn't go to market, sir."

"She told me she did" said Mr. Gary, looking at her father.

"Did you buy anything else, Daisy?" said her father, carelessly.

"Papa," said Daisy, colouring, "Mr. McFarlane asked me, I thought, where we went to market, and I told him New York. I did not mean that I went myself."

"Didn't you get anything but baskets?" said Mr. McFarlane mischievously.

"Papa," said Daisy, making a brave push, "if I only spend what you give me for my birthday, don't you think it would be considerate in Mr. McFarlane not to ask me any more?" But this speech set the gentlemen to laughing.

"Daisy, you make me curious," said her father. "Do you think it would be inconsiderate in *me* to ask?"

"Papa, I think it would."

"Answer, Daisy, directly, and don't be ridiculous," said her mother.

Daisy's face clouded, coloured, and the tears came into her eyes.

"Answer, Daisy, since it is put so," said her father, gravely.

"I bought a ham, papa."

But the shout that was raised at this was so uproarious that Daisy was almost overcome. She would certainly have made her escape, only she knew such a thing would not be permitted. She sat still, and bore it as well as she could.

"The baskets held eggs, no doubt," said Captain Drummond, the other gentleman.

"Roast potatoes would be better for your Irish friends, Daisy," said McFarlane. "Ham and eggs is good for the Yankees. It would be the best plan to make a fire out-of-doors and let each one cook for himself, according to his country. How do you expect to please everybody?"

"Come here, Daisy," said her father, kindly, and he put his arm round her and kissed her; "did you have money enough for your ham and your other purchases too?"

"Plenty, papa," said Daisy, gratefully.

"And why didn't you go yesterday afternoon, as I thought you intended?" Daisy's and Ransom's eyes met.

"Papa, it was a great deal pleasanter this morning than it would have been then; I never had such a nice ride."

"And what do you want done now? Is your table ready?"

"It will be ready Mr. Stilton is getting it ready."

"Who is invited, Daisy?" inquired Mr. McFarlane. "Do you intend to receive any except those who are not your friends?"

"I don't think those of a different class had better come," said Daisy.

"Daisy is quite right," said Mrs. Randolph.

"Do you not intend to show yourself?" said her husband, with some meaning.

"I? No! Certainly not. At her age, since you choose to indulge Daisy in her whim, she may do what she pleases."

Was this what the man meant by Randolph's people being "stuck up?" Daisy looked grave, and her father bade her run away and attend to her preparations.

Even then she went slowly and a little puzzled, till she reached the housekeeper's room; and there the full beauty of the occasion burst upon her. Such nice things as Joanna was making ready!

Daisy ran off at full speed to Logan to get a supply of greens and flowers to trim her baskets. Nora was coming to help her and be with her all day, and arrived just in time. With aprons and baskets full, the two children sought a hidden spot on the bank under the trees, and there sat down, with strawberry baskets in one heap, and the sprigs and leaves to dress them in another.

"Now throw off your hat," said Daisy. "It's shady enough, and you'll feel cooler. Now Nora. how shall we do? You try one, and I'll try one; that will be best; and then we can see. I want them to look very pretty, you know; and they are to be filled with strawberries to send home to the children; if we make them very nice they will go on the table, I think, and help dress it up."

For a time there was comparative silence, while the little hands turned and twisted the mosses and bits of larch and cedar and hemlock in and out of the openings of the baskets. It was not found easy at first to produce a good effect; hands were unused to the work; and Nora declared after half an hour she believed the baskets would look best plain, just as they were. But Daisy would not give up. She grew very warm indeed with the excitement of her efforts, but she worked on. By and by she succeeded in dressing a basket so that it looked rich with green; and then a bit or two of rosebuds or heath or bright yellow everlasting made the adornment gay and pretty enough. It was taken for a model; and from that time tongues and fingers worked together, and heat was forgotten.

"Isn't this pleasant!" exclaimed Daisy at length, dropping her work into her lap. "Isn't it just as pleasant as it can be, Nora?"

"Yes," said Nora, working away.

"Just see the river it's so smooth. And look up into the leaves; how pretty they are! and every one of them is trembling a little; not one of them is still, Nora. How beautiful the green is, with the sun shining through! Wouldn't you like to be a bird up there?"

"No," said Nora; "I'd rather be down here."

"I think it would be nice to be a bird," said Daisy; "it must be pleasant up in those branches only the birds don't know anything, I suppose. What do you think heaven must be like, Nora?"

"Daisy, you're so funny. What makes you think about heaven?"

"Why, you know," said Daisy slowly, "I expect to go there. Why shouldn't I think about it?"

"But you won't go there till you die," said Nora.

"I don't see what that has to do with my thinking about it. I shall die, some time."

"Yes, but Daisy, don't be so queer. You are not going to die now."

"I don't know about that," said Daisy; "but I like to think of heaven. Jesus is there. Isn't it pleasant, Nora, that He can see us always, and knows what we are doing?"

"Daisy, Marmaduke said he wished you would invite him to your party."

The turn Nora wished to give to Daisy's thoughts took effect for the moment. It was grievous; to wish so much for her friend and to have him join in the wish, and all in vain. But, characteristically, Daisy said nothing. She was only silent a moment.

"Nora, did you ever hear Mr. Dinwiddie say that poor people disliked rich people?"

"No. They don't dislike him, I know."

"Is Mr. Dinwiddie rich too?"

"Of course he is," said Nora.

"I shouldn't think anybody would dislike him," said Daisy; "but then he never seemed like rich people." She went into a muse about it.

"Well, he is," said Nora. "He has got as much money as he wants, I know."

"Nora, you know the parable of the servants and the talents?"

"Yes."

"Are you one of the good servants?"

Nora looked up very uneasily. Daisy's face was one of quiet inquiry. Nora fidgeted.

"Daisy, I wish you would be like yourself, as you used to be, and not talk so."

"But *are* you, Nora?"

"No, I don't suppose I am! I couldn't do much."

"But would you like to have the King say to you what He said to the servant who had one talent and didn't do anything?"

"Daisy, I don't want to have you talk to me about it," said Nora, a little loftily. "I have got Marmaduke to talk to me, and that's as much as I want."

"*I* mean to be one of them!" said Daisy gently. "Jesus is the king; and it makes me so glad to think of it! so glad, Nora. He is my King, and I belong to Him; and I *love* to give Him all I've got; and so would you, Nora. I only want to find out all I have got, that I may give it to Him."

Nora went on very assiduously with the covering of the baskets, and Daisy presently followed her example. But the talk was checked for a little.

"Nora, Jesus is *your* King, though," said Daisy again. "He made everything, and He made you; and He *is* your King. I wish you would be His servant too."

Daisy was greatly astonished at the effect of this speech; for Nora without speaking arose, left her baskets and greens on the ground, and set off from the spot with an air that said she did not mean to return to it. Daisy was too bewildered to speak, and only looked after her till she was too far to be recalled. What was the matter? Greatly puzzled and dismayed, she tried to find a possible answer to this question. Left alone on her birthday in the midst of her business, by her best friend, what could have brought about so untoward a combination of circumstances? Daisy could not understand it; and there was no time to go after Nora to get an understanding. The baskets must be finished. Luckily there did not much remain to be done, for Daisy was tired. As soon as her work was out of her hand, she went to see about the success of her table. It was done; a nice long, neat table of boards, on trestles; and it was fixed under a beautiful grove of trees, on the edge of a bank from which the view over the grounds was charming. Mr. Stilton was just gathering up his tools to go away, and looked himself so smiling and bright that Daisy concluded there was reason to hope her party was going to be all right; so with fresh spirit she went in to her own dinner.

After that it was busy times. The long table was to be spread with a table-cloth, and then the cups and plates in proper number and position, leaving the places for the baskets of strawberries. It was a grave question whether they should be arranged in a pyramid, with roses filling the spaces, or be distributed all round the table. Daisy and Joanna debated the matter, and decided finally on the simpler manner; and Logan dressed some splendid bouquets for the centre of the table instead. Daisy saw that the maids were bringing from the house pretty china dishes and cups; and then she ran away to get dressed herself. Just as this was almost done she saw her mother driving off from the house with several gentlemen in her party. It suddenly struck Daisy, who was to do the honours of the strawberry feast? She ran down stairs to find her father; she could not find him, he was out; so Daisy went to see that the setting the table was going

on all right, and then came and planted herself in the library, to wait for Mr. Randolph's coming in. And while she waited eagerly, she began to think about its being her birthday.

"Nine years old," thought Daisy; "there isn't much of my life passed. Perhaps, if I live a good while, I may do a great deal to serve the Lord. I wonder if I know all the things I can do now! all my 'talents'? I am afraid of missing some of them for not knowing. Everything I have, Mr. Dinwiddie said, so Nora said, is a talent of some sort or other. How strange Nora was to-day! But I suppose she will come and tell me what was the matter. Now about the talents I wish papa would come! This birthday was one talent, and I thought it would be a good thing if papa's people could be made to know that he is not 'stuck up,' if he is rich, but if neither he nor mamma come out to speak to them at all, I wonder what they will think?"

Daisy ran out again to view the table. Yes, it was looking very handsome. Joanna was there herself, ordering and directing; and china and glass, and flowers, and silver, made a very brilliant appearance, though none of the dishes were on the table as yet.

"But who is going to pour out the coffee and the tea, Joanna?" said Daisy. "Aren't you going to dress and come and do it for me?"

"La! Miss Daisy, I don't see how I can. I expect the best plan will be to have you do it yourself. That will give the most satisfaction, I guess."

"Joanna! I don't know how."

"Yes, you do, Miss Daisy; you'll have the coffee urn, and all you have to do is to turn the faucet, you know; and Sam will wait upon you, and if you want tea poured out, he can lift it for you. It'll taste twice as good to all the party if you do it."

"Do you think so, Joanna?"

"I don't want to think about it," said Joanna; "I know without thinking."

"But, Joanna, I can't reach the things."

"I'll have a high seat fixed for you. I know what you want."

Daisy stood watching; it was such a pleasure to see Joanna's nice preparations. And now came on the great dishes of strawberries, rich and sweet to the eye and the smell; and then handsome pitchers filled with milk and ice-water, in a range down the table. Then came great fruit cakes and pound cakes, superbly frosted and dressed with strawberries and rosebuds; Joanna had spared no pains. Great store of sliced bread and butter too, and plates of ham and cold beef, and forms of jelly. And when the dressed baskets of strawberries were set in their places all round the table, filling up the spaces, there was a very elegant, flowery, and sparkling appearance of a rich feast. Why was not Nora there? and with the next thought Daisy flew back to the library to find her father. He was found.

"Oh, papa," she said, gently, though she had rushed in like a little summer wind, "are you going to come to the feast?"

"What for, my dear?"

"Papa, they will all like it; they will be pleased."

"I think they will enjoy themselves better without me."

"Papa, I am sure they would be pleased."

"I should only make it a constraint for them, Daisy. I do not think they will want anything but the strawberries especially if *you* look at them."

"But mamma is not here to speak to them either, papa."

"You think somebody must speak to them, eh? I don't think I can make speeches, Daisy," said Mr. Randolph, stretching himself at ease in a chaise longue. "But perhaps I may step down and look at them by and by, my dear."

There was no more to be done, Daisy knew. She went slowly off over the grounds, meditating whether the people would be satisfied with so very at-arms'-length an entertainment. Would *this* draw the poor nearer to the rich? or the

rich nearer to the poor? Daisy had an instinctive, delicate sense of the want, which she set herself to do the best her little self could to supply. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you" that sweet and most perfect rule of high breeding was moving her now; and already the spirit of another rule, which in words she did not yet know, was beginning to possess her heart in its young discipleship; she was ready "to do good to all men, even as she had opportunity."

She went slowly back to the table. Nobody come yet. Joanna was there, putting some last touches. Suddenly a new idea struck Daisy, as she saw what a long table it was.

"Joanna there must be somebody else to wait. Sam can never do it all."

"He'll have to. James is busy, and Hiram. Sam's all that can be spared; and that's as much as ever."

"But I must have more, Joanna. Can't some of the maids come?"

"To wait? they wouldn't, Miss Daisy."

"Yes, they would, Joanna. You must make them, Joanna. Send Maria and Ophelia down here, and I'll tell them what I want of them. And quick, Joanna; and don't you tell them, please, what I want."

"I hope you'll grow up to marry the President, some day," said Joanna, walking off; "you could help him if he got puzzled!"

Poor Daisy almost felt as if she had the affairs of a nation on her hands, when she saw Mr. and Mrs. Stilton, dressed in their best, coming near through the trees. But the spirit of kindness was so thoroughly at work in Daisy, that it made her reception of her guests just what it ought to be, and she was delighted a few minutes after to see that their eyes were kindling with gratification. Logan looked at the table as if he had some right to take an interest in it; the hay-makers were open-mouthed; the women in a flutter of ribands and propriety; and the various people who had come upon the ground with doubtful expectancy, sat down to table proud and gay. It was a pretty sight! and prettier was the sight of little Daisy perched up at one end of the board, and with tremulous fingers filling cups of coffee, and ordering cups of tea.

"Miss Daisy," said Mrs. Stilton, "it's too much trouble for you to fill all them cups sha'n't I come there, and take the responsibility? if you would delegate me."

Gladly Daisy agreed, slipped off her high chair, and saw Mrs. Stilton's full portly figure take the place. But Daisy's labours were not ended. She saw one of the Irish labourers sitting with his eyes straight before him, and nothing on his plate for them to look at. Daisy went round. It was her feast; she felt she must do the honours.

"Will you have a cup of coffee?" said a soft little voice at the man's elbow. He started.

"Ach! Sure Miss, I wouldn't be troublesome."

"It's no trouble. Will you have some tea or some coffee?"

"Dade, sorrow a drop ever I tuk of ary one of 'em but the one time, plase yer ladyship. It's too good for me, sure; that's why it don't agree wid me, Miss."

Very much puzzled by the confidential little nod with which this information was communicated, Daisy yet felt she could not give up the matter.

"Then what will you have? some ham? or some strawberries?"

"Sure I'll do very well, niver fear, plase yer ladyship; don't trouble yerself. The angels wouldn't want something purtier to eat, than what we have, Miss!"

Daisy gave up in despair, and charged Sam to see that the man had his supper. Then, without asking any more questions, she carried a cup of coffee down the table to a meek-looking old woman who likewise seemed to be in a state of bewilderment. It was the mother of Michael the gate-keeper. She started a little too, as Daisy's hand set down her cup, and half rose from her chair.

"Blessings on ye, for a dear little lady! It's a wonder to see the likes of you. The saints above bless the hand and the fut that wasn't above doing that same! and may ye always have plenty to wait on ye, and the angels of heaven above all!"

"Sit down, Mrs. Sullivan," said Daisy. "Do you like coffee?"

"Do I like it! It's better to me nor anything else in the worruld, when it wouldn't be a sup o' summat now and thin, if I'd have the rheumatiz."

"A sup of what?"

"Medicine, dear, medicine that I take whin the doctor says it's good for me. May you niver know the want of it, nor of anything in the wide worruld! and niver know what it is to be poor!"

Daisy managed to get the old woman to eat, supplying her with various things, every one of which was accepted with "Thank you, Miss," and "Blessings on ye!" and turning away from her at last, saw her handmaids approaching from the house. The girls, however disposed to stand upon their dignity, could not refuse to do what their little mistress was doing; and a lively time of it they and Daisy had for the next hour, with all the help Sam and Mrs. Stilton could give them. Daisy saw that strawberries and cream, cake and coffee, were thoroughly enjoyed; she saw too that the honour of being served off silver and china was duly felt. If her father had but come out to say a kind word! but he did not come. His little substitute did all a substitute could do; and at last when everybody seemed in full tide of merrymaking, she stole away that they might have no constraint upon it. Before she had got far, she was startled by a noise behind her, and looking round saw that all the tableful had risen to their feet. The next instant there was a great shout. Daisy could not imagine what they were doing, but she saw that they were all looking at her. She came back a step or two. Now there was another shout greater than the other; the women flourished handkerchiefs, the men waved their arms above their heads. "Long life to ye!" "Good luck to ye forever!" "Blessings on ye for a lady!" "Many thanks to ye, Miss Daisy!" "May ye niver want as good!" "Hurrah for the flower of Melbourne!" Shouts various and confused at last made Daisy comprehend they were cheering *her*. So she gave them a little courtesy or two, and walked off again as fast as she thought it was proper to go.

She went home and to the library, but found nobody there; and sat down to breathe and rest; she was tired. Presently Ransom came in.

"Hallo, Daisy! is nobody here?"

"No."

"Have you seen your things yet?"

"My things? what things?"

"Why, your *things* your birthday things. Of course you haven't, or you'd know. Never mind, you'll know what I mean by and by. I say, Daisy."

"What?"

"You know when papa asked you this morning why you didn't go yesterday to Crum Elbow? "

"Yes."

"Why didn't you tell him?"

Daisy hesitated. Ransom was cutting a pencil vigorously, but as she was silent he looked up.

"Why didn't you tell him? did you tell him *afterwards*?"

"Why, no, Ransom!"

"Well, why didn't you? that's what I want to know. Didn't you tell anybody?"

"No, of course not."

"Why didn't you, then?"

"Ransom," said Daisy, doubtfully.

"What? I think you're turned queer."

"I don't know whether you'd understand me."

"Understand *you!* That's a good one! I couldn't understand *you!* I should rather like to have you try."

"Well, I'll tell you," said Daisy.

"Just do."

"Ransom, you know who the Lord Jesus Christ is."

"I used to; but I have forgotten."

"Oh, Ransom!"

"Come, go ahead, and don't palaver."

"I am His servant," said Daisy; "and He has bid me do to other people what I would like to have them do to me."

"He has bid you! What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean. It is in the Bible."

"What's in the Bible?"

"*That;* that I must do to other people what I would like to have them do to me."

"And I suppose you thought I wouldn't like to have you tell? Well you're out, for I don't care a shot about it there! and you may tell just as fast as you're a mind to."

"Oh, Ransom! you know "

"What do I know?"

"It's no matter," said little Daisy, checking herself.

"Go ahead, and finish! What is the use of breaking off? That's the way with girls; they don't know how to speak English. You may just as well say the whole of something ugly, as the half of it."

If Daisy was tempted to comply with the request, she did not give way to the temptation; for she was silent; and in a mood less pleasant than her own apparently, Ransom took himself out of her presence. Left alone, Daisy presently curled herself down on a couch, and being very tired fell asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EPERGNE.

Daisy slept on, until a bustle and sounds of voices and laughter in the hall, and boots clattering over the marble and up the staircase, at last found their way into her ears.

The riding party had got home. Daisy sat up and rubbed her eyes and looked out.

The sun was low, and shining from the western mountains over the tops of all the trees. It was certainly near dinner-time; the cool glittering look of the light on the trees and shrubs could not be earlier than that. What had become of the strawberry feast? It seemed like a dream. Daisy shook off the remains of her sleep and hurried out by one of the glass doors to go and see. She ran down to the bank where the table was spread. It was a feast over. The company were gone, so were the baskets of strawberries; yes, and the very bouquets of flowers had been taken away. That was a sign of pleasure. Nothing was left but the disordered table. Daisy hoped the people had had a good time, and slowly went

back towards the house. As she came near the library window she saw her father, standing in it.

"Well, Daisy?"

"Well, papa."

"How has the feast gone off?"

"I don't know, papa. There's nothing left but the boards and the cups and saucers."

Mr. Randolph sat down and drew his little daughter up to his side.

"Have you enjoyed it, Daisy?"

"Yes papa I have enjoyed it pretty well."

"Only pretty well! for your birthday! Do you think now you made a good choice, Daisy?"

"Yes, sir I think I did."

"What has been wanting? I am afraid your ham did not figure on the board, if it is so empty?"

Daisy did not answer, but her father, watching her, saw something in her face which made him pursue the subject.

"Did it?"

"No, papa," said Daisy, colouring a little.

"How was that?"

"Joanna arranged everything that was to go on the table."

"And left the ham out of the question? It seems to me that was a mistake, though I am not much of a housekeeper. Why was that?"

"Papa," said Daisy, "do you think I would make a wrong use of a ham?"

Mr. Randolph laughed. "Why, Daisy, unless you are a finished economist, that might be. Do you mean that I am not to know the particular use made of this ham."

"Papa, I wish you would not desire to know!"

But Daisy's face was too much in earnest. "I think I cannot grant that request," said her father. "You must tell me."

Daisy looked distressed. But she dared not evade the order, though she feared very much what might come of it.

"I didn't buy the ham for the party, papa."

"Then for what?"

"I bought it, papa, for a little girl who was going without her breakfast. She came to Mr. Lamb's to buy ham, and she had no money, and he wouldn't let her have any."

"And what became of your baskets?"

"Oh, I got them, papa; I got cheaper ones; and Nora and I dressed them with greens. I had money enough."

Mr. Randolph took his little daughter on his knee, and softly put down his lips to kiss her.

"But Daisy, after all, why did you not go to Crum Elbow yesterday afternoon, as you meant to do?"

"Papa, this morning did better, for it was pleasanter."

"Do you call that an answer?" said Mr. Randolph, who was still softly kissing her.

"Papa, if you would be so *very* good as not to ask me that?"

"I am not good at all, Daisy. I ask, and I mean to know."

Daisy was in trouble. No entreaty was worth a straw after that. She was puzzled how to answer.

"Papa," she ventured, "I don't like to tell you, because Ransom would not like I should."

"Ransom's pleasure must give way to mine, Daisy."

"He wanted the pony-chaise," said Daisy, looking very downcast.

"And you gave it him?"

"No, sir."

"What then? Daisy," said Mr. Randolph, bringing her head round to face him, "tell me what I want to know without any more questions."

"He took the chaise, papa, that was all, so I went this morning."

"Ransom knew you wanted it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, Daisy, tell me further, why you did not give me this information when I asked about your drive this morning at breakfast?"

"Papa, I thought Ransom would not like to have it told."

"Were you afraid he would revenge himself in any way if you did?"

"Oh, no, papa! not at all."

"Then what moved you to silence?"

"Why, papa, I did not want to trouble Ransom. I was afraid you would be displeased with him perhaps, if I told."

"Were you not displeased when he took the chaise?"

"Yes, papa," said Daisy, softly.

"And had your displeasure all gone off by this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Randolph was not quite satisfied. There was no doubting Daisy; but he had reasons of his own for knowing that she had not said to him quite all that she had confessed to her brother. He would have liked the whole confession; but did not see how he could get at it just now. He took a little gold piece out of his pocket, and quietly slipped it into Daisy's hand.

"Papa! what is this for?"

"For your poor woman, if you like. You can send it to her by Sam."

"Oh, thank you, papa! But, papa, she won't take it so she will not take the least thing without working to pay for it."

"How do you know?"

"She told me so, papa."

"Who told you so?"

"The poor woman Mrs. Harbonner."

"Where did you see her?"

"I saw her at her house, papa."

"Why did you go to her house?"

"To take her the ham, sir."

"And she told you she wouldn't have anything without doing work for it eh?"

"Yes, papa she wouldn't even take the ham any other way."

"What work did you engage her to do, Daisy?"

"I thought Joanna could find her some, papa."

"Well, let Joanna manage it. You must not go there again, nor into any strange house, Daisy, without my leave. Now go and get ready for dinner, and your part of your birthday."

Daisy went very soberly. To see Mrs. Harbonner and her daughter again, and to do them all sorts of good, had been a dream of hers, ever since the morning. Now this was shut off. She was very sorry. How were the rich to do good to the poor, if they never came together? A question which Daisy thought about while she was dressing. Then she doubted how her feast had gone; and she had been obliged to tell of Ransom. Altogether, Daisy felt that doing good was a somewhat difficult matter, and she let June dress her in very sober silence. Daisy was elegantly dressed for her birthday and the dinner. Her robe was a fine beautifully embroidered muslin, looped with rose ribands on the shoulder and tied with a broad rose-coloured sash round the waist. There was very little rose in Daisy's cheeks, however; and June stood and looked at her when she had done, with mingled satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

"You've tired yourself to-day, Miss Daisy, with making that party for the men!" she said.

"Have you done? Now, June, will you go away, please, and leave me my room for a few minutes?"

"Yes, Miss Daisy but it's most time for you to go down."

June went, and Daisy locked her doors, and dropped on her knees by her little bed. How was she to know what was right to do? and still more, how was she to do it wisely and faithfully? Little Daisy went to her stronghold, and asked for help; and that she might know what her talents were.

"Miss Daisy," said the voice of June at the door, "you are wanted in the library."

Down went Daisy in a hurry. There was her father; and there also, to her great surprise, were Nora and Mr. Dinwiddie!

"I have brought Nora to make her peace with you, Daisy," said Mr. Dinwiddie. "I found her in great trouble because, she said, you were offended with her. Will you love her again?"

Daisy put her arms round Nora, who looked a little ashamed, and gave her a very peaceful and reassuring kiss. The gentlemen both smiled at her action. It was too graceful to need the aid of words.

"My mission is successful," said Mr. Dinwiddie.

"But I was not offended the least bit, Mr. Dinwiddie," said Daisy.

"I believe it; but Nora thought you had so much reason, that she would not come alone to make her apology."

The young man looked towards Mr. Randolph, whose attention was just then taken by somebody who had come to him on business. He waited.

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Dinwiddie." said Daisy.

"I must go."

"But I want to ask you a question, sir."

Mr. Dinwiddie sat down.

"Mr. Dinwiddie," said Daisy with a grave face, "what are my talents?"

"What is the question, Daisy? I do not understand."

"You know, sir one servant had ten and another had five.
What are my talents?"

"I do not know."

"But how can I tell, Mr. Dinwiddie?"

Then the young man's eyes glowed, as Daisy had a few times seen them do before.

"Ask the Lord, Daisy. See what His word tells you to do."

"But Mr. Dinwiddie, I am little; I can't do much."

"*You* cannot do anything. But Jesus can use you, to do what He pleases, if you will be His little servant. Give me that spoon, Nora."

"But, Marmaduke "

"Yes I know," said her brother. He took from Nora's hand? and unfolded from its wrapping-paper a very curious thing, which he told Daisy was an Egyptian spoon. He did not give her time to look at it, only he held it so that she saw what it was.

"You see that spoon, Daisy. It cannot do anything. But in your hand it might carry drops of comfort to somebody's lips."

Daisy looked earnestly at the spoon, then at the bright eyes that were fixed on her; and taking his meaning, she smiled, a bright, satisfied smile. It satisfied Mr. Dinwiddie too. He wrapped up the spoon again, handed it to Nora, and rose up to make his adieus to Mr. Randolph.

"Daisy," whispered Nora, "this spoon is for you. Will you take it for my birthday present? Marmaduke says it is very handsome. It is his he gave it to me to give to you."

"It is very, very old," said Mr. Dinwiddie, coming to Daisy. "It was found in an old Egyptian tomb, and was made and put there perhaps before the Israelites came out of Egypt. Good bye!"

He took Daisy's hand with a strong, kindly grasp, and went away with his little sister just as the dinner-bell rang. Daisy had not time to look at her present. She held it tight, and went in to dinner with it in her hand.

Daisy did not generally dine with her father and mother. To-day was a great exception to the rule. Even to-day she was not expected to eat anything till the dessert came on; she had had her dinner; so she had the more time for other things. Her place was by her mother; Captain Drummond on the other side, and Gary McFarlane opposite. Then her aunt, Mrs. Gary, had arrived, just an hour before dinner; and she and her children and one or two other friends filled the table, and the talking and laughing went round faster than the soup. Daisy looked and listened, very much pleased to see her aunt and cousins, and amused; though, as usual, in her quiet fashion, she gave no sign of it.

"How did that party come off, Daisy?" said Mr. Gary McFarlane.

"What party?" said Mrs. Gary.

"Daisy's birthday entertainment."

"Daisy invited all the gardeners and haymakers to take supper and strawberries with her, Aunt Gary," said Ransom.

"What is that?" said Mrs. Gary, looking to her sister.

"Ransom has stated the matter correctly."

"Gardeners and haymakers! What was that for, Daisy?"

"I thought it would give them pleasure, aunt Gary, " said Daisy.

"Give *them* pleasure! of course, I suppose it would; but are we to give everybody pleasure that we can? At that rate, why not invite our footmen and chambermaids too? Why stop?"

"I suppose that will be the next thing," said Mrs. Randolph.

"Daisy, you must not eat that cheese."

"What's Daisy's notion?" said Mrs. Gary, appealing to her brother-in-law.

"A child's notion," said Mr. Randolph. "The worst you can say of it is, that it is Arcadian."

"How did it go off, Daisy?" said Gary McFarlane.

"I don't know," said Daisy. "I think it went off pretty well."

"How did the hob-nails behave themselves?"

"They had lots of things to eat," said Ransom. "I don't believe we shall have any strawberries for a day or two ourselves."

"Did you give them strawberries?" said Mrs. Gary.

"A tableful," said Ransom; "and baskets and baskets to take home."

"Something new, " said Mrs. Gary, eating her salad.

"But how did the company behave?" said Mr. McFarlane.

"I saw no behaviour that was not proper," Daisy answered, gravely. She thought as much could not be said of the present company, seeing that servants were present.

"What have you there, Daisy?" said her mother.

"It is a birthday present, mamma. It is an Egyptian spoon."

"An Egyptian spoon! Where did you get it?"

"Mr. Dinwiddie I mean, Nora gave it to me."

"What about Mr. Dinwiddie?"

"Nothing, mamma."

"Then why did you speak his name?"

"I don't know. He brought Nora to see me just now."

"Where did you see him?"

"In the library."

"Mr. Randolph" said the lady "did Mr. Dinwiddie call to see you?"

"He did me that honour," said Mr. Randolph; "but I think primarily his visit was to Daisy."

"Who is Mr. Dinwiddie?" said Mrs. Gary, seeing a contraction in her sister's brow. "It's a Virginian name."

"He is a fanatic," said Mrs. Randolph. "I don't know what else he is."

"Let us see the fanatic's spoon," said Gary McFarlane.

"Egyptian, is it, Daisy? Curious, upon my word!"

"Beautiful!" said Captain Drummond, taking the spoon in his turn across the table. "Beautiful! This is a nice piece of carving and very old it undoubtedly is. This is the lotus, Daisy this stem part of the spoon; and do you see, in the bowl here is the carving of a lake, with fish in it?"

"Is it?" said Daisy; "and what is a *lotus*, Captain Drummond?"

"If you will put me in mind to-morrow, privately, I will tell you about it," said he.

"Let me look at that, Captain Drummond," said Mrs. Gary. "Why, here's a duck's head at the end of the handle. What a dear old thing! Who is this Mr. Dinwiddie, pray?"

"The duck's bill makes the spoon, aunt Gary," said Daisy.

"If you asked me *what* he is, I have told you," said Mrs. Randolph.

"He is a young man, of good family I believe, spending the summer with a neighbour of ours who is his relation," Mr. Randolph answered.

"What is he a fanatic about?"

This question did not get an immediate answer; the conversation diverged, and it was lost. Daisy's spoon made the round of the company. It was greatly admired, both from its oddness and from the beauty of its carving.

"Daisy, I will buy this spoon of you," said her aunt.

Daisy thought not; but she said, "With what, aunt Gary?"

"With anything you please. Do you set a high value on it? What is it worth?"

Daisy hesitated; and then she said, "I think it is worth my regard, aunt Gary!"

She could not guess why there was a general little laugh round the table at this speech.

"Daisy, you are an original," said Mrs. Gary. "May I ask, why this piece of old Egypt deserves your regard?"

"I think anything does, aunt Gary, that is a gift," Daisy said, a little shyly.

"If your first speech sounded forty years old, your second does not," said the lady.

"Arcadian again, both of them," Mr. Randolph remarked.

"You always take Daisy's part," said the lady briskly. But Mr. Randolph let the assertion drop.

"Mamma," said Daisy, "what is an original?"

"Something your aunt says you are. Do you like some of this *biscuit*, Daisy?"

"If you please, mamma. And mamma, what do you mean by a fanatic?"

"Something that I will not have you," said her mother, with knitting brow again.

Daisy slowly eat her biscuit-glace and wondered wondered what it could be that Mr. Dinwiddie was, and that her mother was determined she should not be.

Mr. Dinwiddie was a friend of poor people was that what her mother meant? He was a devoted, unflinching servant of Christ; "so will I be," said Daisy to herself; "so I am now; for I have given the Lord Jesus all I have got, and I don't want to take anything back. Is that what mamma calls being a fanatic?" Daisy's meditations were broken off; for a general stir round the table made her look up.

The table was cleared, and the servants were bringing on the fruit; and with the fruit they were setting on the table a beautiful old fashioned silver epergne, that was never used but for great occasions. Generally it was adorned with fruit and flowers; to-day it was empty, and the attendants proceeded to arrange upon it very strange looking things; packages in white paper, books, trinkets, what not; and in the middle of all a little statuette of a Grecian nymph, which was a great favourite of Daisy's. Daisy began to guess that the epergne had something to do with her birthday. But the nymph? perhaps she came there by her beauty to dignify this use made of the stately old thing. However, she forgot all about fanatics and Mr. Dinwiddie for the present. The looks and smiles of the company were unmistakable. Who would speak first?

"How are you to reach the epergne, Daisy?" said her father.

"Shall I be the medium?" said Mrs. Gary. "These things are to travel up to Daisy, I suppose."

"I will represent the rolling stock of this road, and undertake to carry parcels safely," said Mr. McFarlane. "Any message with the goods, Mrs. Gary?"

"I believe they carry their own message with them," said the lady; "or else I don't see what is the use of these little white tickets. Where shall I begin, Mr. Randolph?"

"I do not think the order of proceedings will be criticized, provided it does not delay," said Daisy's father.

"Then transmit this, Gary."

"Literary freight" said Gary McFarlane, handing over to Daisy a little parcel of books. Five or six little volumes, in pretty binding Daisy looked eagerly to see what they might be. "Marmion" "The Lady of the Lake" "Scott's Poetical Works."

"Oh, thank you, papa!" said Daisy, looking delighted.

"Not me," said Mr. Randolph. "I am not to be thanked."

"There's no name in them" said Daisy.

"That's Preston's gift," said her aunt. Preston was Daisy's oldest cousin; a fine boy of sixteen.

"I like it so much, Preston!" said Daisy, sending a grateful look down the table to where he sat.

"Is Daisy fond of poetry?" inquired Mr. McFarlane, with a grave look.

"Very fond," Mrs. Randolph said.

"Dangerous taste!" said Gary. "What is this new consignment?"

"Something valuable take care of it."

"To be taken with care right side up," said Gary, putting before Daisy by a stretch of his long arm a little paper covered package. Daisy's cheeks were beginning to grow pink. She unfolded the package.

A little box then white cotton then a gold bracelet.

"Mamma?" said Daisy instantly. Mrs. Randolph stooped and kissed her. "It's beautiful, mamma!" Daisy spoke very earnestly; however, her face did not show the light of pleasure which the first gift had called into it.

"How did you know so well?" said Mr. McFarlane. "Mrs. Randolph, I am afraid you are not literary. Now Daisy, exercise your discernment upon that."

It was a little box containing a Chinese puzzle, with the plans and keys belonging to it.

"Where do you think that comes from?"

Daisy looked up. "I think perhaps from you, Mr. McFarlane."

"Do you think I am anything like a puzzle?"

"I think perhaps you mean to be," Daisy said, innocently. But a shout from the whole tableful answered to this chance hit. Daisy didn't know what they could mean.

"I have done!" said Gary. "I have got more than my match. But I know who will plague people worse than a puzzle, if she gets well educated. There's a pair of gloves, you little fencer."

It was a nice little thick pair of riding or driving gloves; beautifully made and ornamented. These came from Eloise, Daisy's other cousin. Mrs. Gary had brought her two beautiful toilet bottles of Bohemian glass. Daisy's end of the table was growing full.

"What is this?" said Mrs. Gary, taking from the epergne a sealed note directed to Daisy.

"That is Ransom's present. Give her mine first," said Mr. Randolph.

"Which is yours? I don't see anything more."

"That little Proserpine in the middle."

"*This?* Are you going to give this to Daisy? But why is she called Proserpine? I don't see."

"Nor I," said Mr. Randolph, "only that everything must have a name. And this damsel is supposed to have been carrying a basket, which might easily have been a basket of flowers, I don't see how the statement could be disproved. And Daisy is fonder of the little nymph, I believe, than any one else in the house.

"Oh, papa! thank you," exclaimed Daisy, whose eyes sparkled.
"I like to have her very much!"

"Well, here she goes," said Mrs. Gary. "Hand her over. You have a variety, Daisy. Chinese playthings and Grecian art."

"*Some* modern luxury," said Gary McFarlane. "Just a little."

"Egyptian art, too," said Captain Drummond.

"Oh, where's my spoon?" cried Daisy. "Has papa got it?"

"Here is Ransom's present," said her aunt, handing the note.
"Nobody knows what it is. Are we to know?"

Daisy opened and read, read over again, looked very grave, and finally folded the note up in silence.

"What is it?" said her aunt.

Daisy hesitated, wishing, but in doubt if she would be permitted to keep it to herself. Her father answered for her.

"It is all of Ransom's part, share, and possession in a certain small equipage known about these premises; the intent and understanding being, that henceforth the pony carriage and pony are Daisy's sole property, and to be by her used and appropriated without any other person's interference whatever."

"But, papa " Ransom began.

"I think it is a very poor arrangement, Mr. Randolph," said Ransom's mother. "Daisy cannot use the pony half enough for his good."

"She will make more use of him now," said Mr. Randolph.

Ransom looked very glum. His mother rose, with the ladies, and went to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER VII.

A SOLDIER.

A day or two after the birthday, it happened that Captain Drummond was enjoying the sunshine in a way that gentlemen like to enjoy it; that is, he was stretched comfortably on the grass under the shade of some elm trees, looking at it. Perhaps it was not exactly the sunshine that he was enjoying, but the soft couch of short grass, and the luxurious warm shadow of the elms, and a little fanciful breeze which played and stopped playing, and set the elm trees all a flutter and let them be still, by turns. But Captain Drummond was having a good time there, all by himself, and lying at length in a most lazy luxurious fashion; when he suddenly was "ware" of a fold of white drapery somewhere not very far from his left ear. He raised himself a little up, and there to be sure, as he had guessed, was Daisy. She was all alone too, and standing there looking at him.

Now Captain Drummond was a great favourite of Daisy's. In the first place he was a handsome fellow, with a face which was both gentle and manly; and his curly light brown hair and his slight well-trimmed moustache set off features that were pleasant for man or woman to look upon. Perhaps Daisy liked him partly for this, but I think she had other reasons. At any rate, there she stood looking at him.

"Can you command me, Daisy?" said the young officer.

"Are you at leisure, Captain Drummond?"

"Looks like it!" said the gentleman rousing himself. "What shall I give you? a camp-chair? or will you take the Oh! that is a better arrangement."

For Daisy had thrown on the ground a soft shawl for a carpet, and took her place upon it beside Captain Drummond, who looked at her in a pleased kind of way.

"Are you quite at leisure, Captain Drummond?"

"Gentlemen always are when ladies' affairs are to be attended to."

"Are they?" said Daisy.

"They ought to be!"

"But I am not a lady."

"What do you call yourself?"

"I don't know," said Daisy, gravely. "I suppose I am a little piece of one."

"Is that it?" said Captain Drummond, laughing. "Well, I will give you as large a piece of my leisure as you can make use of without regard to proportions. What is on hand, Daisy?"

"Captain Drummond," said Daisy, with a very serious face, "do soldiers have a very hard time?"

"Not always. Not when they are lying out under the trees at Melbourne, for example."

"But I mean, when they are acting like soldiers?"

He was ready with a laughing answer again, but seeing how earnest Daisy's face was, he controlled himself; and leaning on his elbow, with just a little smile of amusement on his face, he answered her.

"Well, Daisy sometimes they do."

"How, Captain Drummond?"

"In a variety of ways."

"Will you please tell me about it?"

He looked up at her. "Why, Daisy, what makes you curious in the matter? Have you a friend in the army?"

"No other but you," said Daisy.

"That is a kind speech. To reward you for it, I will tell you anything you please. What is the question, Daisy?"

"I would like to know in what way soldiers have a hard time?"

"Well, Daisy, to begin with, a soldier can't do what he has a mind."

"Not about anything?"

"Well no; not unless he gets leave. I am only at Melbourne now because I have got leave; and I must go when my leave is up. A soldier does not belong to himself."

"To whom does he belong?"

"To his commander! He must go and come, do or not do things, just as his General bids him; and ask no questions."

"Ask no questions?" said Daisy.

"No; only do what he is ordered."

"But why mayn't he ask questions?"

"That isn't his business. He has nothing to do with the reason of things; all he has got to do is his duty. The *reason* is his General's duty to look after."

"But suppose he had a very good General then that wouldn't be much of a hardship," said Daisy.

"Well, that is a very material point," said the Captain. "*Suppose* he has a good General as you say; that would make a great difference, certainly."

"Is that all, Captain Drummond?"

"Not quite all."

"What else?"

"Well, Daisy, a soldier, even under a good General, is often ordered to do hard things."

"What sort of things?"

"What do you think," said the Captain, lolling comfortably on the green bank, "of camping out under the rain-clouds with no bed but stones or puddles of mud and wet leaves and rain pouring down all night, and hard work all day; and no better accommodations for week in and week out?"

"But Captain Drummond!" said Daisy, horrified, "I thought soldiers had tents?"

"So they do in fine weather " said the Captain. "But just where the hardest work is to do, is where they can't carry their tents."

"Couldn't that be prevented?"

"I'm afraid not."

"I should think they'd get sick?"

"*Think* they would! Why, they do, Daisy, by hundreds and hundreds. What then? A soldier's life isn't his own; and if he has to give it up in a hospital instead of on the field, why it's good for some other fellow."

So this it was, not to belong to oneself! Daisy looked on the soldier before her who had run, or would run, such risks, very tenderly; but nevertheless the child was thinking her own thoughts all the while. The Captain saw both things.

"What is the 'hard work' they have to do?" she asked, presently.

"Daisy, you wouldn't like to see it."

"Why, sir?"

"Poor fellows digging and making walls of sand or sods to shelter them from fire when every now and then comes a shot from the enemy's batteries, ploughs up their work, and knocks over some poor rascal who never gets up again. That's one kind of hard work."

Daisy's face was intent in its interest; but she only said,
"Please go on."

"Do you like to hear it?"

"Yes, I like to know about it."

"I wonder what Mrs. Randolph would say to me?"

"Please go on, Captain Drummond!"

"I don't know about that. However, Daisy, work in the trenches is not the hardest thing nor living wet through or frozen half through nor going half fed about the hardest thing I know, is in a hurried retreat to be obliged to leave sick and wounded friends and poor fellows to fall into the hands of the enemy. That's hard."

"Isn't it hard to fight a battle?"

"You would not like to march up to the fire of the enemy's guns, and see your friends falling right and left of you struck down?"

"Would you?" said Daisy.

"Would I what?"

"Don't *you* think it is hard, to do that?"

"Not just at the time, Daisy. It is a little tough afterwards, when one comes to think about it. It is hard to see fellows suffer too, that one cannot help."

Daisy hardly knew what to think of Captain Drummond. His handsome pleasant face looked not less gentle than usual, and *did* look somewhat more sober. Daisy concluded it must be something about a soldier's life that she could not understand, all this coolness with which he spoke of dreadful things. A deep sigh was the testimony of the different feelings of her little breast. Captain Drummond looked up at her.

"Daisy, women are not called to be soldiers."

Daisy passed that.

"Have you told me all you can tell me, Captain Drummond?"

"I should not like to tell you all I could tell you."

"Why? Please do! I want to know all about soldiers."

He looked curiously at her. "After all," he said, "it is not so bad as you think, Daisy. A good soldier does not find it hard to obey orders."

"What sorts of orders does he have to obey?"

"All sorts."

"But suppose they were wrong orders?"

"Makes no difference."

"*Wrong* orders?"

"Yes," said Captain Drummond, laughing. "If it is something he can do, he does it; if it is something he can't do, he

loses his head trying."

"Loses his head, sir?"

"Yes by a cannon ball; or his heart, by a musket ball; or maybe he gets off with losing a hand or a leg; just as it happens. That makes no difference, either." He watched Daisy as he spoke, seeing a slight colour rise in her cheeks, and wondering what made the child's quiet grey eyes look at him so thoughtfully.

"Captain Drummond, is he ever told to do anything he *can't* do?"

"A few years ago, Daisy, the English and the French were fighting the Russians in the Crimea. I happened to be there on business, and I saw some things. An order was brought one day to an officer commanding a body of cavalry you know what cavalry is?"

"Yes, I know."

"The order was brought in Hallo! what's that?" For a voice was heard shouting at a little distance, "Drummond! Ho, Drummond! Where are you?"

"It's Mr. McFarlane!" said Daisy. "He'll come here. I'm very sorry."

"Don't be sorry," said the Captain. "Come, let us disappoint him. He can't play hide and seek."

He jumped up and caught Daisy's willing hand, with the other hand caught up her shawl, and drew her along swiftly under cover of the trees and shrubbery towards the river, and away from the voice they heard calling. Daisy half ran, half flew, it seemed to her; so fast the strong hand of her friend pulled her over the ground. At the edge of the bank that faced the river, at the top of a very steep descent of a hundred feet or near that, under a thick shelter of trees, Captain Drummond called a halt and stood listening. Far off, faint in the distance, they could still hear the shout, "Drummond! where are you? Hallo!"

"We'll go down to the river," said the Captain; "and he is too lazy to look for us there. We shall be safe. Daisy, this is a retreat but it is not a hardship, is it?"

Daisy looked up delighted. The little face so soberly thoughtful a few minutes ago was all bright and flushed. The Captain was charmed too.

"But we can't get down there," said Daisy, casting her eye down the very steep pitch of the bank.

"That is something," said the Captain, "with which as a soldier you have nothing to do. All you have to do is to obey orders; and the orders are that we charge down hill."

"I shall go head first, then," said Daisy, "or over and over. I couldn't keep my feet one minute."

"Now you are arguing," said the Captain; "and that shows insubordination, or want of discipline. But we have got to charge, all the same; and we'll see about putting you under arrest afterwards."

Daisy laughed at him, but she could not conceive how they should get to the bottom. It was very steep, and strewn with dead leaves from the trees which grew thick all the way. Rolling down was out of the question, for the stems of the trees would catch them; and to keep on their feet seemed impossible. Daisy found, however, that Captain Drummond could manage what she could not. He took hold of her hand again; and then Daisy hardly believed it while she was doing it, but there she was, going down that bank in an upright position; not falling nor stumbling, though it is true she was not walking neither. The Captain did not let her fall, and his strong hand seemed to take her like a feather over the stones and among the trees, giving her flying leaps and bounds down the hill along with him. How he went and kept his feet remained always a marvel to Daisy; but down they went, and at the bottom they were in a trifle of time.

"Do you think he will come down there after us?" said the Captain.

"I am sure he won't," said Daisy.

"So am I sure. We are safe, Daisy. Now I am your prisoner, and you are my prisoner; and we will set each other at any

work we please. This is a nice place."

Behind them was the high, steep, wooded bank, rising right up. Before them was a little strip of pebbly beach, and little wavelets of the river washing past it. Beyond lay the broad stream, all bright in the summer sunshine, with the great blue hills rising up misty and blue in the distance. Nothing else; a little curve in the shore on each side shut them in from all that was above or below near at hand.

"Why, this is a fine place," repeated the Captain. "Were you ever here before?"

"Not in a long time," said Daisy. "I have been here with June."

"June! Aren't we here with June now?"

"*Now?* Oh, I don't mean the month I mean mamma's black June," said Daisy, laughing.

"Well, that is the first time I ever heard of a black June!" muttered the Captain. "Does she resemble her name or her colour?"

"She isn't much like the month of June," said Daisy. "I don't think she is a very cheerful person."

"Then I wouldn't come here any more with her or anywhere else."

"I don't," said Daisy. "I don't go with her, or with anybody else much. Only I go with Sam and the pony."

"Where's Ransom. Don't he go with you?"

"Oh, Ransom's older, you know; and he's a boy."

"Ransom don't know his advantages. This is pleasant, Daisy. Now let us see. What were you and I about?"

"You were telling me something, Captain Drummond."

"What was it? Oh, I know. Daisy, you are under arrest, you know, and sentenced to extra duty. The work you are to perform, is to gather as many of these little pebbles together these white ones as you can in five minutes."

Daisy went to work; so did the Captain; and very busy they were, for the Captain gathered as many pebbles as she did. He made her fetch them to a place where the little beach was clean and smooth, and in the shadow of an overhanging tree they both sat down. Then the Captain, throwing off his cap, began arranging the white pebbles on the sand in some mysterious manner lines of them here and lines of them there whistling as he worked. Daisy waited with curious patience; watched him closely, but never asked what he was doing. At last he stopped, looked up at her, and smiled.

"Well! " he said.

"What is it all, Captain Drummond?"

"This is your story, Daisy."

"My story!"

"Yes. Look here these rows of white stones are the Russians; these brown stones are the English," said he, beginning to marshal another set into mysterious order some distance from the white stones. "Now what shall I do for some guns?"

Daisy, in a very great state of delight, began to make search for something that would do to stand for artillery; but Captain Drummond presently solved the question by breaking some twigs from the tree overhead and cutting them up into inch lengths. These little mock guns he distributed liberally among the white stones, pointing their muzzles in various directions; and finally drew some lines in the sand which he informed Daisy were fortifications. Daisy looked on; it was better than a fairy tale.

"Now Daisy, we are ready for action. This is the battle of Balaklava; and these are part of the lines. An order was brought to an officer commanding a body of cavalry stationed up here you know what cavalry is."

"Yes, I know."

"The order was brought to him to charge upon the enemy down *there*, in a place where he could do no good and must be cut to pieces; the enemy had so many guns in that place and he had so few men to attack them with. The order was a mistake. He knew it was a mistake, but his General had sent it there was nothing for him to do but to obey. So he charged."

"And his men?"

"Every one. They knew they were going to their death and everybody else knew it that saw them go but they charged!"

"Did you see it, Captain Drummond?"

"I saw it."

"And did they go to their death?" said Daisy, awe-stricken, for Captain Drummond's look said that he was thinking of something it had been grave to see.

"Why, yes. Look here, Daisy here were cannon; there were cannon; there were more cannon; cannon on every side of them but one. They went into death they knew, when they went in there."

"How many of them went there?"

"Six hundred."

"Six hundred! were they *all* killed?"

"No. There were a part of them that escaped and lived to come back."

Daisy looked at the pebbles and the guns in profound silence.

"But if the officer knew the order was a mistake, why must he obey it?"

"That's a soldier's duty, Daisy. He can do nothing but follow orders. A soldier can't know, very often, what an order is given for; he cannot judge; he does not know what his General means to accomplish. All he has to think of is to obey orders; and if every soldier does that, all is right."

What was little Daisy thinking of? She sat looking at her friend the Captain. He was amused.

"Well, Daisy what do you think? will it do? Do you think you will stand it and be a soldier?"

Daisy hesitated a good deal, and looked off and on at the Captain's face. Then she said very quietly, "Yes."

"You will!" he said. "I wish you would join my branch of the service. Suppose you come into my company?"

"Suppose you join mine?"

"With all my heart!" said the Captain, laughing; "if it is not inconsistent with my present duties. So you have enlisted already? Are you authorised to receive recruits?"

Daisy shook her head, and did not join in his laugh.

"Honestly, Daisy, tell me true; what did you want to know about soldiers for? I have answered you; now answer me. I am curious."

Daisy did not answer, and seemed in doubt.

"Will you not honour me so far?"

Daisy hesitated still, and looked at the Captain more than once. But Captain Drummond was a great favourite, and had earned her favour partly by never talking nonsense to her; a great distinction.

"I will tell you when we get back to the house," she said, "if you will not speak of it, Captain Drummond."

The Captain could get no nearer his point; and he and Daisy spent a good while longer by the river-side, erecting fortifications and studying the charge of the Light brigade.

CHAPTER VIII.

GEOGRAPHY.

The Captain was not able to claim Daisy's promise immediately. On their return to the house he was at once taken up with some of the older people, and Daisy ran off to her long delayed dinner.

The next day in the course of her wanderings about the grounds, which were universal, Daisy came upon her cousin Preston. He sat in the shade of a clump of larches under a great oak, making flies for fishing; which occupation, like a gentlemanly boy as he was, he had carried out there where the litter of it would be in nobody's way. Preston Gary was a very fine fellow; about sixteen, a handsome fellow, very spirited, very clever, and very gentle and kind to his little cousin Daisy. Daisy liked him much, and was more entirely free with him perhaps than with any other person in the family. Her seeing him now was the signal for a joyous skip and bound which brought her to his side.

"Oh, Preston, are you going fishing?"

"Perhaps if I have a good day for it."

"When?"

"To-morrow."

"Who's going with you?"

"Nobody, I reckon. Unless you want to go, Daisy."

"Oh, Preston, may I go with you? Where are you going?"

"Daisy, I'm bound for the Hillsdale woods, back of Crum Elbow they say there are first-rate trout streams there; but I am afraid you can't go so far."

"Oh, I can go anywhere, Preston! with Loupe, you know. You're going to ride, aren't you?"

"Yes, but Loupe! What shall we do with Loupe? You see, I shall be gone the whole day, Daisy it's likely. You'd get tired."

"Why, we could find somewhere to put Loupe Sam could take care of him. And I should like to go, Preston, if you think I would not frighten the fish."

"Oh, if Sam's going along, that is another matter," said Preston. "You frighten the fish, Daisy! I don't believe you can do that for anything. But I won't let you get into mischief."

So it was settled, and Daisy's face looked delighted; and for some time she and Preston discussed the plan, the fish, and his flies. Then suddenly Daisy introduced another subject.

"Preston, where is the Crimea?"

"The Crimea!" said Preston.

"Yes; where the English and the French were fighting with the Russians."

"The Crimea! Why, Daisy, don't you know where it is? You'll find it in the Black Sea somewhere."

Daisy hesitated.

"But Preston, I don't know where the Black Sea is."

"Why, Daisy, what has become of your geography?"

"I never had much," said Daisy, humbly, and looking serious; "and lately mamma hasn't wanted me to do anything but run about."

"Well, if you take the map of Europe, and set out from the north of Russia and walk down, you'll find yourself in the Crimea after a while. Just hold that, Daisy, will you."

Daisy held the ends of silk he put in her fingers; but while he worked, she thought. Might it not be possible that a good knowledge of geography might have something to do with the use or the improvement of her *talents*? And if a knowledge of geography, why not also a knowledge of history, and of arithmetic, and of everything! There could not be a reasonable doubt of it. What would Preston be, what would Mr. Dinwiddie or Captain Drummond be, if they knew nothing? And by the same reasoning, what would Daisy Randolph be? What could she do with her talents, if she let them lie rusty with ignorance? Now this was a very serious thought to Daisy, because she did not like study. She liked knowledge right well, if she could get it without trouble, and if it was entertaining knowledge; but she did not think geography at all entertaining, nor arithmetic. Yet Daisy forgot all about Preston's artificial flies, and her face grew into a depth of sobriety.

"Preston " she began, slowly, "is it hard?"

"Not just that," said Preston, busy in finishing a piece of work, "it is a little ticklish to stroke this into order but it isn't hard, if you have the right materials, and know how."

"Oh, no I don't mean flies I mean geography."

"Geography!" said Preston. "Oh, you are at the Crimea yet, are you? I'll show it to you, Daisy, when we go in."

"Preston, is the use of geography only to know where places are?"

"Well, that's pretty convenient," said Preston. "Daisy, just look for that bunch of grey silk I had it here a minute ago."

"But Preston, tell me what *is* the use of it?"

"Why, my dear little Daisy thank you! you'd be all abroad without it."

"All abroad!" exclaimed Daisy.

"It comes to about that, I reckon. You wouldn't understand anything. How can you? Suppose I show you my pictures of the North American Indians they'll be as good as Chinese to you, if you don't know geography."

Daisy was silent, feeling puzzled.

"And," said Preston, binding his fly, "when you talk of the Crimea, you will not know whether the English came from the east or the west, nor whether the Russians are not living under the equator and eating ripe oranges."

"Don't they eat oranges?" said Daisy, seriously. But that question set Preston off into a burst of laughter, for which he atoned as soon as it was over by a very gentle kiss to his little cousin.

"Never mind, Daisy," he said; "I think you are better without geography. You aren't just like everybody else that's a fact."

"Daisy," said Captain Drummond, coming upon the scene, "do you allow such things?"

"It is Preston's manner of asking my pardon, Captain Drummond," Daisy answered, looking a little troubled, but in her slow, womanly way. The Captain could not help laughing in his turn.

"What offence has he been guilty of? tell me, and I will make him ask pardon in another manner. But, Daisy, do you reckon such a liberty no offence?"

"Not if I am willing he should take it," said Daisy.

The Captain seemed much amused. "My dear little lady!" he said, "it is good for me you are not half a score of years wiser. What were you talking about the Crimea? I heard the word as I came up."

"I asked Preston to show it to me on the map or he said he would."

"Come with me, and I'll do it. You shouldn't ask anybody but me about the Crimea."

So getting hold affectionately of Daisy's hand, he and she went off to the house. No one was in the library. The Captain opened a large map of Russia; Daisy got up in a chair, with her elbows on the great library table, and leaned over it, while the Captain drew up another chair and pointed out the Crimea and Sebastopol, and showed the course by which the English ships had come, for Daisy took care to ask that. Then, finding so earnest a listener, he went on to describe to her the situation of other places on the Peninsula, and the character of the country, and the severities of the climate in the region of the great struggle. Daisy listened, with her eyes varying between Captain Drummond's face and the map. The Black Sea became known to Daisy thence and forever.

"I never thought geography was so interesting!" she remarked with a sigh, as the Captain paused. He smiled.

"Now, Daisy, you have something to tell me," he said.

"What?" said Daisy, looking up suddenly.

"Why, you wanted to know about soldiers don't you remember your promise?"

The child's face all changed; her busy, eager, animated look became on the instant thoughtful and still. Yet changed, as the Captain saw with some curiosity, not to lesser but to greater intentness.

"Well, Daisy?"

"Captain Drummond, if I tell you, I do not wish it talked about."

"Certainly not!" he said, suppressing a smile, and watched her while she got down from her chair and looked about among the book-shelves.

"Will you please put this on the table for me?" she said "I can't lift it."

"A Bible!" said the Captain to himself. "This is growing serious." But he carried the great quarto silently and placed it on the table. It was a very large volume, full of magnificent engravings, which were the sole cause and explanation of its finding a place in Mr. Randolph's library. He put it on the table and watched Daisy curiously, who, disregarding all the pictures, turned over the leaves hurriedly, till near the end of the book; then stopped, put her little finger under some words, and turned to him. The Captain looked and read over the little finger "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

It gave the Captain a very odd feeling. He stopped, and read it two or three times over.

"But Daisy!" he said.

"What, Captain Drummond?"

"What has this to do with what we were talking about?"

"Would you please shut this up and put it away, first."

The Captain obeyed, and as he turned from the bookshelves Daisy took his hand again, and drew him, child-fashion, out of the house and through the shrubbery. He let her alone till she had brought him to a shady spot, where, under the thick growth of magnificent trees a rustic seat stood, in full view of the distant mountains and the river.

"Where is my answer, Daisy?" he said, as she let go his hand and seated herself.

"What was your question, Captain Drummond?"

"Now you are playing hide and seek with me. What have those words you showed me, what have they to do with our yesterday's conversation?"

"I would like to know," said Daisy, slowly, "what it means, to be a good soldier?"

"Why?"

"I think I have told you," she said.

She said it with the most unmoved simplicity. The Captain could not imagine what made him feel uncomfortable. He whistled.

"Daisy, you are incomprehensible!" he exclaimed, and, catching hold of her hand, he began a race down towards the river. Such a race as they had taken the day before. Through shade and through sun, down grassy steeps and up again, flying among the trees as if some one were after them, the Captain ran; and Daisy was pulled along with him. At the edge of the woods which crowned the river bank, he stopped and looked at Daisy who was all flushed and sparkling with exertion and merriment.

"Sit down there!" said he, putting her on the bank and throwing himself beside her. "Now you look as you ought to look!"

"I don't think mamma would think so," said Daisy, panting and laughing.

"Yes, she would. Now tell me do you call yourself a soldier?"

"I don't know whether there can be such little soldiers," said Daisy. "If there can be, I am."

"And what fighting do you expect to do, little one?"

"I don't know," said Daisy. "Not very well."

"What enemies are you going to face?"

But Daisy only looked rather hard at the Captain, and made him no answer.

"Do you expect to emulate the charge of the Light Brigade, in some tilt against fancied wrong?"

Daisy looked at her friend; she did not quite understand him, but his last words were intelligible.

"I don't know," she said, meekly. "But if I do, it will not be because the order is a *mistake*, Captain Drummond."

The Captain bit his lip. "Daisy," said he, "are you the only soldier in the family?"

Daisy sat still, looking up over the sunny slopes of ground towards the house.

The sunbeams showed it bright and stately on the higher ground; they poured over a rich luxuriant spread of greensward and trees, highly kept; stately and fair; and Daisy could not help remembering that in all that domain, so far as she knew, there was not a thought in any heart of being the sort of soldier she wished to be. She got up from the ground and smoothed her dress down.

"Captain Drummond," she said, with a grave dignity that was at the same time perfectly childish too, "I have told you about myself I can't tell you about other people."

"Daisy, you are not angry with me!"

"No, sir."

"Don't you sometimes permit other people to ask your pardon in Preston Gary's way?"

Daisy was about to give a quiet negative to this proposal, when perceiving more mischief in the Captain's face than might be manageable, she pulled away her hand from him, and dashed off like a deer. The Captain was wiser than to follow.

Later in the day, which turned out a very warm one, he and Gary McFarlane went down again to the edge of the bank,

hoping to get if they could a taste of the river breeze. Lying there stretched out under the trees, after a little while they heard voices. The voices were down on the shore. Gary moved his position to look.

"It's that child what under the sun is she doing! I beg pardon for naming anything warm just now, Drummond but she is building fortifications of some sort, down there."

Captain Drummond came forward too. Down below them, a little to the right, where a tiny bend in the shore made a spot of shade, Daisy was crouching on the ground apparently very busy. Back of her a few paces was her dark attendant, June.

"There's energy," said Gary. "What a nice thing it is to be a child and play in the sand!"

The talk down on the shore went on; June's voice could scarcely be heard, but Daisy's words were clear "Do, June! Please try." Another murmur from June, and then Daisy "Try, June do, please!" The little voice was soft, but its utterances were distinct; the words could be heard quite plainly. And Daisy sat back from her sand-work, and June began to sing something. *What*, it would have been difficult to tell at the top of the bank, but then Daisy's voice struck in. With no knowledge that she had listeners, the notes came mounting up to the top of the bank, clear, joyous and strong, with a sweet power that nobody knew Daisy's voice had.

"Upon my word, that's pretty!" said the Captain.

"A pretty thing, too, faith," said Gary. "Captain, let's get nearer the performers. Look out, now, and don't strike to windward."

They went, like hunters, softly down the bank, keeping under shelter, and winding round so as to get near before they should be seen. They succeeded. Daisy was intent upon her sand-work again, and June's back was towards them. The song went on more softly; then in a chorus Daisy's voice rang out again, and the words were plain.

"Die in the field of battle,
Die in the field of battle,
Die in the field of battle,
Glory in your view."

"Spirited!" whispered Gary.

"I almost think it is a Swedish war song," said the Captain.

"I am not sure."

"Miss Daisy!" said June "the gentlemen "

Daisy started up. The intruders came near. On the ground beside her lay an open map of Europe; in the sand before her she had drawn the same outlines on a larger scale. The shore generally was rough and pebbly; just in this little cove there was a space of very fine sand, left wetted and adhesive by the last tide. Here the battle of Inkermann had been fought, and here Daisy's geography was going on. Captain Drummond, who alone had the clue to all this, sat down on a convenient stone to examine the work. The lines were pretty fairly drawn, and Daisy had gone on to excavate to some depth the whole area of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, and the region of the Atlantic to some extent; with the course of the larger rivers deeply indented.

"What is all this gouging for, Daisy?" he said. "You want water here now, to fill up."

"I thought when the tide came, Captain Drummond, I could let it flow in here, and see how it would look."

"It's a poor rule that don't work both ways," said the Captain. "I always heard that 'time and tide wait for no man;' and we won't wait for the tide. Here Gary make yourself useful fetch some water here; enough to fill two seas and a portion of the Atlantic Ocean."

"What shall I bring it in, if you please?"

"Anything! your hands, or your hat, man. Do impossibilities for once. It is easy to see you are not a soldier."

"The fates preserve me from being a soldier under you!" said Gary "if that's your idea of military duty! What are you

going to do while I play Neptune in a bucket."

"I am going to build cities and raise up mountains. Daisy, suppose we lay in a supply of these little white stones, and some black ones."

While this was done, and Daisy looked delighted, Mr. McFarlane seized upon a tin dipper which June had brought, and filled it at the river. Captain Drummond carefully poured out the water into the Mediterranean, and opened a channel through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which were very full of sand, into the Black Sea. Then he sent Gary off again for more; and began placing the pebbles.

"What is that for, Captain Drummond?" asked Daisy.

"These are the Alps white, as they should be, for the snow always lies on them."

"Is it so cold there?"

"No, but the mountains are so high. Their tops are always cold, but flowers grow down in the valleys. These are very great mountains, Daisy."

"And what are those black ones, Captain Drummond?"

"This range is the Pyrenees between France and Spain; they are great too, and beautiful. And here go the Carpathians and here the Ural mountains, and these must stand for the Apennines."

"Are they beautiful too?"

"I suppose so but I can't say, never having been there. Now what shall we do for the cities? As they are centres of wealth, I think a three-cent piece must mark them. Hand over, Gary; I have not thrips enough. There is St. Petersburg here is Constantinople here is Rome now here is Paris. Hallo! we've no England! can't leave London out. Give me that spoon, Daisy " and the Captain, as he expressed it, went to work in the trenches. England was duly marked out, the channel filled, and a bit of silver planted for the metropolis of the world.

"Upon my word!" said Gary, "I never knew geography before. I shall carry away some ideas."

"Keep all you can get," said the Captain. "Now, there's Europe."

"And here were the battles," said Daisy, touching the little spot of wet sand which stood for the Crimea.

"*The battles!*" said Gary. "What battles?"

"Why, where the English and French fought the Russians."

"*The battles!* Shades of all the heroes! Why, Daisy, Europe has done nothing but fight for a hundred thousand years. There isn't a half inch of it that hasn't had a battle. See, *there* was one, and there was another tremendous; and there, and there, and there, and there, and all over! This little strip here that is getting swallowed up in the Mediterranean there has been blood enough shed on it to make it red from one end to the other, a foot deep. That's because it has had so many great men belonging to it."

Daisy looked at Captain Drummond.

"It's pretty much so, Daisy," he said; "all over the south of Europe, at any rate."

"Why over the south and not the north?"

"People in the north haven't anything to fight for," said Gary. "Nobody wants a possession of ice and snow more than will cool his butter."

"A good deal so, Daisy," said Captain Drummond, taking the silent appeal of her eyes.

"Besides," continued Gary, "great men don't grow in the north. Daisy, I want to know which is the battle-field you are going to die on."

Daisy sat back from the map of Europe, and looked at Gary with unqualified amazement.

"Well?" said Gary. "I mean it."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I hear you are going to die on the field of battle and I want to be there that I may throw myself after you, as Douglas did after the Bruce's locket; saying 'Go thou first, brave heart, as thou art wont, and I will follow thee!'"

"Daisy," said the Captain, "you were singing a battle-song as we came down the hill that is what he means."

"Oh!" said Daisy, her face changing from its amazed look. But her colour rose, too, a little.

"What was it?"

"That?" said Daisy. "Oh, that was a hymn."

"A hymn!" shouted Gary. "Good! A hymn! That's glorious! Where did you get it, Daisy? Have you got a collection of Swedish war-songs? They used to sing and fight together, I am told. They are the only people I ever heard of that did except North American Indians. Where did you get it?"

"I got it from June."

"June! what, by inspiration? June is a fine month, I know for strawberries but I had no idea "

"No, no," said Daisy, half laughing, "I mean my June there she is; I got it from her."

"Hollo!" cried Gary. "Come here, my good woman Powers of Darkness! Is your name June?"

"Yes sir, if you please," the woman said, in her low voice, dropping a courtesy.

"Well, nobody offers more attractions in a name," said Gary; "I'll say that for you. Where did you get that song your little mistress was singing when we came down the hill? Can you sing it?"

June's reply was unintelligible.

"Speak louder, my friend. What did you say?"

June made an effort. "If you please, sir, I can't sing," she was understood to say. "They sings it in camp meeting."

"In camp meeting!" said Gary. "I should think so! What's that! You see I have never been there, and don't understand."

"If you please, sir the gentleman knows" June said, retreating backwards as she spoke, and so fast that she soon got out of their neighbourhood. The shrinking, gliding action accorded perfectly with the smothered tones and subdued face of the woman.

"Don't *she* know!" said Gary. "Isn't that a character now? But, Daisy, are you turning Puritan?"

"I don't know what that is," said Daisy.

"Upon my word, you look like it! It's a dreadful disease, Daisy; generally takes the form of I declare I don't know! fever, I believe, and delirium; and singing is one of the symptoms."

"You don't want to stop her singing?" said Captain Drummond.

"That sort? yes I do. It wouldn't be healthy, up at the house. Daisy, sing that gipsy-song from 'The Camp in Silesia,' that I heard you singing a day or two ago."

" 'The Camp in Silesia?'" said Captain Drummond. "Daisy, can you sing *that*?"

"Whistles it off like a gipsy herself," said Gary. "Daisy, sing it."

"I like the other best," said Daisy.

But neither teasing nor coaxing could make her sing again, either the one or the other.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER TROUT.

It was bright morning, the pony-chaise at the door, and Daisy in it; standing to arrange matters.

"Now, Daisy, have you got all in there? I don't believe it."

"Why don't you believe it?"

"How much will that concern hold?"

"A great deal more than you want. There's a big box under all the seat."

"What have you got in it?"

Daisy went off into a laugh, such a laugh of glee as did her father's heart good. Mr. Randolph was standing in the doorway to see the expedition set forward.

"What's the matter, Daisy?" he said.

"Papa, he don't think anybody is a person of forethought but himself."

It was Preston's turn to laugh, and Mr. Randolph joined him.

"Shows he don't know you, Daisy, as well as I do. When do you expect to be home again?"

Mr. Randolph had come down to the side of the chaise, and was looking with a very pleased face at what was in it. Daisy said she supposed they would stay till Preston had caught as many fish as he wanted.

"And won't you be tired before that?"

"Oh, no, papa! I am going to fish too."

"I'll have all you catch, Daisy, for my own eating!"

He bent his head down as he spoke, to kiss the little fisherwoman; but Daisy, answering some unusual tenderness of face or manner, sprung up and threw her arms round his neck, and only released him after a very close pressure.

"She is in a fair way to be cured of her morbid seriousness," Mr. Randolph thought as he saw the cavalcade set forth; and, well pleased, he went in to breakfast. Daisy and Preston had breakfasted already, before the family; and now were off to the hills just as other people were stirring sugar into cups of coffee.

Preston led the way on a fine bay of his uncle's; taking good gallops now and then to ease his own and his horse's spirits, and returning to go quietly for a space by the side of the pony-chaise. Loupe never went into anything more exciting than his waddling trot; though Daisy made him keep that up briskly.

"What a thing it is, to have such short legs!" said Preston, watching the movements of the pony.

"*You* go over the road without seeing it," said Daisy.

"I don't want to see it. What I want to see is Hillsdale."

"So do I; but I want to see everything."

Preston smiled, he could not help it, at the very happy and busy little face and spirit down in the pony-chaise.

"What do you see, Daisy, that you have not seen a hundred times before?"

"That makes no difference," said Daisy. "I have seen you a hundred times before."

Preston laughed, set spurs to his horse, and went off for another gallop.

Daisy enjoyed her morning's drive. The light was clear and the air was fresh; Preston galloping before and Sam jogging on behind; everything was fine! Then it was quite true that she liked to see everything; those grey eyes of hers were extremely busy. All the work going on in the fields had interest for her, and all the passers-by on the road. A strange interest, often, for Daisy was very apt to be wondering whether any of them knew and loved the name she loved best; wondering who among all those rough-looking, unknown people, might be her fellow-servants. And with that a thought which, if Mr. Randolph had known it, would have checked his self-congratulations. He had not guessed what made the clasp of Daisy's arms round his neck so close that morning.

Till they passed through Crum Elbow everything had been, as Preston said, seen a hundred times before. A little way beyond that everything became new. Mrs. Randolph's carriage never came that road. The country grew more rough and broken, and the hills in their woody dress showed more and more near.

"Do you see that break in the woods?" said Preston, pointing with his whip; "that is where the brook comes out, that is where we are going."

"What time is it, Preston?"

"Time? it is half past nine. What about it?"

"I'm hungry that's all. I wanted to know what time it was."

"Hungry! Oh, what a fisher you will make, Daisy! Can't stand fasting for two hours and a half."

"No, but Preston, I didn't eat much breakfast. And I've had all this ride since. I am going to stand fasting; but I am going to be hungry too."

"No, you aren't," said Preston. "Just let Loupe take you up to that little gate, will you? I'll see if we can leave the horses here. Sam! take this fellow!"

Preston jumped down from the saddle and went into the house, to the front yard of which the little gate opened. Daisy looked after him. It was a yard full of grass and weeds, among which a few poppies and hollyhocks and balsams grew straggling up where they could. Nothing kept them out of the path but the foot-tread of the people that went over it; hoe and rake were never known there since the walk was first made. The house was a little, low, red-front house, with one small window on each side the door.

"All right!" said Preston, coming back. "Sam, take the horses round to the barn; and bring the baskets out of the chaise-box, and wait at this gate for us."

"Why is he to wait? where are we going?"

"Going in to get some breakfast."

"Here, Preston? Oh, I can't."

"What's the matter?"

"I can't eat anything in there. I can wait."

"Why, it looks clean," said Preston; "room and table and woman and all." But Daisy still shook her head, and was not to be persuaded; and Preston, laughing, went back to the house. But presently he came out again, bearing a tray in his hand, and brought it to Daisy. On the tray was very nice looking brown and white bread, and milk and cheese and a platter of strawberries. Preston got into the chaise and set the tray on his knees. After him had come from the house a woman in a fly-away cap and short-gown. She stood just inside the gate, leaning her arms on it. If she had not been there, perhaps Daisy would still have refused to touch the food; but she was afraid of offending or hurting the woman's feelings; so first she tried a strawberry, and found it of rare flavour; for it was a wild one; then she broke a morsel of bread, and that was excellent. Daisy discovered that breakfast in a pony-chaise, out in the air, was a very fine thing. So

did Preston.

"So you're agoin' afishin'?" said the woman at the gate.

"Yes, ma'am," Preston said.

"And that little one too?"

"Certainly."

"I declare! I never see nobody so little and gauzy as was willin' to do such indelicate work! But I shouldn't wonder, now, if she was to catch some. Fishes and all things is curious creeturs, and goes by contrairies."

"Hope they won't to-day!" said Preston, who was eating strawberries and bread and milk at a great rate.

"Where's the rest of your party?" the woman went on.

"We're all here, ma'am," said Preston.

"Well, I see a horse there that haint nobody on top of him?"

"I was on top of him a little while ago," said Preston.

"Well, I expect that little creetur hain't druv herself?"

"Drove the pony, anyhow," said Preston. "Now, ma'am, what do we owe you, besides thanks, for your excellent hospitality?"

"I reckon you don't owe me much," said the woman, as Preston got out of the chaise. "You can set the tray in there on the table, if you're a mind to. We always calculate to set a good meal, and we're allowed to; but we don't never calculate to live by it, and we've no dispensary. There's only my husband and me, and there's a plenty for more than us."

Preston had handed the tray to Sam to carry in, and as soon as he could get a chance bade good morning, and went forward with Daisy. On foot now they took their way to the woods, and presently plunged into them. It was very pleasant under the deep shade, for the sun had grown warm, and there was hardly air enough to flutter the leaves in the high branches. But Daisy and Preston pushed on briskly, and soon the gurgle of the brook gave its sweet sound to their ears. They followed up the stream then, over stones and rocks, and crossing from side to side on trunks of trees that had fallen across the water; till a part of the brook was reached far enough back among the hills to be wild and lonely; where the trout might be supposed to be having a good time.

"Now, Daisy," said Preston, "I think this will do. Can't have a better place. I'll try and get you to work here."

"And now, how must I manage, Preston?" said Daisy, anxiously.

"I'll show you."

Daisy watched while Preston took out and put together the light rod which she was to use, and fixed a fly for the bait.

"Do you see that little waterfall, Daisy?"

"Yes."

"And you see where the water curls round just under the fall?"

"Yes."

"That is where you must cast your fly. I should think there must be some speckled fellows there. What glory, Daisy, if you should catch one!"

"Well, what must I do, Preston?"

"Throw your fly over, so that it may light just there, and then watch; and if a fish jumps up and catches it, you pull your line away and catch the fish."

"But I can't throw it from here? I must go nearer."

"No, you mustn't you're near enough; stand just here. Try if you can't throw your fly there. If you went nearer, you would frighten the fish. They are just about as shy as if they were Daisies. Now I will go a little further off, and see what I can do. You'll catch the first fish!"

"No, I shall not," said Daisy, gravely. She tried with a beating heart to throw her line; she tried very hard. The first time it landed on the opposite side of the brook. The next time it landed on a big stone this side of the waterfall. The third trial fastened the hook firmly in Daisy's hat. In vain Daisy gently sought to release it; she was obliged at last to ask help of Sam.

"That ar's no good, Miss Daisy," said Sam, as he got the fly out of its difficulty.

"If I could only throw it in," said Daisy. And this time, with a very great effort she did succeed in swinging the bait by a gentle motion to the very spot. No statue was more motionless than Daisy then. She had eyes and ears for nothing but the trout in the brook. Minutes went by. The brook leaped and sang on its way the air brought the sweet odours of mosses and ferns; the leaves flapped idly overhead; you could hear every little sound. For there sat Daisy, and there stood Sam, as still as the stones. Time went by. At last a sigh came from Daisy's weary little body, which she had not dared to move an inch for half an hour.

"Tain't no good, Miss Daisy," whispered Sam.

"I can't keep it still," said Daisy, under her breath, as if the fishes would hear and understand her.

"Suppos'n you try t'other bait, Miss Daisy."

"What bait?"

"Oh, t'other kind, Miss Daisy. Will I put it on for you to try?"

Daisy sat awhile longer, however, in silence and watching, until every joint was weary and her patience too. Then she left the rod in Sam's hands, and went up to see what Preston was doing. He was some distance higher up the stream. Slowly and carefully Daisy crept near, till she could see his basket, and find out how much he had in it. That view loosed her tongue.

"Not one yet, Preston!" she exclaimed.

"Not a bite," said Preston.

"I hadn't either."

"I don't believe that there are any fish," said Preston.

"Oh, but Sam said he saw lots of them."

"Lots of them! It's the flies then. Sam! Hollo, Sam! Sam! "

"Here, sir," said Sam, coming up the brook.

"Just find me some worms, will you? and be spry. I can't get a bite."

Daisy sat down to look about her, while Preston drew in his line and threw the fly away. It was a pretty place! The brook spread just there into a round pool several feet across; deep and still; and above it the great trees towered up as if they would hide the sun. Sam came presently with the bait. Preston dressed his hook, and gave his line a swing, to cast the bait into the pool; rather incautiously, seeing that the trees stood so thick and so near. Accordingly the line lodged in the high branches of an oak on the opposite side of the pool. Neither was there any coaxing it down.

"What a pity!" said Daisy.

"Not at all," said Preston. "Here, Sam just go up that tree and clear the line will you?"

Sam looked at the straight high stem of the oak, which had shot up high before it put forth a single branch, and he did not like the job. His slow motions said so.

"Come!" said Preston, "be alive and do it quick, will you."

"He can't " said Daisy.

"Yes, he can," said Preston. "If he can't, he isn't worth his bread and salt. That's it, Sam hand over hand, and you'll be there directly."

Sam showed what he *could* do, if he did not like it; for he worked himself up the tall tree like a monkey. It was not so large but he could clasp it; so after a little rough work on his part, and anxious watching on Daisy's, he got to the branches. But now the line was caught in the small forks at the leafy end of the branch. Sam lay out upon it as far as he dared; he could not reach the line.

"Oh, he'll fall!" cried Daisy, softly. "Oh, Preston, let him come down! he can't get it."

"He'll come to no harm," said Preston, coolly. "A little further, Sam it's oak wood, it will hold you; a little further, and you will have it a little further! "

And Daisy saw that Sam had gone too far. The bough swayed, Sam made a lunge after the line, lost his hold, and the next minute his dark body was falling through the air and splashed into the pool. The water flew all over the two fishers who stood by its side; Preston awe-struck for the moment, Daisy white as death. But before either of them could speak or move, Sam's head reappeared above water.

"Oh, get him out! get him out, Preston!" was Daisy's distressed cry. Preston spoke nothing, but he snatched a long stick that lay near, and held it out to Sam; and so in a few minutes drew him to the shore and helped him out. Sam went to a little distance and stood dripping with water from head to foot; he did not shake himself, as a Newfoundland dog would have done.

"Are you hurt, Sam?" said Preston.

"No, sir " Sam answered, in a tone as if he felt very wet.

"Well, you've cleared the line for me at last," said Preston. "All's well that ends well. Hollo! here's my hook gone, broken off, float and all. Where's that basket, Sam?"

"It's below, sir."

"Below? where? just fetch it here, will you? This misfortune can be mended."

Sam moved off, dripping from every inch of him.

"Oh, Preston," said Daisy, "he's all wet as he can be do let him go right down to that house and dry himself! We can get the basket."

"Do him good to move about," said Preston. "Nonsense, Daisy! a ducking like that won't do anybody any harm in a summer's day."

"I don't think *you'd* like it," said Daisy; "and all his clothes are full of water, and the sun don't come down here. Tell him to go and get dry!"

"I will, as soon as I've done with him. Here, Sam just bend on this hook for me, while I see how the brook is further up. I've no time to lose, and then you can go sun yourself somewhere."

Preston bounded off; Sam stood with the tackle in hand, silently at work. Daisy sat still on a stone near by, looking at him.

"Were you hurt, Sam?" she asked, tenderly.

"No, Miss Daisy." This answer was not discontented, but stoical.

"As soon as you have done that, Sam, run down to Mrs. Dipper's, and maybe she can give you something dry to put on while your clothes can be hung out."

Silence on Sam's part.

"Have you almost finished that?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then run off, Sam! Make haste to Mrs. Dipper's and get yourself dry and don't come back till you are quite dry, Sam."

Sam finished his piece of work, flung down the line, and with a grateful "Thank you, Miss Daisy!" set off at a bound. Daisy watched him running at full speed down the brook till he was out of sight.

"Has he done it?" said Preston returning. "The rascal hasn't put any bait on. However, Daisy, it's no use coaxing the trout in *this* place at present and I haven't found any other good spots for some distance up; suppose we have our lunch and try again?"

"Oh, yes!" said Daisy. "The other basket is down by my fishing-place it's just as pleasant there, Preston."

They went back to the basket, and a very convenient huge rock was found on the edge of the brook, which would serve for table and seats too, it was so large and smooth. Preston took his place upon it, and Daisy at the other end with the basket began to unpack.

"Napkins?" said Preston "you have no right to be so luxurious on a fishing party."

"Why not?"

"Why, because a fisher is a kind of a Spartan animal, while he is about his business."

"What kind of an animal is that?" said Daisy, looking up from her arrangements.

She had set out a plate of delicate rolls, and another with bread and butter folded in a napkin; and still she paused with her hand in the basket.

"Go on, Daisy. I want to see what comes next."

"I don't know," said Daisy. "Why, Joanna has made us a lemon pie!"

"Capital!" said Preston. "And what have you got in that dish?"

"I know," said Daisy. "Joanna has put in some jelly for me. What sort of an animal is that, Preston?"

"It is a sort I shall not be to-day with jelly and lemon pie. But what has Joanna put in for me? nothing but bread?"

"Why, there are sandwiches."

"Where?"

"Why, there! Those rolls are stuffed with meat, Preston."

"Splendid!" said Preston, falling foul of the rolls immediately. "What sort of an animal is a Spartan? My dear little Daisy, don't you know?"

"I don't believe I know anything," said Daisy, humbly.

"Don't you want to?"

"Oh, yes, Preston! if I had anybody to help me, I do."

"Well we'll see. How perfect these sandwiches are! when one's hungry."

"I am hungry too," said Daisy. "I think the sound of the water makes me hungry. Oh, I wish I had given Sam some! I never thought of it. How hungry he must be!"

"He'll get along," said Preston, helping himself to another roll.

"But how could I forget!" said Daisy. "And *he* did not have a second breakfast either. I am so sorry!" Daisy's hands fell

from her own dainties.

"There is nothing here fit for him," said Preston. "I dare say he has his own pockets full."

"They were full of water, the last thing," said Daisy, quaintly.

Preston could not help laughing. "My dear Daisy," he said, "I hope you are not getting soft-hearted on the subject of servants?"

"How, Preston?"

"Don't; because it is foolish."

"But, Preston," said Daisy, looking earnestly at his handsome pleasant face which she liked very much, "don't you know what the Bible says?"

"No."

"It says, 'The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.'"

"Well," said Preston, "that don't mean that He made them all alike."

"Then, if they are not made alike, what is the difference?"

"Good gracious!" said Preston; "do you often ask such questions, Daisy? I hope you are not going to turn out a Mrs. Child, or a philanthropist, or anything of that sort?"

"I am not going to be a Mrs. Anybody," said Daisy; "but why don't you answer me?"

"Where did you get hold of those words?"

"What words?"

"Those words that you quoted to me about rich and poor."

"I was reading them this morning."

"In what?"

"Why, in the Bible of course," said Daisy, with a little check upon her manner.

"This morning! Before we started! How came you to be reading the Bible so early in the morning?"

"I like to read it."

"Well, I'd take proper times for reading it," said Preston.

"Who set you to reading it at five o'clock in the morning?"

"Nobody. Oh, Preston, it was a great deal after five o'clock. What are proper times for reading it?"

"Are you going to cut that lemon pie? or shall I? Daisy, I thought you were hungry. What is the use of jelly, if you don't eat it? You'll never catch fish at that rate. Fishers must eat."

"But, Preston, what do you mean by proper times for reading the Bible?"

"Daisy, eat some lemon pie. It's capital. It melts in your mouth. Joanna Underwood is an excellent woman!"

"But, Preston, what do you mean?"

"I don't mean you shall be religious, Daisy, if I can help it."

"What do you mean by being religious?"

"I declare!" said Preston, laughing at her grave little face, "I believe you've begun already. I am come in good time. I won't let you be anything but just what you ought to be, Daisy. Come eat some jelly, or some pie, or something."

"But, tell me then, Preston!" Daisy persisted.

"It is something ridiculous, and you would not wish to be ridiculous."

"I do not think I have ever seen ridiculous religious people," said Daisy, steadily; "and they couldn't be ridiculous *because* they were religious."

"Couldn't they?" said Preston. "Look out well, Daisy I shall watch you. But they won't like it much down at Melbourne House, Daisy. If I were you, I would stop before you begin."

Daisy was silent. One thing was clear, she and Preston were at issue; and the value she set upon his favour was very high. She would not risk it by contending. Another thing was as clear, that Preston's last words were truth. Among her opposers, Daisy must reckon her father and mother, if she laid herself open at all to the charge of being "religious." And what opposition that would be, Daisy did not let herself think. She shrunk from it. The lunch was finished, and she set her attention to pack the remainder of the things back into the basket. Suddenly she stopped.

"Preston, I wish you to consider my words confidential."

"Perfectly!" said Preston.

"You are honourable," said Daisy.

"Oh, Daisy, Daisy! you ought to have lived hundreds of years ago! You have me under command. Come," said he, kissing her grave little face, "are all these things to go in here? Let me help and then we will go up stream."

He helped her with a delicate kind of observance which was not like most boys of sixteen, and which Daisy fully relished. It met her notions. Then she went to get her fishing-rod which lay fallen into the water.

"Oh, Preston!" she exclaimed, "there is something on it! it's heavy! it's a fish!"

"It *is* a fish!" repeated Preston, as a jerk of Daisy's line threw it out high and dry on the shore "and what's more, it's a splendid one. Daisy, you've done it now!"

"And papa will have it for breakfast! Preston, put it in a pail of water till we come back. There's that tin pail we don't want it for anything won't you. Oh, I have caught one!"

It was done; and Daisy and Preston set off on a charming walk up the brook; but though they tried the virtue of their bait in various places, however it was, that trout was the only one caught. Daisy thought it was a fine day's fishing.

They found Sam, sound and dry, mounting guard over the tin pail when they came back to it. And I think Daisy held to her own understanding of the text that had been in debate; for there was a fine portion of lemon pie, jelly, and sandwiches, laid by for him in the basket, and by Sam devoured with great appreciation.

CHAPTER X.

A FIELD OF BATTLE.

June came the next morning to dress her young mistress as usual. Daisy was not soon done with that business on this particular day; she would break off, half dressed, and go to lean out of her window. There was a honey-suckle below the window; its dewy sweet smell came up to her, and the breath of the morning was sweet beside in all the trees and leaves around; the sun shone on the short turf by glimpses, where the trees would let it. Daisy leaned out of her window. June stood as often before, with comb and brush in hand.

"Miss Daisy it's late."

"June," said Daisy, "it's Sunday."

"Yes, ma'am."

"It'll be hot too," Daisy went on. "June, are you glad when Sunday comes?"

"Yes ma'am," said June, shifting her position a little.

"I am," said Daisy. "Jesus is King to-day. To be sure, He is King always; but to-day *everything* is His."

"Miss Daisy, you won't be dressed."

Daisy drew her head in from the window, and sat down to submit it to June's brush; but she went on talking.

"What part of the Bible do you like best to read, June."

"Miss Daisy, will you wear your white muslin to-day or the one with blue spots?"

"White. But tell me, June which part of the Bible do you like best?"

"I like where it tells about all they had to go through," June answered, rather unwillingly.

"They? who?"

"The people, Miss Daisy Christians, I s'pose."

"What did they have to go through?"

"Things, ma'am," said June, very confusedly. "Miss Daisy, please don't turn your head round."

"But what things? and what for? Where is it, June?"

"I can't tell I can find it for you, Miss Daisy. But you won't be ready."

June, however, had to risk that and find the chapter; and then Daisy read perseveringly all through the rest of her dressing, till it was finished. All the while June was fastening her frock, and tying her sash, and lacing her boots, Daisy stood or sat with the Bible in her hands and her eyes on the eleventh of Hebrews.

"June, I wonder when all this happened?"

"A great while ago, it's likely, Miss Daisy but it's good to read now" June added, but half distinctly, as it was her manner often to speak. Daisy was accustomed to her, and heard it. She did not answer except by breaking out into the chorus she had learnt from June:

"Die in the field of battle,
Die in the field of battle,
Die in the field of battle,
Glory in your view!"

"Miss Daisy I wouldn't sing that in the house," June ventured. For the child's voice, clear and full, raised the sweet notes to a pitch that might have been heard at least through several of the large rooms. Daisy hushed her song.

The trout was to be for breakfast, and Daisy, when she was quite ready, went gaily down to see if it would be approved. Her father was engaged to eat it all, and he held to his promise; only allowing Daisy herself to share with him; and on the whole Daisy and he had a very gay breakfast.

"It is too hot to do anything," said Mrs. Randolph, as the trout was very nearly reduced to a skeleton. "I shall not go to church this morning."

A shade passed over Daisy's face, but she did not look towards her mother.

"If you do not, I can't see why I should," said Mr. Randolph.

"The burden of setting a good example lies upon you."

"Why?" said his wife, quickly.

"Nobody will know whether *I* am there or not."

"Nobody will know that I am there at any rate," the lady rejoined. "The heat will be insufferable." Mrs. Gary declared herself of the same opinion.

An hour after, Daisy came into her mother's room.

"Mamma, may I go to church with Joanna?"

"It's too hot, Daisy."

"No, mamma I don't mind it. I would like to go."

"Children don't mind anything! Please yourself. But how are you going?"

"On foot, mamma; under the shade of the trees. It is nice and shady, all the way."

"It is enough to kill you! But go."

So Daisy's great flat set off alongside of Miss Underwood's Sunday gown to walk to church. They set out all right, on the way to the church by the evergreens. Preston Gary was a good deal surprised to find them some time later in another part of the grounds, and going in a different direction.

"Where are you bound, Daisy," he asked.

"To church, Preston."

"Church is the other way."

"Yes, but Mr. Pyne is sick, and the church is closed, and we are going over to that little church on the other side of the road."

"Why, that is a dissenting chapel, isn't it?"

"There's no more dissent amongst 'em than there is among other folks!" broke in Miss Underwood, with a good deal of expression. "I wish all other folks and churches was as peaceable and kept as close to their business! Anyhow, it's a church, and the other one won't let us in."

Preston smiled and stepped back, and to Daisy's satisfaction they met with no further stay. They got to the little church, and took their places in the very front; that place was empty, and Joanna said it was the only one that she could see. The house was full. It was a plain little church, very neat, but very plain compared with what Daisy was accustomed to. So were the people. These were not rich people, not any of them, she thought. At least there were no costly bonnets, nor exquisite lace shawls, nor embroidered muslin dresses among them; and many persons that she saw looked absolutely poor. Daisy, however, did not see this at first; for the service began almost as soon as they entered.

Daisy was very fond of the prayers always in church, but she seldom could make much of the sermon. It was not so today. In the first place, when the prayers and hymns were over, and what Daisy called "the good part" of the service was done, her astonishment and delight were about equal to see Mr. Dinwiddie come forward to speak. It is impossible to tell how glad Daisy was; even a sermon she thought she could relish from his lips; but when he began, she forgot all about it's being a sermon. Mr. Dinwiddie was talking to her and to the rest of the people; that was all she knew; he was not looking down at his book, he was looking at them; his eyes were going right through hers. And he did not speak as if he was preaching; his voice sounded exactly as it did every day out of church. It was delightful. Daisy forgot all about it's being a sermon, and only drank in the words with her ears and her heart, and never took her eyes from those bright ones that every now and then looked down at her. For Mr. Dinwiddie was telling of Him "who though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor." He told how rich He was, in the glories and happiness of heaven, where everything is perfect and all is His. And then he told how Jesus made Himself poor; how He left all that glory and

everything that pleased Him; came where everything displeased Him; lived among sin and sinners; was poor, and despised, and rejected, and treated with every shame, and at last shamefully put to death and His dead body laid in the grave. All this because He loved us; all this because He wanted to make us rich, and without His death to buy our forgiveness there was no other way. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Daisy forgot even Mr. Dinwiddie in thinking of that wonderful One. She thought she had never seen before how good He is, or how beautiful; she had never felt how loving and tender Jesus is in His mercy to those that seek Him, and whom *He* came to seek first; she never saw "the kindness and love of God our Saviour" before. As the story went on, again and again Daisy would see a cloud or mist of tears come over the brightness of those brilliant eyes; and saw the lips tremble; and Daisy's own eyes filled and ran over, and her cheeks were wet with tears, and she never knew it!

But when Mr. Dinwiddie stopped, she was so full of gladness in her little heart, gladness that this beautiful Saviour loved her and that she loved Him, that although if she *could* have been sorry, she would have been very sorry that the sermon was over, she was not; she could be nothing but glad.

She thought they were going home then, after the hymn was sung; but in her thoughts she had missed some words not spoken by Mr. Dinwiddie. And now she perceived that not only it was sacrament day, which she had seen before; but further, that the people who would not share in that service were going, and that Miss Underwood was staying, and by consequence she must stay too. Daisy was pleased. She had never in her life, as it happened, seen the observance of this ordinance; and she had, besides a child's curiosity, a deep, deep interest in all that Christians are accustomed to do. Was she not one?

Mr. Dinwiddie had spoken about the service and the purpose of it; he explained how the servants of Christ at His command take the bread and wine in remembrance of Him and what He has done for them; and as a sign to all the world that they believe in Him and love Him, and wait for Him to come again. Now some prayers were made, and there were spoken some grave words of counsel and warning, which sounded sweet and awful in Daisy's ears; and then the people came forward, a part of them, and knelt around a low railing which was before the pulpit. As they did this, some voices began to sing a hymn, in a wonderfully sweet and touching music. Daisy was exceedingly fond of every melody and harmony that was worthy the name; and this plaintive, slow, simple seemed to go not only through her ears, but down to the very bottom of her heart. They sang but a verse and a chorus; and then, after an interval, when those around the railings rose and gave place to others, they sang a verse and a chorus again; and this is the chorus that they sang. It dwelt in Daisy's heart for many a day; but I can never tell you the sweetness of it.

"Oh, the Lamb! the loving Lamb!
The Lamb on Calvary;
The Lamb that was slain, but lives again,
To intercede for me."

It seemed to Daisy a sort of paradise while they were singing. Again and again, after a pause the notes measuredly rose and fell; and little Daisy who could take no other open part in what was going on, responded to them with her tears. Nobody was looking, she thought; nobody would see.

At last it was all done; the last verses were sung; the last prayers spoken; the little crowd turned to go. Daisy, standing behind Joanna in the front place, was obliged to wait till the aisle was clear. She had turned too when everybody else did, and so was standing with her back to the pulpit, when a hand was laid on her shoulder. The next minute Daisy's little fingers were in Mr. Dinwiddie's clasp, and her face was looking joyfully into his.

"Daisy I am glad to see you."

Another look, and a slight clasp of her little fingers, answered him.

"I wish you had been with us just now."

"I am too little " was Daisy's humble and regretful reply.

"Nobody is too little, who is old enough to know what Jesus has done and to love Him for it, and to be His servant. Do you love Him, Daisy?"

"Yes, Mr. Dinwiddie."

A very soft, but a very clear answer; and so was the answer of the eyes raised to his. To Daisy's great joy, he did not let go her hand when they got out of the church. Instead of that, keeping it fast, he allowed Miss Underwood to go on a little before them, and then he lingered with Daisy along the shady, overarched walks of Melbourne grounds, into which they presently turned. Mr. Dinwiddie lingered purposely, and let Joanna get out of hearing. Then he spoke again.

"If you love Jesus, you want to obey Him, Daisy."

"Yes, Mr. Dinwiddie!"

He felt the breathless manner of her answer.

"What will you do, little one, when you find that to obey Him, you may have a great deal of hard fighting to go through?"

"I'll die on the field of battle, Mr. Dinwiddie."

He looked at her a little curiously. It was no child's boast. Her face was quiet, her eye steady; so had her tone been. It was most unlike Daisy to make protestations of feeling; just now she was speaking to the one person in the world who could help her, whom in this matter she trusted; speaking to him, maybe, for the last time, she knew; and moreover Daisy's heart was full. She spoke as she might live years and not do again, when she said,

"I'll die on the field of battle."

"That is as the Lord pleases," returned Mr. Dinwiddie; "but how will you *fight*, Daisy? you are a weak little child. The fight must be won, in the first place."

"Please tell me, Mr. Dinwiddie."

He sat down on a bank, and drew Daisy down beside him.

"In the first place, you must remember that you are the Lord's, and that everything you have belongs to Him; so that His will is the only thing to be considered in every case. Is it so, Daisy?"

"Yes, Mr. Dinwiddie! But tell me what you mean by 'everything I have.' That is what I wanted to know."

"I will tell you presently. In the next place whenever you know the Lord's will, don't be afraid, but trust Him to help you to do it. He always will, He always can. Only trust Him, and don't be afraid."

"Yes, Mr. Dinwiddie!" Daisy said; but with a gleam on her face which even then reflected the light of those words.

"That's all, Daisy."

"Then, Mr. Dinwiddie, please tell me what you mean by 'everything.'"

"If you love the Lord, Daisy, you will find out."

"But I am afraid I don't know, Mr. Dinwiddie, what all my talents are."

"He is a wise man that does. But if you love the Lord Jesus with all your heart, you will find that in everything you do you can somehow please Him, and that He is first to be pleased."

They looked into each other again, those two faces, with perfect understanding; grateful content in the child's eyes, watchful tenderness in those of Mr. Dinwiddie, through all their keenness and brightness. Then he rose up and offered his hand to Daisy; just said 'good bye,' and was gone. He turned off another way, Daisy followed Miss Underwood's steps. But Joanna had got to the house long before she reached it; and Daisy thought herself very happy that nobody saw her come home alone. She got to her own room in safety.

Daisy's heart was full of content. That day was the King's, to be sure; the very air seemed to speak of the love of Jesus, and the birds and the sunshine and the honeysuckle repeated the song of "The Lamb on Calvary." There was no going to church a second time; after luncheon, which was Daisy's dinner, she had the time all to herself. She sat by her own

window, or sometimes she lay down for Daisy was not very strong yet but sitting or lying, and whatever she was doing, the thought that that King was hers, and that Jesus loved her, made her happy; and the hours of the day rolled away as bright as its own sunshine.

"Well, mouse," said her mother, when Daisy came down to tea, where have you been? What a mouse you are!"

"Intelligent for a lower order of quadrupeds," said Mr. McFarlane.

"The day has been insufferable!" said Mrs. Randolph. "Have you been asleep, Daisy?"

"No, mamma."

"You were lying down?"

"Yes, mamma."

Daisy had drawn up close to her mother who had thrown an arm round her. The family were gathered in the library; the windows open, the fresh air coming faintly in; the light fading but no lamps needed yet.

"I am glad the day is over!" said Mrs. Gary. "This morning I did not know how I was going to live through it. There is a little freshness now. Why is it always so much hotter on Sundays than on any other day?"

"Because you think about it," said Mr. Randolph, who was moving from window to window, setting the glass doors wider open.

"There is nothing else to think about," said Mrs. Randolph with a yawn. "Gary, do bring me a cup of tea."

"You ought to think about your evil deeds," said Mr. McFarlane, obeying the command. "Then you would have enough."

"*You* would, you mean."

"I know it. I speak from experience. I tried it once, for a whole afternoon; and you've no idea how good tea-time was when it came!"

"What *could* set you about such a piece of work, Gary?" said his hostess, laughing.

"Conscience, my dear," said her sister. "I am not at all surprised. I wonder if anybody has been to church to-day?"

"I am sorry for the clergyman, if anybody has," remarked Gary.

Mrs. Randolph's arm had slipped from Daisy, and Daisy slipped away from her mother's sofa to the table; where she clipped sponge biscuits in milk, and wondered at other people's Sundays. A weight seemed settling down on her heart. She could not bear to hear the talk; she ate her supper, and then sat down on the threshold of one of the glass doors that looked towards the west, and watched the beautiful colours on the clouds over the mountains; and softly sung to herself the tune she had heard in the morning. So the colours faded away, and the light, and the dusk grew on, and still Daisy sat in the window-door, humming to herself. She did not know that Gary McFarlane had stolen up close behind her and gone away again.

He went away just as company came in; some gay neighbours who found the evening tempting, and came for a little diversion. Lamps were lit, and talking and laughing went round, till Mrs. Randolph asked where Daisy was.

"In the window, singing to the stars," Gary McFarlane whispered. "Do you know, Mrs. Randolph, how she can sing?"

"No, how? She has a child's voice."

"But not a child's taste or ear," said Gary. "I heard her the other day warbling the gypsy song in 'The Camp in Silesia,' and she did it to captivation. Do, Mrs. Randolph, ask her to sing it. I was astonished."

"Do!" said Captain Drummond; and the request spread and became general.

"Daisy " said Mrs. Randolph. Daisy did not hear; but the call being repeated, she came from her window, and after speaking to the strangers, whom she knew, she turned to her mother. The room was all light and bright and full of gay talkers.

"Daisy," said her mother, "I want you to sing that gypsy song from the 'Camp in Silesia.' Gary says you know it so he is responsible. Can you sing it?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then sing it. Never mind whether you succeed or not; that is of no consequence."

"Mamma," began Daisy.

"Well, what?"

Daisy was in great confusion. What to say to her mother she did not know.

"No matter how you get along with it," repeated Mrs. Randolph.

"That is nothing."

"It isn't that, mamma, but "

"Then sing. No more words, Daisy; sing."

"Mamma, please don't ask me!"

"I *have* asked you. Come Daisy don't be silly."

"Mamma," whispered Daisy, trembling, "I will sing it any other night but to night!"

"To-night? what's to-night?"

"To-night is Sunday."

"And is that the reason?"

Daisy stood silent, very much agitated.

"I'll have no nonsense of the kind, Daisy. Sing immediately!"

But Daisy stood still.

"Do you refuse me?"

"Mamma " said Daisy, pleadingly.

"Go and fetch me a card from the table."

Daisy obeyed. Mrs. Randolph rapidly wrote a word or two on it with a pencil.

"But where is the gypsy?" cried Gary McFarlane.

"She has not found her voice yet. Take that to your father, Daisy."

Daisy's knees literally shook under her as she moved across the room to obey this order. Mr. Randolph was sitting at some distance talking with one of the gentlemen. He broke off when Daisy came up with the card.

"What is it your mother wishes you to sing?" he inquired, looking from the writing to the little bearer. Daisy answered very low.

"A gypsy-song from an opera."

"Can you sing it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then do so at once, Daisy."

The tone was quiet but imperative. Daisy stood with eyes cast down, the blood all leaving her face to reinforce some attacked region. She grew white from second to second.

"It is the charge of the Light Brigade," said Captain Drummond to himself. He had heard and watched the whole proceeding, and had the key to it. He thought good-naturedly to suggest to Daisy an escape from her difficulty, by substituting for the opera song something else that she *could* sing. Rising and walking slowly up and down the room, he hummed near enough for her to hear and catch it, the air of "Die in the field of battle." Daisy heard and caught it, but not his suggestion. It was the thought of the *words* that went to her heart, not the thought of the tune. She stood as before, only clasped her little hands close upon her breast. Captain Drummond watched her. So did her father, who could make nothing of her.

"Do you understand me, Daisy?"

"Papa "

"Obey me first, and then talk about it."

Daisy was in no condition to talk; she could hardly breathe that one word. She knew the tone of great displeasure in her father's voice. He saw her condition.

"You are not able to sing at this minute," said he. "Go to your room I will give you ten minutes to recover yourself. Then, Daisy, come here and sing if you like to be at peace with me."

But Daisy did not move; she stood there, with her two hands clasped on her breast.

"Do you mean that you will not?" said Mr. Randolph.

"If it wasn't Sunday, papa " came from Daisy's parted lips.

"Sunday?" said Mr. Randolph "is that it? Now we know where we are. Daisy do you hear me? turn about and sing your song. Do not give me another refusal!"

But Daisy stood, growing paler and paler, till the whiteness reached her lips, and her father saw that in another minute she would fall. He snatched her from the floor, and placed her upon his knee with his arm round her; but though conscious that she was held against his breast, Daisy was conscious too that there was no relenting in it; she knew her father; and her deadly paleness continued. Mr. Randolph saw that there would be no singing that night, and that the conflict between Daisy and him must be put off to another day. Making excuse to those near, that she was not well, he took his little daughter in his arms, and carried her up stairs to her own room. There he laid her on the bed and rang for June, and staid by her till he saw her colour returning. Then without a word he left her.

Meanwhile Captain Drummond, downstairs, had taken a quiet seat in a corner; his talking mood having deserted him.

"Did I ever walk up to the cannon's mouth like that?" he said to himself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WOUNDED HAND.

Daisy kept herself quite still while her father and June were present. When Mr. Randolph had gone downstairs, and June, seeing her charge better, ventured to leave her to get some brandy and water, then Daisy seized that minute of being alone to allow herself a few secret tears. Once opened, the fountain of tears gushed out a river; and when June came back Daisy was in an agony which prevented her knowing that anybody was with her. In amaze, June set down the brandy and water, and looked on. She had never in her life seen Daisy so. It distressed her; but though June might be called dull, her poor wits were quick to read some signs; and troubled as she was, she called neither Daisy's father nor her mother. The child's state would have warranted such an appeal. She never heard June's tremulous "Don't, Miss Daisy!" She was shaken with the sense of the terrible contest she had brought on herself; and grieved to the very

depths of her tender little heart that she must bear the displeasure of her father and her mother. She struggled with tears and agitation until she was exhausted, and then lay quiet, panting and pale, because she had no strength to weep longer.

"Miss Daisy," said June, "drink this."

"What is it?"

"It is brandy and water. It is good for you."

"I am not faint. I don't like it."

"Miss Daisy, please! You want something. It will make you feel better and put you to sleep."

Disregarding the tumbler which June offered, Daisy slowly crawled off the bed, and went and kneeled down before her open window, crossing her arms on the sill. June followed her, with a sort of submissive pertinacity.

"Miss Daisy, you want to take some of this, and lie down and go to sleep."

"I don't want to go to sleep."

"Miss Daisy, you're weak won't you take a little of this, to strengthen you a bit?"

"I don't want it, June."

"You'll be sick to-morrow."

"June," said Daisy, "I wish a chariot of fire would come for me!"

"Why, Miss Daisy?"

"To take me right up. But I shall not be sick. You needn't be afraid. You needn't stay."

June was too much awed to speak, and dared not disobey. She withdrew; and in her own premises stood as Daisy was doing, looking at the moonlight; much wondering that storms should pass over her little white mistress such as had often shaken her own black breast. It was mysterious.

Daisy did not wish to go to sleep; and it was for fear she should, that she had crawled off the bed, trembling in every limb. For the same reason she would not touch the brandy and water. Once asleep, the next thing would be morning and waking up; she was not ready for that. So she knelt by the window, and felt the calm glitter of the moonlight, and tried to pray. It was long, long since Daisy had withstood her father or mother in anything. She remembered the last time; she knew now they *would* have her submit to them, and now she thought she must not. Daisy dared not face the coming day. She would have liked to sit up all night; but her power of keeping even upon her knees was giving way when June stole in behind her, too uneasy to wait for Daisy's ring.

"Miss Daisy, you'll be surely sick to-morrow, and Mis' Randolph will think I ought to be killed."

"June, didn't the minister say this morning "

"What minister?"

"Oh, it wasn't you, it was Joanna. Where is Joanna? I want to see her."

"Most likely she's going to bed, Miss Daisy."

"No matter I want to see her. Go and tell her, June no matter if she is in her night-gown, tell her I want to speak to her one minute."

June went, and Daisy once more burst into tears. But she brushed them aside when Joanna came back with June a few minutes after.

"Joanna didn't the minister say this morning, that when we are doing what Jesus tells us, He will help us through?"

"It's true," said Joanna, looking startled and troubled at the pale little tear-stained face lifted to her; "but I don't just know as that minister said it this morning."

"Didn't he?"

"Why, it's true, Miss Daisy; for I've heard other ministers say it; but that one this morning was preaching about something else don't you know?"

"Was he? Didn't he say that?"

"Why, no, Miss Daisy; he was preaching about how rich "

"Oh, I know!" said Daisy "I remember; yes, it wasn't then it was afterwards. Yes, he said it I knew it but it wasn't in his sermon. Thank you, Joanna that's all; I don't want you any more."

"What ails her?" whispered Joanna, when June followed her out with a light.

But June knew her business better than to tell her little mistress's secrets; and her face showed no more of them than it showed of her own. When she returned, Daisy was on her knees, with her face hidden in her hands, at the foot of the bed.

June stopped; and the little white figure there looked so slight, the attitude of the bended head was so childlike and pitiful, that the mulatto woman's face twinkled and twitched in a way most unwonted to its usual stony lines. She never stirred till Daisy rose up and submissively allowed herself to be put to bed; and then waited on her with most reverent gentleness.

So she did next morning. But Daisy was very pale, and trembled frequently, June noticed; and, when she was dressed, sat down patiently by the window. She was not going down to breakfast, she told June; and June went away to her own breakfast, very ill satisfied.

Breakfast was brought up to Daisy, as she expected; and then she waited for her summons. She could not eat much. The tears were very ready to start, but Daisy kept them back. It did not suit her to go weeping into her father and mother's presence, and she had self-command enough to prevent it. She could not read; yet she turned over the pages of her Bible to find some comfort. She did not know or could not remember just where to look for it; and at last turned to the eleventh of Hebrews, and with her eye running over the record there of what had been done and borne for Christ's sake, felt her own little heart beating hard in its own trial.

June came at length to call her to her mother's room.

Mrs. Randolph was half lying on a couch, a favourite position; and her eye was full on Daisy as she came in. Daisy stopped at a little distance; and June took care to leave the door ajar.

"Daisy," said Mrs. Randolph, "I want in the first place an explanation of last night's behaviour."

"Mamma, I am very sorry to have offended you!" said Daisy, pressing both hands together upon her breast to keep herself quiet.

"Looks like it," said Mrs. Randolph; and yet she did see and feel the effect of the night's work upon the child. "Go on; tell me why you disobeyed me last night."

"It was Sunday " said Daisy, softly.

"Sunday! well, what of that? what of Sunday?"

"That song wasn't a Sunday song."

"What do you mean by a Sunday song?"

"I mean" Daisy was on dangerous ground, and she knew it, "I mean, one of those songs that God likes to hear people sing on His day."

"Who is to be judge?" said Mrs. Randolph, "you or I?"

"Mamma," said Daisy, "I will do everything else in the world you tell me!"

"You will have to do everything else and this too. Isn't there a commandment about children obeying their mothers."

"Yes, ma'am."

"That is the very first commandment I mean you shall obey," said Mrs. Randolph, rousing herself enough to bring one foot to the floor. "You have no business to think whether a thing is right or wrong, that I order you to do; if I order it, that makes it right; and anybody but a fool would tell you so. You will sing that song from the 'Camp in Silesia' for me next Sunday evening, or I will whip you, Daisy you may depend upon it. I have done it before, and I will again; and you know I do not make believe. Now go to your father."

"Where is he, mamma?" said Daisy, with a perceptible added paleness in her cheek.

"I don't know. In the library, I suppose."

To the library Daisy went, with trembling steps, in great uncertainty what she was to expect from her father. It was likely enough that he would say the same as her mother, and insist on the act of submission to be gone through next Sunday; but Daisy had an inward consciousness that her father was likely to come to a point with her sooner than that. It came even sooner than she expected.

Mr. Randolph was pacing up and down the library when Daisy slowly opened the door. No one else was there. He stopped when she came in, and stood looking at her as she advanced towards him.

"Daisy, you disobeyed me last night."

"Yes, papa, but "

"I have but one answer for that sort of thing," said Mr. Randolph, taking a narrow ruler from the library table.

"Give me your hand!"

Daisy gave it, with a very vague apprehension of what he was about to do. The sharp, stinging stroke of the ruler the next moment upon her open palm, made her understand very thoroughly. It drew from her one cry of mixed pain and terror; but after that first forced exclamation Daisy covered her face with her other hand, and did not speak again. Tears, that she could not help, came plentifully; for the punishment was sufficiently severe, and it broke her heart that her father should inflict it; but she stood perfectly still, only for the involuntary wincing that was beyond her control, till her hand was released and the ruler was thrown down. Heart and head bowed together then, and Daisy crouched down on the floor where she stood, unable either to stand or to move a step away.

"There! that account's settled!" said Mr. Randolph, as he flung down his ruler. And the next moment his hands came softly about Daisy, and lifted her from the floor and placed her on his knee; and his arms were wrapped tenderly round her. Daisy almost wished he had let her alone; it seemed to her that her sorrow was more than she could bear.

"Is your heart almost broken?" said Mr. Randolph, softly, as he felt rather than heard the heavy sobs so close to him. But to speak was an impossibility, and so he knew, and did not repeat his question; only he held Daisy fast, and it was in his arms that she wept out the first overcharged fulness of her heart.

It was a long time before she could quiet those heavy sobs; and Mr. Randolph sat quite still holding her.

"Is your heart quite broken?" he whispered again, when he judged that she could speak. Daisy did not speak, however. She turned, and rising upon her knees, threw her arms round her father's neck, and hid her soft little head there. If tears came Mr. Randolph could not tell; he thought his neck was wet with them. He let her alone for a little while.

"Daisy "

"Papa."

"Can you talk to me?"

Daisy sank back into her former position. Her father put his lips down to hers for a long kiss.

"That account is settled," said he; "do you understand? Now Daisy, tell me what was the matter last night."

"Papa, it was Sunday night."

"Yes. Well?"

"And that song that mamma wanted me to sing" Daisy spoke very low, "was out of an opera; and it was good for any other day, but not for Sunday."

"Why not?"

Daisy hesitated, and at last said, "It had nothing to do with Sunday, papa."

"But obedience is not out of place on Sunday, is it?"

"No, papa, except "

"Well, except what?"

"Papa, if God tells me to do one thing, and you tell me another, what shall I do?" Daisy had hid her face in her father's breast.

"What counter command have you to plead in this case?"

"Papa, may I show it to you?"

"Certainly."

She got down off his lap, twinkling away a tear hastily, and went to the bookcase for the big Bible aforesaid. Mr. Randolph seeing what she was after, and that she could not lift it, went to her help, and brought it to the library table. Daisy turned over the leaves with fingers that trembled yet, hastily, flurriedly; and paused and pointed to the words that her father read, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day."

Mr. Randolph read them, and the words following, and the words that went before; then he turned from them, and drew Daisy to her place in his arms again.

"Daisy, there is another commandment there, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' Is there not?"

"Yes, papa."

"Is not one command as good as the other?"

"Papa, I think not," said Daisy. "One command tells me to obey you, the other tells me to obey God."

Childish as the answer was, there was truth in it; and Mr. Randolph shifted his ground.

"Your mother will not be satisfied without your obeying the lesser command nor shall I!"

Silence.

"She will expect you to do next Sunday evening what you refused to do last evening."

Still silence, but a shiver ran over Daisy's frame.

"Do you know it?" said Mr. Randolph, noticing also that Daisy's cheek had grown a shade paler than it was.

"Papa I wish I could die!" was the answer of the child's agony.

"Do you mean that you will not obey her, Daisy?"

"How can I, papa? how can I!" exclaimed Daisy.

"Do you think that song is so very bad, Daisy?"

"No, papa, it is very good for other days; but it is not holy." Her accent struck strangely upon Mr. Randolph's ear; and sudden contrasts rushed together oddly in his mind.

"Daisy, do you know that you are making yourself a judge of right and wrong? over your mother and over me?"

Daisy hid her face again in his breast; what could she answer? Mr. Randolph unfolded the little palm, swollen and blistered from the marks of his ruler.

"Why did you offend me, Daisy?" he said, gravely.

"Oh, papa!" said Daisy, beside herself, "I didn't I couldn't I wouldn't, for anything in the world! but I couldn't offend the Lord Jesus!"

She was weeping again bitterly.

"That will not do," said Mr. Randolph. "You must find a way to reconcile both duties. I shall not take an alternative." But after that he said no more, and only applied himself to soothing Daisy; till she sat drooping in his arms, but still and calm. She started when the sound of steps and voices came upon the verandah.

"Papa, may I go?"

He let her go, and watched her measured steps through the long room to the door, and heard the bound they made as soon as she was outside of it. He rang the bell and ordered June to be called. She came.

"June," said Mr. Randolph, "I think Daisy wants to be taken care of to-day I wish you would not lose sight of her."

June courtesied her obedience.

A few minutes afterwards her noiseless steps entered Daisy's room. June's footfall was never heard about the house. As noiseless as a shadow she came into a room; as stealthily as a dark shadow she went out. Her movements were always slow; and whether from policy or caution originally, her tread would not waken a sleeping mouse. So she came into her little mistress's chamber now. Daisy was there, at her bureau, before an open drawer; as June advanced, she saw that a great stock of little pairs of gloves was displayed there, of all sorts, new and old; and Daisy was trying to find among them one that would do for her purpose. One after another was tried on the fingers of her right hand, and thrown aside; and tears were running over the child's cheeks and dropping into the drawer all the time. June came near, with a sort of anxious look on her yellow face. It was strangely full of wrinkles and lines, that generally never stirred to express or reveal anything. Suddenly she exclaimed, but June's very exclamations were in a smothered tone

"Oh, Miss Daisy! what have you done to your hand?"

"I haven't done anything to it," said Daisy, trying furtively to get rid of her tears, "but I want a glove to put on, June, and they are all too small. Is Cecilia at work here to-day?"

"Yes, Miss Daisy; but let me look at your hand! let me put some liniment on."

"No, I don't want it," said Daisy; and June saw the suppressed sob that was not allowed to come out into open hearing; "but June, just rip that glove, will you, here in the side seam; and then ask Cecilia to make a strip of lace-work there so that I can get it on." Daisy drew a fur glove over the wounded hand as she spoke it was the only one large enough and put on her flat hat.

"Miss Daisy, Mr. Randolph said I was to go with you anywhere you went to take care of you."

"Then come down to the beach, June; I'll be there."

Daisy stole down stairs and slipped out of the first door she came to. What she wanted was to get away from seeing anybody; she did not wish to see her mother, or Preston, or Captain Drummond, or Ransom; and she meant even if possible to wander off and not be at home for dinner. She could not bear the thought of the dinner-table, with all the faces round it. She stole out under the shrubbery, which soon hid her from view of the house.

It was a very warm day, the sun beating hot wherever it could touch at all. Daisy went languidly along under cover of the trees, wishing to go faster, but not able, till she reached the bank. There she waited for June to join her, and together they went down to the river shore. Safe there from pursuit, on such a day, Daisy curled herself down in the shade with her back against a stone, and then began to think. She felt very miserable; not merely for what had passed, but for a long stretch of trouble that she saw lying before her. Indeed where or how it was to end, Daisy had no idea. Her father indeed, she felt pretty sure would not willingly allow his orders to come in conflict with what she thought her duty; though if he happened to do it unconsciously, Daisy would not follow that train of thought. But here she was now, at this moment, engaged in a trial of strength with her mother; very unequal, for Daisy felt no power at all for the struggle, and yet she could not yield!

Where was it to end? and how many other like occasions of difference might arise, even after this one should somehow have been settled? Had the joy of being a servant of Jesus so soon brought trouble with it? Daisy had put the trunk of a large tree between her and June; but the mulatto woman, where she sat, heard the stifled sobs of the child. June's items of intelligence, picked up by eye and ear, had given her by this time an almost reverent feeling towards Daisy; she regarded her as hardly earthly; nevertheless, this sort of distress must not be suffered to go on, and she was appointed to prevent it.

"Miss Daisy it is luncheon time," she said, without moving. Daisy gave no response. June waited, and then came before her and repeated her words.

"I am not going in."

"But you want your dinner, Miss Daisy."

"No, I don't, June. I don't want to go in."

June looked at her a minute. "I'll get you your luncheon out here, Miss Daisy. You'll be faint for want of something to eat. Will you have it out here?"

"You needn't say where I am, June."

June went off, and Daisy was left alone. Very weary and exhausted, she sat leaning her head against the stone at her side, in a sort of despairing quiet. The little ripple of the water on the pebbly shore struck her ear; it was the first thing eye or ear had perceived to be pleasant that day. Daisy's thoughts went to the hand that had made the glittering river, with all its beauties and wonders; then they went to what Mr. Dinwiddie had said, that God will help His people when they are trying to do any difficult work for Him; He will take care of them; He will not forsake them. Suddenly it filled Daisy's soul like a flood, the thought that Jesus loves His people; that she was His little child and that He loved her; and all His wisdom and power and tenderness were round her and would keep her. Her trouble seemed to be gone, or it was like a cloud with sunlight shining all over it. The very air was full of music, to Daisy's feeling, not her sense. There never was such sunlight, or such music either, as this feeling of the love of Jesus. Daisy kneeled down by the rock, and rested her forehead against it, to pray for joy.

She was there still, when June came back, and stopped and looked at her, a vague expression of care sitting in her black eyes, into which now an unwonted moisture stole. June had a basket, and as soon as Daisy sat down again, she came up and began to take things out of it. She had brought everything for Daisy's dinner. There was a nice piece of beefsteak, just off the gridiron; and rice and potatoes; and a fine bowl of strawberries for dessert. June had left nothing; there was the roll and the salt, and a tumbler and a carafe of water. She set the other things about Daisy, on the ground and on the rock, and gave the plate of beefsteak into her hand.

"Miss Daisy, what will you do for a table?"

"It's nicer here than a table. How good you are, June. I didn't know I wanted it."

"I know you do, Miss Daisy."

And she went to her sewing, and sewed perseveringly, while Daisy eat her dinner.

"June, what o'clock is it."

"It's after one, ma'am."

"You haven't had your own dinner?"

June mumbled something, of which nothing could be understood except that it was a general abnegation of all desire or necessity for dinner on her own part.

"But you have not had it?" said Daisy.

"No, ma'am. They've done dinner by this time."

"June, I have eaten up all the beefsteak there is nothing left but some potato, and rice, and strawberries; but you shall have some strawberries."

June in vain protested. Daisy divided the strawberries into two parts, sugared them both, broke the remaining roll in two, and obliged June to take her share. When this was over, Daisy seated herself near June, and laid her head against her knee. She could hardly hold it up.

"June," she said presently, "I think those people in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews you know."

"Yes, Miss Daisy."

"I think they were very happy, because they knew that Jesus loved them."

June made no audible answer; she mumbled something; and Daisy sat still. Presently her soft breathing made June look over at her; Daisy was asleep. In her hand, in her lap, lay a book. June looked yet further, to see what book it was. It was Mr. Dinwiddie's Bible.

June sat up and went on with her work, but her face twitched.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

Daisy was at the dinner-table. After having a good sleep on June's knee, she had come home, and dressed as usual, and she was in her place when the dessert was brought on. Mr. Randolph, from his distant end of the table, watched her a little; he saw that she behaved just as usual; she did not shun anybody, though her mother shunned her. A glove covered her right hand, yet Daisy persisted in using that hand rather than attract notice, though from the slowness of her movements it was plain it cost her some trouble. Gary McFarlane asked why she had a glove on, and Mr. Randolph heard Daisy's perfectly quiet and true answer, that "her hand was wounded, and had to wear a glove," given without any confusion or evasion. He called his little daughter to him, and giving her a chair by his side, spent the rest of his time in cracking nuts and preparing a banana for her; doing it carelessly, not as if she needed but as if it pleased him to give her his attention.

After dinner, Daisy sought Preston, who was out on the lawn, as he said, to cool himself; in the brightness of the setting sun to be sure, but also in a sweet light air which was stirring.

"Phew! it's hot. And you, Daisy, don't look as if the sun and you had been on the same side of the earth to-day. What do you want now?"

"I want a good talk with you, Preston."

"I was going to say 'fire up,'" said Preston, "but, no, don't do anything of that sort! If there is any sort of talking that has a chilly effect, I wish you'd use it."

"I have read of such talk, but I don't think I know how to do it," said Daisy. "I read the other day of somebody's being 'frozen with a look.'"

Preston went off into a fit of laughter, and rolled himself over on the grass, declaring that it was a splendid idea; then he sat up and asked Daisy again what she wanted? Daisy cast a glance of her eye to see that nobody was too near.

"Preston, you know you were going to teach me."

"Oh ay! about the Spartans."

"I want to learn everything," said Daisy. "I don't know much."

Preston looked at the pale, delicate child, whose doubtful health he knew had kept her parents from letting her "know much"; and it was no wonder that when he spoke again, he used a look and manner that were caressing, and even tender.

"What do you want to know, Daisy?"

"I want to know everything," whispered Daisy; "but I don't know what to begin at."

"No!" said Preston, " 'everything' seems as big as the world, and as hard to get hold of."

"I want to know geography," said Daisy.

"Yes. Well you shall. And you shall not study for it neither; which you can't."

"Yes I can."

"No you can't. You are no more fit for it, little Daisy but look here! I wish you would be a red daisy."

"Then what else, Preston?"

"Nothing else. Geography is enough at once."

"Oh, no, it isn't. Preston, I can't do the least little bit of a sum in the world."

"Can't you? Well I don't see that that is of any very great consequence. What sums do *you* want to do?"

"But I want to know how."

"Why?"

"Why, Preston, you know I *ought* to know how. It might be very useful, and I ought to know."

"I hope it will never be of any use to you," said Preston; "but you can learn the multiplication table if you like."

"Then will you show it to me?"

"Yes; but what has put you in such a fever of study, little Daisy? It excites me, this hot weather."

"Then won't you come in and show me the multiplication table now, Preston?"

In came Preston, laughing, and found an arithmetic for Daisy; and Daisy, not laughing, but with a steady seriousness, sat down on the verandah in the last beams of the setting sun to learn that "twice two is four."

The same sort of sweet seriousness hung about all her movements this week. To those who knew what it meant, there was something extremely touching in the gentle gravity with which she did everything, and the grace of tenderness which she had for everybody. Daisy was going through great trouble. Not only the trouble of what was past, but the ordeal of what was to come. It hung over her like a black cloud, and her fears were like muttering thunder. But the sense of right, the love of the Master in whose service she was suffering, the trust in His guiding hand, made Daisy walk with that strange, quiet dignity between the one Sunday and the other. Mr. Randolph fancied sometimes when she was looking down, that he saw the signs of sadness about her mouth; but whenever she looked up again, he met such quiet, steady eyes, that he wondered. He was puzzled; but it was no puzzle that Daisy's cheeks grew every day paler, and her appetite less.

"I do not wish to flatter you" said Mrs. Gary, one evening "but that child has very elegant manners! Really, I think they are very nearly perfect. I don't believe there is an English court beauty who could show better."

"The English beauty would like to be a little more robust in her graces," remarked Gary McFarlane.

"That is all Daisy wants," her aunt went on; "but that will come, I trust, in time."

"Daisy would do well enough," said Mrs. Randolph, "if she could get some notions out of her head."

"What, you mean her religious notions? How came she by them, pray?"

"Why, there was a person here a connexion of Mrs. Sandford's that set up a Sunday school in the woods; and Daisy went to it for a month or two, before I thought anything about it, or about him. Then I found she was beginning to ask questions, and I took her away."

"Is asking questions generally considered a sign of danger?" said Gary McFarlane.

"What was that about her singing the other night?" said Mrs. Gary "that had something to do with the same thing, hadn't it?"

"Refused to sing an opera song because it was Sunday."

"Ridiculous!" said Mrs. Gary. "I'll try to make her see it so herself if I get a chance. She is a sensible child."

Mr. Randolph was walking up and down the room, and had not spoken a word. A little time after, he found himself nearly alone with Mrs. Randolph, the others having scattered away. He paused near his wife's sofa.

"Daisy is failing," he said. "She has lost more this week than she had gained in the two months before."

Mrs. Randolph made no answer, and did not even move her handsome head, or her delicate hands.

"Can't you get out of this business, Felicia?"

"In the way that I said I would. You expect your words to be obeyed, Mr. Randolph; and I expect it for mine."

Mr. Randolph resumed his walk.

"Daisy has got some things in her head that must get out of it. I would as lieve not have a child, as not to have her mind me."

Mr. Randolph passed out upon the verandah, and continuing his walk there, presently came opposite the windows of the library. There he saw Daisy seated at the table, reading. Her hand was over her brow, and Mr. Randolph did not feel satisfied with the sober lines of the little mouth upon which the lamplight shone. Once, too, Daisy's head went down upon her book, and lay there a little while. Mr. Randolph did not feel like talking to her just then, or he would have liked to go in and see what she was studying. But while he stood opposite the window, Captain Drummond came into the library.

"You here, Daisy! What are you busy about?" he said, kindly.

"What are you studying now?"

"I am reading the History of England, Captain Drummond."

"How do you like it?"

"I have not got very far. I do not like it very much."

"Where are you?"

"I have just got to where it tells about Alfred."

"Why do you read it, Daisy? Is it a lesson?"

"No, Captain Drummond, but I think proper to read it."

"It is proper," said the Captain. "Come, Daisy, suppose we go down on the sand-beach to-morrow, and we will play out the Saxon Heptarchy there as we played out the Crimea. Shall we?"

Daisy's face changed. "Oh, thank you, Captain Drummond! that will be nice! Shall we?"

"If you will, I will," said the Captain.

Mr. Randolph moved away.

The next day, after luncheon, Daisy followed her father when he left the table. She followed till they were quite away from other ears.

"Papa, I would like to go to Mrs. Harbonner's again. You said I must not go without leave."

"Who is Mrs. Harbonner?"

"Papa, it is the place where I took the ham, do you remember? Joanna has enquired about her, and found that she is respectable."

"What do you want to go there again for, Daisy?"

"Joanna has found some work for her, papa. She would not have the ham unless she could work to pay for it. I want to see her to tell her about it."

Mr. Randolph had it on his tongue to say that somebody else might do that; but looking down at Daisy, the sight of the pale face and hollow eyes stopped him. He sat down, and drew Daisy up to his side.

"I will let you go."

"Thank you, papa!"

"Do you know," said Mr. Randolph, "that your mother is going to ask you to sing that song again when Sunday evening comes?"

The smile vanished from Daisy's face; it grew suddenly dark; and a shuddering motion was both seen and felt by Mr. Randolph, whose arm was round her.

"Daisy," said he, not unkindly, "do you know that I think you a little fool?"

She lifted her eyes quickly, and in their meeting with her father's there was much that Mr. Randolph felt without stopping to analyse, and that made his own face as suddenly sober as her own. There was no folly in that quick grave look of question or appeal; it seemed to carry the charge in another direction.

"You think it is not right to sing such a song on a Sunday?" he asked.

"No, papa."

"But, suppose, by singing it, you could do a great deal of good, instead of harm."

"How, papa?"

"I will give you a hundred dollars for singing it, which you may spend as you please for all the poor people about Melbourne or Crum Elbow."

It was very singular to him to see the changes in Daisy's face. Light and shadow came and went with struggling quickness. He expected her to speak, but she waited for several minutes; then she said in a troubled voice, "Papa, I will think of it."

"Is that all, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph, disappointed.

"I am going to Mrs. Harbonner's, papa, and I will think, and tell you."

Mr. Randolph was inclined to frown and suspect obstinacy; but the meek little lips which offered themselves for a kiss disarmed him of any such thought. He clasped Daisy in his arms, and gave her kisses, many a one, close and tender. If he had known it, he could have done nothing better for the success of his plan; under the pressure of conscience Daisy could bear trouble in doing right, but the argument of affection went near to trouble her conscience. Daisy was obliged to compound for a good many tears, before she could get away and begin her drive. And when she did, her

mind was in a flutter. A hundred dollars! how much good could be done with a hundred dollars. Why, would it not be right to do something, even sing such a song on Sunday, when it was sung for such a purpose and with such results? But Daisy could not feel quite sure about it; while at the same time the prospect of getting quit of her difficulties by this means escaping her mother's anger, and the punishment with which it was sure to be accompanied, and also pleasing her father shook Daisy's very soul. What should she do? She had not made up her mind when she got to the little brown house where Mrs. Harbonner lived.

She found mother and daughter both in the little bare room; the child sitting on the floor and cutting pieces of calico and cloth into strips, which her mother was sewing together with coarse thread. Both looked just as when Daisy had seen them before slim and poor and uncombed; but the room was clean.

"I thought you warn't coming again," said Mrs. Harbonner.

"I couldn't come till to-day," said Daisy, taking a chair. "I came as soon as I could." Partly from policy, partly because she felt very sober, she left it to Mrs. Harbonner to do most of the talking.

"I never see more'n a few folks that thought much of doing what they said they'd do without they found their own account in it. If I was living in a great house, now, I'd have folks enough come to see me."

Daisy did not know what answer to make to this, so she made none.

"I used to live in a better house once," went on Mrs. Harbonner; "I didn't always use to eat over a bare floor. I was well enough, if I could ha' let well alone; but I made a mistake, and paid for it; and what's more, I'm paying for it yet. 'Taint *my* fault, that Hephzibah sits there cuttin' rags, instead of going to school."

Again Daisy did not feel herself called upon to decide on the mistakes of Mrs. Harbonner's past life; and she sat patiently waiting for something else that she could understand.

"What are you come to see me for now?" said the lady. "I suppose you're going to tell me you haven't got no work for me to do, and I must owe you for that ham?"

"I have got something for you to do," said Daisy. "The boy has got it at the gate. The housekeeper found some clothes to make and you said that was your work."

"Tailoring," said Mrs. Harbonner. "I don't know nothing about women's fixtures, except what'll keep me and Hephzibah above the savages. I don't suppose I could dress a doll so's it would sell."

"This is tailoring work," said Daisy. "It is a boy's suit and there will be more to do if you like to have it."

"Where is it? at the gate, did you say? Hephzibah, go and fetch it in. Who's got it?"

"The boy who is taking care of the horses."

"I declare, have you got that little covered shay there again? it's complete! I never see a thing so pretty! And Hephzibah says you drive that little critter yourself. Ain't you afraid?"

"Not at all," said Daisy. "The pony won't do any harm."

"He looks skeery," said Mrs. Harbonner. "I wouldn't trust him. What a tremendous thick mane he's got! Well, I s'pect you have everything you want, don't you?"

"Of such things " said Daisy.

"That's what I meant. Gracious! I s'pose every one of us has wishes whether they are in the air or on the earth. Wishes is the butter to most folks' bread. Here, child."

She took the bundle from Hephzibah, unrolled it, and examined its contents with a satisfied face.

"What did *you* come along with this for?" she said, suddenly, to Daisy. "Why didn't you send it?"

"I wanted to come and see you," said Daisy, pleasantly.

"What ails you? You ain't so well as when you was here before," said Mrs. Harbonner, looking at her narrowly.

"I am well," said Daisy.

"You ain't fur from bein' something else then. I suppose you're dyin' with learning while my Hephzibah can't get schooling enough to read her own name. That's the way the world's made up!"

"Isn't there a school at Crum Elbow?" said Daisy.

"Isn't there! And isn't there a bench for the rags? No, my Hephzibah don't go to show none."

Mrs. Harbonner was so sharp and queer, though not unkindly towards herself, that Daisy was at a loss how to go on; and, moreover, a big thought began to turn about in her head.

"Poverty ain't no shame, but it's an inconvenience," said Mrs. Harbonner. "Hephzibah may stay to home and be stupid, when she's as much right to be smart as anybody. That's what I look at; it ain't having a little to eat now and then."

"Melbourne is too far off for her to get there, isn't it?" said Daisy.

"What should she go there for?"

"If she could get there," said Daisy, "and would like it, I would teach her."

"*You* would?" said Mrs. Harbonner. "What would you learn her?"

"I would teach her to read," said Daisy, colouring a little; "and anything else I could."

"La, she can read," said Mrs. Harbonner, "but she don't know nothing, for all that. Readin' don't tell a person much, without he has books. I wonder how long it would hold out, if you begun? 'Taint no use to begin a thing and then not go on."

"But could she get to Melbourne?" said Daisy.

"I don't know. Maybe she can. Who'd she see at your house?"

"Nobody, but the man at the lodge, or his mother."

"Who's that?"

"He's the man that lives in the lodge, to open the gate."

"Open the gate, hey? Who pays him for it?"

"Papa pays him, and he lives in the lodge."

"I shouldn't think it would take a man to open a gate. Why, Hephzibah could do it as well as anybody."

Daisy did not see the point of this remark, and went on.

"Hephzibah wouldn't see anybody else, but me."

"Well, I believe you mean what you say," said Mrs. Harbonner, "and I hope you will when you're twenty years older but I don't believe it. I'll let Hephzibah come over to you on Sundays I know she's jumpin' out of her skin to go she shall go on Sundays, but I can't let her go other days, 'cause she's got work to do; and anyhow it would be too fur. What time would you like to see her?"

"As soon as it can be after afternoon church, if you please. I couldn't before."

"You're a kind little soul!" said the woman. "Do you like flowers?"

Daisy said yes. The woman went to a back door of the room, and, opening it, plucked a branch from a great rosebush that grew there.

"We hain't but one pretty thing about this house," said she, presenting it to Daisy, "but that's kind o' pretty."

It was a very rich and delicious white rose, and the branch was an elegant one, clustered with flowers and buds. Daisy gave her thanks and took leave.

"As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men." There was a little warm drop of comfort in Daisy's heart as she drove away. If she could not go to Sunday-school herself, she might teach somebody else, yet more needy; that would be the next best thing. Sunday afternoon it looked bright to Daisy; but then her heart sank; Sunday evening would be near. What should she do? She could not settle it in her mind what was right; between her mother's anger and her father's love, Daisy could not see what was just the plumb-line of duty. Singing would gain a hundred dollars' worth of good; and not singing would disobey her mother and displease her father; but then came the words of one that Daisy honoured more than father and mother "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day;" and she could not tell what to do.

CHAPTER XIII.

OBEDIENCE.

Daisy had gone but a little way out of the village, when she suddenly pulled up. Sam was at the side of the chaise immediately.

"Sam, I want a glass of water; where can I get it?"

"Guess at Mrs. Benoit's, Miss Daisy. There's a fine spring of cold water."

"Who is Mrs. Benoit?"

"It's Juanita Miss Daisy has heard of Mrs. St. Leonard's Juanita. Mr. St. Leonard built a house for her, just the other side o' them trees."

Daisy knew who Juanita was. She had been brought from the West Indies by the mother of one of the gentlemen who lived in the neighbourhood; and upon the death of her mistress had been established in a little house of her own. Daisy judged that she would be quite safe in going there for water.

"If I turn into that road, can I go home round that way, Sam?"

"You can, Miss Daisy; but it's a ways longer."

"I like that;" said Daisy.

She turned up the road that led behind the trees, and presently saw Juanita's cottage. A little grey stone house, low-roofed, standing at the very edge of a piece of woodland, and some little distance back from the road. Daisy saw the old woman sitting on her doorstep. A grassy slope stretched down from the house to the road. The sun shone up against the grey cottage.

"You take care of Loupe, Sam, and I'll go in," said Daisy a plan which probably disappointed Sam, but Daisy did not know that. She went through a little wicket and up the path.

Juanita did not look like the blacks she had been accustomed to see. Black she was not, but of a fine olive dark skin; and though certainly old, she was still straight and tall, and very fine in her appearance and bearing. Daisy could see this but partially while Juanita was sitting at her door; she was more struck by the very grave look her face wore just then. It was not turned towards her little visitor, and Daisy got the impression that she must be feeling unhappy.

Juanita rose, however, with great willingness to get the water, and asked Daisy into her house. Daisy dared not, after her father's prohibition, go in, and she stood at the door till the water was brought. Then, with a strong feeling of kindness towards the lonely and perhaps sorrowful old woman, and remembering to "do good as she had opportunity," Daisy suddenly offered her the beautiful rose-branch.

"Does the lady think I want pay for a glass of water?" said the woman, with a smile that was extremely winning.

"No," said Daisy, "but I thought, perhaps, you liked flowers."

"There's another sort of flowers that the Lord likes," said the woman looking at her; "they be His little children."

Daisy's heart was tender, and there was something in Juanita's face that won her confidence. Instead of turning away, she folded her hands unconsciously, and said, more wistfully than she knew, "I want to be one!"

"Does my little lady know the Lord Jesus?" said the woman, with a bright light coming into her eye.

Daisy's heart was sore as well as tender; the question touched two things, the joy that she did know Him, and the trouble that following Him had cost her; she burst into tears. Then, turning away, and with a great effort throwing off the tears, she went back to the chaise. There stood Sam, with the pony's foot in his hand.

"Miss Daisy, this fellow has kicked one of his shoes half off; he can't go home so; it's hanging. Could Miss Daisy stop a little while at Mrs. Benoit's, I could take the pony to the blacksmith's it ain't but a very little ways off and get it put on, in a few minutes."

"Well, do, do, Sam," said Daisy after she had looked at the matter; and while he took Loupe out of harness, she turned back to Juanita.

"What is gone wrong?" said the old woman.

"Nothing is wrong," said Daisy; "only the pony has got his shoe off, and the boy is taking him to the blacksmith's."

"Will my lady come into my house?"

"No, thank you. I'll stay here."

The woman brought out a low chair for her, and set it on the grass; and took herself her former place on the sill of the door. She looked earnestly at Daisy; and Daisy on her part had noticed the fine carriage of the woman, her pleasant features, and the bright handkerchief which made her turban. Through the open door she could see the neat order of the room within, and her eye caught some shells arranged on shelves; but Daisy did not like to look, and she turned away. She met Juanita's eye; she felt she must speak.

"This is a pleasant place."

"Why does my lady think so?"

"It looks pleasant," said Daisy. "It is nice. The grass is pretty, and the trees; and it is a pretty little house, I think."

The woman smiled. "I think it be a palace of beauty," she said, "for Jesus is here."

Daisy looked, a little wondering but entirely respectful; the whole aspect of Juanita commanded that.

"Does my little lady know, that the presence of the King makes a poor house fine?"

"I don't quite know what you mean," said Daisy, humbly.

"Does my little lady know that the Lord Jesus loves His people?"

"Yes," said Daisy, "I know it."

"But she know not much. When a poor heart say any time, 'Lord, I am all Thine!' then the Lord comes to that heart, and He makes it the house of a King for He comes there Himself. And where Jesus is, all is glory. Do not my little lady read that in the Bible?"

"I don't remember" said Daisy.

The woman got up, went into the cottage, and brought out a large-print Testament which she put into Daisy's hands, open at the fourteenth chapter of John. Daisy read with curious interest the words to which she was directed: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."

Daisy looked at the promise, with her heart beating under troublesome doubts; when the voice of Juanita broke in upon them by saying, tenderly, "Does my little lady keep the Lord's words?"

Down went the book, and the tears rushed into Daisy's eyes. "Don't call me so," she cried, "I am Daisy Randolph; and I

do want to keep His words! and I don't know how."

"What troubles my love?" said the woman, in the low tones of a voice that was always sweet. "Do not she know what the words of the Lord be?"

"Yes," said Daisy, hardly able to make herself understood, "but "

"Then do 'em," said Juanita. "The way is straight. What He say, do."

"But suppose " said Daisy.

"Suppose what? What do my love suppose?"

"Wouldn't it make it right, if it would do a great deal of good?"

This confused sentence Juanita pondered over. "What does my love mean?"

"If it would do a great deal of good wouldn't that make it right to do something?"

"Right to do something that the Lord say not do?"

"Yes."

"If you love Jesus, you not talk so," said Juanita, sorrowfully. But that made Daisy give way altogether.

"Oh, I do love Him! I do love Him!" she cried; "but I don't know what to do." And tears came in a torrent.

Juanita was watchful and thoughtful. When Daisy had very soon checked herself, she said in the same low, gentle way in which she had before spoken, "What do the Lord say to do that some good thing, or to keep His words?"

"To keep His words."

"Then keep 'em and the Lord will do the good thing Himself; that same or another. He can do what He please; and He tell you, only keep His words. He want you to show you love Him and He tell you how."

Daisy sat quite still to let the tears pass away, and the struggle in her heart grow calm; then when she could safely she looked up. She met Juanita's eye. It was fixed on her.

"Is the way straight now?" she asked.

Daisy nodded, with a little bit of a smile on her poor little lips.

"But there is trouble in the way?" said Juanita.

"Yes," said Daisy, and the old woman saw the eyes redden again.

"Has the little one a good friend at home to help?"

Daisy shook her head.

"Then let Jesus help. My little lady keep the Lord's words, and the sweet Lord Jesus will keep her." And rising to her feet, and clasping her hands, where she stood, Juanita poured forth a prayer. It was for her little visitor. It was full of love. It was full of confidence too; and of such clear simplicity as if, like Stephen, she had seen the heavens open. But the loving strength of it won Daisy's heart; and when the prayer was finished she came close to the old woman and threw her arms round her as she stood, and wept with her face hid in Juanita's dress. Yet the prayer had comforted her too, greatly. And though Daisy was very shy of intimacies with strangers, she liked to feel Juanita's hand on her shoulder; and after the paroxysm of tears was past, she still stood quietly by her, without attempting to increase the distance between them; till she saw Sam coming down the lane with the pony.

"Good-bye," said Daisy, "there's the boy."

"My lady will come to see old Juanita again?"

"I am Daisy Randolph. I'll come," said the child, looking lovingly up. Then she went down the slope to Sam.

"The blacksmith couldn't shoe him, Miss Daisy he hadn't a shoe to fit. He took off the old shoe so Miss Daisy please not drive him hard home."

Daisy wanted nothing of the kind. To get home soon was no pleasure; so she let Loupe take his own pace, anything short of walking; and it was getting dusk when they reached Melbourne. Daisy was not glad to be there. It was Friday night; the next day would be Saturday.

Mrs. Randolph came out into the hall to see that nothing was the matter, and then went back into the drawing-room. Daisy got her dress changed, and came there too, where the family were waiting for tea. She came in softly, and sat down by herself at a table somewhat removed from the others, who were all busily talking and laughing. But presently Captain Drummond drew near, and sat down at her side.

"Have you had a good drive, Daisy?"

"Yes, Captain Drummond."

"We missed our history to-day, but I have been making preparations. Shall we go into the Saxon Heptarchy to-morrow you and I and see if we can get the kingdom settled?"

"If you please. I should like it very much."

"What is the matter with you, Daisy?"

Daisy lifted her wise little face, which indeed looked as if it were heavy with something beside wisdom, towards her friend; she was not ready with an answer.

"You aren't going to die on the field of battle yet, Daisy?" he said, half lightly, and half he knew not why.

It brought a rush of colour to the child's face; the self-possession must have been great which kept her from giving way to further expression of feeling. She answered with curious calmness, "I don't think I shall, Captain Drummond."

The Captain saw it was a bad time to get anything from her, and he moved away. Preston came the next minute.

"Why, Daisy," he whispered, drawing his chair close, "where have you been all day? No getting a sight of you. What have you been about?"

"I have been to Crum Elbow this afternoon."

"Yes, and how late you stayed. Why did you?"

"Loupe lost a shoe. I had to wait for Sam to go to the blacksmith's with him."

"Really. Did you wait in the road?"

"No. I had a place to wait."

"I dare say you are as hungry as a bear," said Preston. "Now here comes tea and waffles, Daisy; you shall have some waffles and cream. That will make you feel better."

"Cream isn't good with waffles," said Daisy.

"Yes, it is. Cream is good with everything. You shall try. I know! I am always cross myself when I am hungry."

"I am not hungry, Preston; and I don't think I am cross."

"What are you, then? Come, Daisy, here is a cup of tea, and here is a waffle. First the sugar there, then the cream. So."

"You have spoiled it, Preston."

"Eat it and confess you are hungry and cross too."

Daisy could have laughed, only she was too sore-hearted, and would surely have cried. She fell to eating the creamed waffle.

"Is it good?"

"Very good!"

"Confess you are hungry and cross, Daisy."

"I am not cross. And Preston, please! don't!" Daisy's fork fell; but she took it up again.

"What is the matter, then, Daisy?"

Daisy did not answer; she went on eating as diligently as she could.

"Is it that foolish business of the song?" whispered Preston.

"Is that the trouble, Daisy?"

"Please don't, Preston!"

"Well, I won't, till you have had another waffle. Sugar and cream, Daisy?"

"Yes."

"That's brave! Now eat it up and tell me, Daisy, is *that* the trouble with you?"

He spoke affectionately, as he almost always did to her; and Daisy did not throw him off.

"You don't understand it, Preston," she said.

"Daisy, I told you my uncle and aunt would not like that sort of thing."

Daisy was silent, and Preston wondered at her. Mrs. Gary drew near at this moment, and placed herself opposite Daisy's tea-cup, using her eyes in the first place.

"What are you talking about?" said she.

"About Daisy's singing, ma'am."

"That's the very thing," said Mrs. Gary, "that I wanted to speak about. Daisy, my dear, I hope you are going to sing it properly to your mother the next time she bids you?"

Daisy was silent.

"I wanted to tell you, my dear," said Mrs. Gary, impressively, "what a poor appearance your refusal made, the other evening. You could not see it for yourself; but it made you seem awkward, and foolish, and ill-bred. I am sure everybody would have laughed, if it had not been for politeness towards your mother; for the spectacle was ludicrous, thoroughly. You like to make a graceful appearance, don't you?"

Daisy answered in a low voice, "Yes, ma'am; when I can."

"Well, you can, my dear, for your behaviour is generally graceful, and unexceptionable; only the other night it was very rough and uncouth. I expected you to put your finger in your mouth the next thing, and stand as if you had never seen anybody. And Daisy Randolph! the heiress of Melbourne and Cranford!"

The heiress of Melbourne and Cranford lifted to her aunt's face a look strangely in contrast with the look bent on her; so much worldly wisdom was in the one, so much want of it in the other. Yet those steady grey eyes were not without a wisdom of their own; and Mrs. Gary met them with a puzzled feeling of it.

"Do you understand me, Daisy, my dear?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you see that it is desirable never to look ridiculous, and well-bred persons never do?"

"Yes, aunt Gary."

"Then I am sure you won't do it again. It would mortify me for your father and mother."

Mrs. Gary walked away. Daisy looked thoughtful.

"Will you do it, Daisy?" whispered Preston.

"What?"

"Will you sing the song for them next time? You will, won't you?"

"I'll do what I can" said Daisy. But it was said so soberly, that Preston was doubtful of her. However, he, like Captain Drummond, had got to the end of his resources for that time; and seeing his uncle approach, Preston left his seat.

Mr. Randolph took it, and drew Daisy from her own to a place in his arms. He sat then silent a good while, or talking to other people; only holding her close and tenderly. Truth to tell, Mr. Randolph was a little troubled about the course things were taking; and Daisy and her father were a grave pair that evening.

Daisy felt his arms were a pleasant shield between her and all the world; if they might only *keep* round her! And then she thought of Juanita's prayer, and of the invisible shield, of a stronger and more loving arm, that the Lord Jesus puts between His children and all real harm.

At last Mr. Randolph bent down his head, and brought his lips to Daisy's, asking her if she had had a nice time that afternoon.

"Very, papa!" said Daisy, gratefully; and then added, after a little hesitation, "Papa, do you know old Juanita? Mrs. St. Leonard's woman, that Mr. St. Leonard built a little house for?"

"I do not know her. I believe I have heard of her."

"Papa, would you let me go into her house? She has some beautiful shells that I should like to see."

"How do you know?"

"I saw them, papa, through the doorway of her house, I waited there while Sam went with Loupe to the blacksmith's."

"And you did not go in?"

"No, sir you said I must not, you know."

"I believe Juanita is a safe person, Daisy. You may go in, if ever you have another opportunity."

"Thank you, papa."

"What are you going to do with the hundred dollars?" said Mr. Randolph, putting his head down, and speaking softly.

Daisy waited a minute, checked the swelling of her heart, forbade her tears, steadied her voice to speak; and then said, "I sha'n't have them, papa."

"Why not?"

"I can't fulfil the conditions." Daisy spoke again, after waiting a minute.

"Don't you mean to sing?"

Every time Daisy waited. "I can't, papa."

"Your mother will require it."

Silence, only Mr. Randolph saw that the child's breath went and came under excitement.

"Daisy, she will require it."

"Yes, papa" was said, rather faintly.

"And I think you must do it."

No response from Daisy; and no sign of yielding.

"How do you expect to get over it?"

"Papa, won't you help me?" was the child's agonised cry. She hid her face in her father's breast.

"I have tried to help you. I will give you what will turn your fancied wrong deed into a good one. It is certainly right to do charitable things on Sunday."

There was silence, and it promised to last some time. Mr. Randolph would not hurry her: and Daisy was thinking, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. *If ye love Me.*"

"Papa," said she at last, very slowly, and pausing between her words, "would you be satisfied, if I should disobey you for a hundred dollars?"

This time it was Mr. Randolph that did not answer, and the longer he waited the more the answer did not come. He put Daisy gently off his knee, and rose at last without speaking. Daisy went out upon the verandah, and sat down on the step; and there the stars seemed to say to her "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." They were shining very bright; so was that saying to Daisy. She sat looking at them, forgetting all the people in the drawing-room; and though troubled enough, she was not utterly unhappy. The reason was, she loved her King.

Somebody came behind her, and took hold of her shoulders. "My dear little Daisy!" said the voice of Preston, "I wish you were an India-rubber ball, that I might chuck you up to the sky and down again a few times!"

"Why? I don't think it would be nice."

"Why? why, because you want shaking; you are growing dull, yes, absolutely you are getting heavy! you, little Daisy! of all people in the world. It won't do."

"I don't think such an exercise would benefit me," said Daisy.

"I'd find something else then. Daisy, Daisy," said he, shaking her shoulders gently, "this religious foolery is spoiling you. Don't you go and make yourself stupid. Why I don't know you. What is all this ridiculous stuff? You aren't yourself."

"What do you want me to do, Preston?" said Daisy, standing before him, not without a certain childish dignity. It was lost on him.

"I want you to be my own little Daisy," said he, coaxingly. "Come! say you will, and give up these outlandish notions you have got from some old woman or other. What is it they want you to do? sing? Come, promise you will. Promise me!"

"I will sing any day but Sunday."

"Sunday? Now, Daisy! I'm ashamed of you. Why, I never heard such nonsense. Nobody has such notions but low people. It isn't sensible. Give it up, Daisy, or I shall not know how to love you."

"Good night, Preston "

"Daisy, Daisy! come and kiss me, and be good."

"Good night" repeated Daisy, without turning; and she walked off.

It half broke June's heart that night to see that the child's eyes were quietly dropping tears all the while she was getting undressed. Preston's last threat had cut very close. But Daisy said not a word; and when, long after June had left her, she got into bed, and lay down, it was not Preston's words, but the reminder of the stars that was with her, and making harmony among all her troubled thoughts "If a man love Me, he will keep My words."

CHAPTER XIV.

SUNDAY EVENING.

In spite of the burden that lay on Daisy's heart, she and Captain Drummond had a good time the next morning over the Saxon Heptarchy. They went down to the shore for it, at Daisy's desire, where they would be undisturbed; and the morning was hardly long enough. The Captain had provided himself with a shallow tray filled with modelling clay; which he had got from all artist friend living a few miles further up the river. On this the plan of England was nicely marked out, and by the help of one or two maps which he cut up for the occasion, the Captain divided off the seven kingdoms greatly to Daisy's satisfaction and enlightenment. Then, how they went on with the history! introduced Christianity, enthroned Egbert, and defeated the Danes under Alfred. They read from the book, and fought it all out on the clay plan as they went along. At Alfred they stopped a good while, to consider the state of the world in the little island of Britain at that time. The good king's care for his people, his love for study and encouragement of learning; his writing fables for the people; his wax candles to mark time; his building with brick and stone; his founding the English navy, and victories with the same; no less than his valour and endurance in every time of trial; all these things Captain Drummond, whose father had been an Englishman, duly enlarged upon, and Daisy heard them with greedy ears. Truth to tell, the Captain had read up a little for the occasion, being a good deal moved with sympathy for his little friend, who he saw was going through a time of some trial. Nothing was to be seen of that just now, indeed, other than the peculiarly soft and grave expression which Daisy's face had worn all this week; and which kept reminding the Captain to be sorry for her.

They got through with Alfred at last by the way, the Captain had effaced the dividing lines of the seven kingdoms and brought all to one in Egbert's time and now they went on with Alfred's successors. A place was found on the sand for Denmark and Norway to show themselves; and Sweyn and Canute came over; and there was no bating to the interest with which the game of human life went on. In short, Daisy and the Captain having tucked themselves away in a nook of the beach and the tenth and eleventh centuries, were lost to all the rest of the world and to the present time; till a servant at last found them with the information that the luncheon bell had rung, and Mrs. Randolph was ready to go out with the Captain. And William the Conqueror had just landed at Hastings!

"Never mind, Daisy," said the Captain; "we'll go on with it, the next chance we get."

Daisy thanked him earnestly, but the thought that Sunday must come and go first, threw a shadow over her thanks. The Captain saw it; and walked home thinking curiously about the "field of battle" not Hastings.

Daisy did not go in to luncheon. She did not like meeting all the people who felt so gay, while she felt so much trouble. Nor did she like being with her mother, whose manner all the week had constantly reminded Daisy of what Daisy never forgot. The rest of Saturday passed soberly away. There was a cloud in the air.

And the cloud was high and dark Sunday morning, though it was as fair a summer day as might be seen. Some tears escaped stealthily from Daisy's eyes, as she knelt in the little church beside her mother; but the prayers were deep and sweet and strong to her, very much. Sadly sorry was Daisy when they were ended. The rest of the service was little to her. Mr. Pyne did not preach like Mr. Dinwiddie; and she left the church with a downcast heart, thinking that so much of the morning was past.

The rest of the day Daisy kept by herself, in her own room; trying to get some comfort in reading and praying. For the dread of the evening was strong upon her; every movement of her mother spoke displeasure and determination. Daisy felt her heart beating gradually quicker and quicker, as the hours of the day wore on.

"Ye ain't well, Miss Daisy," said June, who had come in as usual without being heard.

"Yes I am, June," said Daisy. But she had started when the woman spoke, and June saw that now a tear sprang.

"Did you eat a good lunch, Miss Daisy?"

"I don't know, June. I guess I didn't eat much."

"Let me bring you something!" said the woman, coaxingly "some strawberries, with some good cream to 'em."

"No I can't, June I don't want them. What o'clock is it?"

"It is just on to five, Miss Daisy."

Five! Daisy suddenly recollected her scholar, whom she had directed to come to her at this hour. Jumping up, she

seized her hat, and rushed off down stairs and through the shrubbery, leaving June lost in wonder and concern.

At a Belvedere, some distance from the house, and nearer the gate, Daisy had chosen to meet her pupil; and she had given orders at the Lodge to have her guided thither when she should come. And there she was; Daisy could see the red head of hair before she got to the place herself. Hephzibah looked very much as she did on week days; her dress partially covered with a little shawl; her bonnet she had thrown off; and if the hair had been coaxed into any state of smoothness before leaving home, it was all gone now.

"How do you do, Hephzibah?" said Daisy. "I am glad to see you."

Hephzibah smiled, but unless that meant a civil answer, she gave none. Daisy sat down beside her.

"Do you know how to read, Hephzibah?"

The child first shook her shaggy head then nodded it. What that meant, Daisy was somewhat at a loss.

"Do you know your letters?"

Hephzibah nodded.

"What is that letter?"

Daisy had not forgotten to bring a reading book, and now put Hephzibah through the alphabet, which she seemed to know perfectly, calling each letter by its right name. Daisy then asked if she could read words; and getting an assenting nod again, she tried her in that. But here Hephzibah's education was defective; she could read indeed, after a fashion; but it was a slow and stumbling fashion; and Daisy and she were a good while getting through a page. Daisy shut the book up.

"Now, Hephzibah," said she, "do you know anything about what is in the Bible?"

Hephzibah shook her head in a manner the reverse of encouraging.

"Did you never read the Bible, nor have any one read it to you?"

Another shake.

Daisy thereupon began to tell her little neighbour the grand story which concerned them both so nearly, making it as clear and simple as she could. Hephzibah's eyes were fixed on her intently all the while; and Daisy, greatly interested herself, wondered if any of the interest had reached Hephzibah's heart, and made the gaze of her eyes so unwavering. They expressed nothing. Daisy hoped, and went on, till at a pause Hephzibah gave utterance to the first words (of her own) that she had spoken during the interview. They came out very suddenly, like an unexpected jet of water from an unused fountain.

"Mother says, you're the fus'ratest little girl she ever see!"

Daisy was extremely confounded. The thread of her discourse was so thoroughly broken, indeed, that she could not directly begin it again; and in the minute of waiting she saw how low the sun was. She dismissed Hephzibah, telling her to be at the Belvedere the same hour next Sunday.

As the shaggy little red head moved away through the bushes, Daisy watched it, wondering whether she had done the least bit of good. Then another thought made her heart beat, and she turned again to see how low the sun was. Instead of the sun, she saw Gary McFarlane.

"Who is that, Daisy?" said he, looking after the disappearing red head.

"A poor little girl " said Daisy.

"So I should think, very poor! looks so indeed! How came she here?"

"She came by my orders, Mr. McFarlane."

"By your orders! What have you got there, Daisy? Let's see! As sure as I'm alive! a spelling book. Keeping school, Daisy? Don't say no!"

Daisy did not say no, nor anything. She had taken care not to let Gary get hold of her Bible; the rest she must manage as she could.

"This is benevolence!" went on the young man. "Teaching a spelling lesson in a Belvedere with the thermometer at ninety degrees in the shade? What sinners all the rest of us are! I declare, Daisy, you make me feel bad."

"I should not think it, Mr. McFarlane."

"Daisy, you have a *plomb* enough for a princess, and gravity enough for a Puritan! I should like to see you when you are grown up, only then I shall be an old man, and it will be of no consequence. What *do* you expect to do with that little red head? now do tell me."

"She don't know anything, Mr. McFarlane."

"No more don't I! Come Daisy have pity on me. You never saw anybody more ignorant than I am. There are half a dozen things at this moment which I don't know and which you can tell me. Come, will you?"

"I must go in, Mr. McFarlane."

"But tell me first. Come, Daisy! I want to know why is it so much more wicked to sing a song than to make somebody else sing-song? for that's the way they all do the spelling-book, I know. Eh, Daisy?"

"How did you know anything about it, Mr. McFarlane?"

"Come, Daisy, explain. I am all in a fog or else you are. This spelling-book seems to me a very wicked thing on Sunday."

"I will take it, if you please, Mr. McFarlane."

"Not if I know it! I want my ignorance instructed, Daisy. I am persuaded you are the best person to enlighten me but if not, I shall try this spelling-book on Mrs. Randolph. I regard it as a great curiosity, and an important question in metaphysics."

Poor Daisy! She did not know what to do; conscious that Gary was laughing at her all the while, and most unwilling that the story of the spelling-book should get to Mrs. Randolph's ears. She stood hesitating and troubled, when her eye caught sight of Preston near. Springing to him she cried, "Oh, Preston, get my little book from Mr. McFarlane he won't give it to me."

There began then a race of the most uproarious sort between the two young men springing, turning, darting round among the trees and bushes, shouting to and laughing at each other. Daisy another time would have been amused; now she was almost frightened, lest all this boisterous work should draw attention. At last, however, Preston got the spelling-book, or Gary let himself be overtaken and gave it up.

"It's mischief, Preston!" he said; "deep mischief occult mischief. I give you warning."

"What is it, Daisy?" said Preston. "What is it all about?"

"Never mind. Oh, Preston! don't ask anything, but let me have it!"

"There it is then; but Daisy," he said, affectionately, catching her in his arms, "you are going to sing to-night, aren't you?"

"Don't Preston don't! let me go," cried Daisy, struggling to escape from him; and she ran away as soon as he let her, hardly able to keep back her tears. She felt it very hard. Preston and Gary, and her mother and her father, all against her in different ways. Daisy kneeled down by her window-sill in her own room, to try to get comfort and strength; though she was in too great tumult to pray connectedly. Her little heart was beating sadly. But there was no doubt at all in Daisy's mind as to what she should do. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." She never questioned now about doing that.

The dreaded tea bell rang, and she went down; but utterly unable to eat or drink through agitation. Nobody seemed to notice her particularly, and she wandered out upon the verandah; and waited there. There presently her father's arms came round her before she was aware.

"What are you going to do, Daisy?"

"Nothing, papa," she whispered.

"Are you not going to sing?"

"Papa, I can't!" cried Daisy, dropping her face against his arm. Her father raised it again, and drawing her opposite one of the windows, looked into the dark-ringed eyes and white face.

"You are not well," said he. "You are not fit to be up; and my orders to you, Daisy, are to go immediately to bed. I'll send you some medicine by and by. Good night!"

He kissed her, and Daisy needed no second bidding. She sprang away, getting into the house by another door; and lost no time. Her fear was that her mother might send for her before she could get undressed. But no summons came; June was speedy, thinking and saying it was a very good thing for Daisy to do; and then she went off, and left her alone with the moonlight. Daisy was in no hurry then. She knelt by her beloved window, where the scent of the honeysuckle was strong in the dewy air; and with a less throbbing heart prayed her prayer. But she was not at ease yet; it was very uncertain in her mind how her mother would take this order of her father's; and what would come after, if she was willing to let it pass. So Daisy could not go to sleep, but lay wide awake and fearing in the moonlight, and listening to every sound in the house that came to her ears.

The moonlight shone in peacefully, and Daisy, lying there and growing gradually calmer, began to wonder in herself that there should be so much difficulty made about anybody's doing right. If she had been set on some wrong thing, it would have made but a very little disturbance if any; but now, when she was only trying to do right, the whole house was roused to prevent her. Was it so in those strange old times that the eleventh chapter of Hebrews told of? when men, and women, were stoned, and sawn asunder, and slain with the sword, and wandered like wild animals in sheepskins and goatskins and in dens and caves of the earth? all for the name of Jesus. But if they suffered once, they were happy now. Better anything, at all events, than to deny that name!

The evening seemed excessively long to Daisy, lying there on her bed awake, and listening with strained ears for any sound near her room. She heard none; the hours passed, though so very slowly, as they do when all the minutes are watched; and Daisy heard nothing but dim distant noises, and grew pretty quiet. She had heard nothing else, when, turning her head from the moonlight window, she caught the sight of a white figure at her bedside; and by the noble form and stately proportions Daisy knew instantly whose figure it was. Those soft flowing draperies had been before her eyes all day. A pang shot through the child, that seemed to go from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet.

"Are you awake, Daisy?"

"Yes, mamma," she said, feebly.

"Get up. I want to speak to you."

Daisy got off the bed, and the white figure, in the little night dress, stood opposite the other white figure, robed in muslin and laces that fell around it like a cloud.

"Why did you come to bed?"

"Papa papa ordered me."

"It's all the same. If you had not come to bed, Daisy if you had been well, would you have sung when I ordered you to-night?"

Daisy hesitated, and then said in a whisper

"No, mamma not that."

"Think before you answer me, for I shall not ask twice. Will you promise to sing the gypsy-song, because I command you, next Sunday in the evening? Answer, Daisy."

Very low it was, for Daisy trembled so that she did not know how she could speak at all, but the answer came, "I can't, mamma."

Mrs. Randolph stepped to the bell, and rang it. Almost at the same instant June entered, bearing a cup in her hand.

"What is that?" said Mrs. Randolph.

"Master sent Miss Daisy some medicine."

"Set it down. I have got some here better for her. June, take Daisy's hands."

"Oh, mamma, no!" exclaimed Daisy. "Oh, please send June away!"

The slight gesture of command to June which answered this, was as imperious as it was slight. It was characteristically like Mrs. Randolph; graceful and absolute. June obeyed it, as old instinct told her to do; though sorely against her will. She had held hands before, though not Daisy's; and she knew very well the look of the little whip with which her mistress stepped back into the room, having gone to her own for it. In a Southern home that whip had been wont to live in Mrs. Randolph's pocket. June's heart groaned within her.

The whip was small, but it had been made for use, not for play; and there was no play in Mrs. Randolph's use of it. This was not like her father's ferule, which Daisy could bear in silence, if tears would come; her mother's handling forced cries from her; though smothered and kept under in a way that showed the child's self-command.

"What have you to say to me?" Mrs. Randolph responded, without waiting for the answer. But Daisy had none to give. At length her mother paused.

"Will you do what I bid you?"

Daisy was unable to speak for tears and perhaps for fear. The wrinkles on June's brow were strangely folded together with agitation; but nobody saw them.

"Will you sing for me next Sunday?" repeated Mrs. Randolph.

There was a struggle in the child's heart, as great almost as a child's heart can bear. The answer came, when it came, tremblingly: "I can't, mamma."

"You cannot?" said Mrs. Randolph.

"I can't, mamma."

The chastisement which followed was so severe, that June was moved out of all the habits of her life, to interfere in another's cause. The white-skinned race were no mark for trouble in June's mind; least of them all, her little charge. And if white skin was no more delicate in reality than dark skin, it answered to the lash much more speakingly.

"Missus, you'll kill her!" June said, using in her agitation a carefully disused form of speech; for June was a freed-woman.

A slight turn of the whip brought the lash sharply across her wrist, with the equally sharp words, "Mind your own business!"

A thrill went through the woman, like an electric spark, firing a whole life-train of feeling and memory; but the lines of her face never moved, and not the stirring of a muscle told what the touch had reached, besides a few nerves. She had done her charge no good by her officiousness, as June presently saw with grief. It was not till Mrs. Randolph had thoroughly satisfied her displeasure at being thwarted, and not until Daisy was utterly exhausted, that Mrs. Randolph stayed her hand.

"I will see what you will say to me next Sunday!" she remarked, calmly. And she left the room.

It was not that Mrs. Randolph did not love her daughter, in her way; for in her way she was fond of Daisy; but the habit of bearing no opposition to her authority was life-strong, and probably intensified in the present instance by perceiving that her husband was disposed to shield the offender. The only person in whose favour the rule ever relaxed, was Ransom. June was left with a divided mind, between the dumb indignation which had never known speech, and an almost equally speechless concern.

Daisy, as soon as she was free, had made her way to the window; there the child was, on her knees, her head on her

window sill, and weeping as if her very heart were melting and flowing away drop by drop. And June stood like a dark statue, looking at her; the wrinkles in her forehead scarce testifying to the work going on under it. She wanted first of all to see Daisy in bed; but it seemed hopeless to speak to her; and there the little round head lay on the window-sill, and the moonbeams poured in lovingly over it. June stood still and never stirred.

It was a long while before Daisy's sobs began to grow fainter, and June ventured to put in her word, and got Daisy to lay herself on the bed again. Then June went off after another sort of medicine of her own devising, despising the drops which Mr. Randolph had given her. Without making a confidant of the housekeeper, she contrived to get from her the materials to make Daisy a cup of arrowroot, with wine and spices. June knew well how to be a cook when she pleased; and what she brought to Daisy was, she knew, as good as a cook could make it.

She found the child lying white and still on the bed, and not asleep, nor dead, which June had almost feared at first sight of her. She didn't want the arrowroot, she said.

"Miss Daisy, s'pose you take it?" said June. "It won't do you no hurt maybe it'll put you to sleep."

Daisy was perhaps too weak to resist. She rose half up and eat the arrowroot, slowly, and without a word. It did put a little strength into her, as June had said. But when she gave back the cup, and let herself fall again upon her pillow, Daisy said, "June, I'd like to die."

"Oh, why, Miss Daisy?" said June.

"Jesus knows that I love Him now; and I'd like " said the child, steadying her voice "I'd like to be in heaven!"

"Oh, no, Miss Daisy not yet; you've got a great deal to do in the world first."

"Jesus knows I love Him " repeated the child.

"Miss Daisy, He knowed it before He's the Lord."

"Yes, but He wants people to *show* they love Him, June."

"Do, don't! Miss Daisy," said June, half crying. "Can't ye go to sleep? Do, now!"

It was but three minutes more, and Daisy had complied with her request. June watched, and saw that the sleep was real; went about the room on her noiseless feet; came back to Daisy's bed, and finally went off for her own pillow, with which she lay down on the matting at the foot of the bed, and there passed the remainder of the night.

CHAPTER XV.

SCHROEDER'S MOUNTAIN.

The sun was shining bright the next morning, and Daisy sat on one of the seats under the trees, half in sunshine, half in shadow. It was after breakfast, and she had been scarcely seen or heard that morning before. Ransom came up.

"Daisy, do you want to go fishing?"

"No, I think not."

"You don't! What are you going to do?"

"I am not going to do anything."

"I don't believe it. What ails you? Mother said I was to ask you and there you sit like a wet feather. I am glad I am not a girl, however!"

Ransom went off, and a very faint colour rose in Daisy's cheek.

"Are you not well, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph, who had also drawn near.

"I am well, papa."

"You don't look so. What's the matter, that you don't go a- fishing, when Ransom has the consideration to ask you?"

Daisy's tranquillity was very nearly overset. But she maintained it, and only answered without the change of a muscle, "I have not the inclination, papa." Indeed her face was *too* quiet; and Mr. Randolph, putting that with its colourless hue, and the very sweet upward look her eyes had first given him, was not satisfied. He went away to the breakfast room.

"Felicia," said he, in a low tone, bending down by his wife, "did you have any words with Daisy last night?"

"Has she told you about it?" said Mrs. Randolph.

"Told me what? What is there to tell?"

"Nothing, on my part," answered the lady, nonchalantly. "Daisy may tell you what she pleases."

"Felicia," said Mr. Randolph, looking much vexed, "that child has borne too much already. She is ill."

"It is her own fault. I told you, Mr. Randolph, I would as lief not have a child as not have her mind me. She shall do what I bid her, if she dies for it."

"It won't come to that," said Mrs. Gary. Mr. Randolph turned on his heel.

Meantime, another person who had seen with sorrow Daisy's pale face, and had half a guess as to the cause of it, came up to her side and sat down.

"Daisy, what is to be done to-day?"

"I don't know, Captain Drummond."

"You don't feel like storming the heights, this morning?"

Again, to him also, the glance of Daisy's eye was so very sweet, and so very wistful, that the captain was determined in a purpose he had half had in his mind.

"What do you say to a long expedition, Daisy?"

"I don't feel like driving, Captain Drummond."

"No, but suppose I drive, and we will leave Loupe at home for to-day. I want to go as far as Schroeder's Hill, to look after trilobites; and I do not want anybody with me but you. Shall we go?"

"What are those things, Captain Drummond?"

"Trilobites?"

"Yes. What are they?"

"Curious things, Daisy! They are a kind of fish that are found on land."

"Fish on land! But then they can't be fish, Captain Drummond?"

"Suppose we go and see," said the captain; "and then, if we find any, we shall know more about them than we do now."

"But how do you catch them?"

"With my hands, I suppose."

"With your hands, Captain Drummond?"

"Really I don't know any other way, unless your hands will help. Come! shall we go and try?"

Daisy slowly rose up, very mystified, but with a little light of interest and curiosity breaking on her face. The Captain moved off on his part to get ready, well satisfied that he was doing a good thing.

It went to the Captain's heart, nevertheless, for he had a kind one, to see all the way how pale and quiet Daisy's face was. She asked him no more about trilobites, she did not talk about anything; the subjects the Captain started were soon let drop. And not because she was too ill to talk, for Daisy's eye was thoughtfully clear and steady, and the Captain had no doubt but she was busy enough in her own mind with things she did not bring out. What sort of things? he was very curious to know. For he had never seen Daisy's face so exceeding sweet in its expression as he saw it now; though the cheeks were pale and worn, there was in her eye whenever it was lifted to his, a light of something hidden that the Captain could not read. It was true. Daisy had sat stunned and dull all the morning until he came with his proposal for the drive; and with the first stir of excitement in getting ready, a returning tide of love had filled the dry places in Daisy's heart; and it was full now of feelings that only wanted a chance to come out. Meanwhile she sat as still as a mouse and as grave as a judge.

The hill for which they were bound was some dozen or more miles away. It was a wild rough place. Arrived at the foot of it, they could go no further by the road; the Captain tied his horse to a tree, and he and Daisy scrambled up the long winding ascent, thick with briars and bushes, or strewn with pieces of rock, and shaded with a forest of old trees. This was hard walking for Daisy today; she did not feel like struggling with any difficulties, and her poor little feet almost refused to carry her through the roughnesses of the last part of the way. She was very glad when they reached the ground where the Captain wanted to explore, and she could sit down and be still. It was quite on the other side of the mountain; a strange-looking place. The face of the hill was all bare of trees, and seemed to be nothing but rock; and jagged and broken as if quarriers had been there cutting and blasting. Nothing but a steep surface of broken rock; bare enough; but it was from the sun, and Daisy chose the first smooth fragment to sit down upon. Then what a beautiful place! For, from that rocky seat, her eye had a range over acres and acres of waving slopes of tree tops; down in the valley at the mountain foot, and up and down so many slopes and ranges of swelling and falling hillsides and dells, that the eye wandered from one to another and another, softer and softer as the distance grew, or brighter and more varied as the view came nearer home. A wilderness all, no roof of a house nor smoke from a chimney even; but those sunny ranges of hills, over which now and then a cloud shadow was softly moving, and which finished in a dim blue horizon.

"Well, are you going to sit here?" said the Captain, "or will you help me to hunt up my fishes?"

"Oh, I'll sit here," said Daisy. She did not believe much in the success of the Captain's hunt.

"Won't you be afraid, while I am going all over creation?"

"Of what?" said Daisy.

The Captain laughed a little and went off; thinking, however, not so much of his trilobites as of the sweet fearless look the little face had given him. Uneasy about the child too, for Daisy's face looked not as he liked to see it look. But where got she that steady calm, and curious fearlessness. "She is a timid child," thought the Captain, as he climbed over the rocks; "or she was, the other night."

But the Captain and Daisy were looking with different eyes; no wonder they did not find the same things. In all that sunlit glow over hill and valley, which warmed every tree-top, Daisy had seen only another light, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. With that love round her, over her, how could she fear anything. She sat a little while, resting and thinking; then, being weary and feeling weak, she slipped down on the ground, and like Jacob taking a stone for her pillow, she went to sleep.

So the Captain found her, every time he came back from his hunt to look after his charge; he let her sleep, and went off again. He had a troublesome hunt. At last he found some traces of what he sought; then he forgot Daisy in his eagerness, and it was after a good long interval the last time that he came to Daisy's side again. She was awake.

"What have you got?" she said, as he came up with his hands full.

"I have got my fish."

"Have you! Oh, where is it?"

"How do you do?" said the Captain, sitting down beside her.

"I do very well. Where is the fish? You have got nothing but stones there, Captain Drummond?"

The Captain, without speaking, displayed one of the stones he had in his hand. It looked very curious. Upon a smooth

flat surface, where the stone had been split, there was a raised part which had the appearance of some sort of animal; but this, too, seemed to be stone, and was black and shining, though its parts were distinct.

"What is that, Captain Drummond? It is a stone."

"It is a fish."

"That?"

"That."

"But you are laughing."

"Am I?" said the Captain, as grave as a senator. "It's a fish for all that."

"This curious black thing?"

"Precisely."

"What sort of a fish?"

"Daisy, have you had any luncheon?"

"No, sir."

"Then you had better discuss that subject first. Soldiers cannot get along without their rations, you'll find."

"What is that?" said Daisy.

"Rations?"

"Yes, sir."

"Daily bread, Daisy. Of one sort or another, as the case may be. Where is that basket?"

Daisy had charge of it, and would not let him take it out of her hands. She unfolded napkins, and permitted the Captain to help himself when she had all things ready. Then bread-and- butter and salad were found to be very refreshing. But while Daisy ate, she looked at the trilobite.

"Please tell me what it is, Captain Drummond."

"It is a Crustacean."

"But, you know, I don't know what a Crustacean is."

"A Crustacean is a fellow who wears his bones on the outside."

"Captain Drummond! What do you mean?"

"Well, I mean that, Daisy. Did you never hear of the way soldiers used to arm themselves for the fight in old times in plates of jointed armour?"

"Yes, I know they did."

"Well, these fellows are armed just so only they do not put on steel or brass, but hard plates of bone or horn, that do exactly as well, and are jointed just as nicely."

"And those are Crustaceans?"

"Those are Crustaceans."

"And was this thing armed so?"

"Splendidly. Don't you see those marks? those show the rings of his armour. Those rings fitted so nicely, and played so

easily upon one another, that he could curl himself all up into a ball if he liked, and bring his armour all round him; for it was only on his back, so to speak."

"And how came he into this rock, Captain Drummond?"

"Ah! how did he?" said the Captain, looking contentedly at the trilobite. "That's more than I can tell you, Daisy. Only he lived before the rock was made, and when it was made, it wrapped him up in it, somehow; and now we have got him!"

"But, Captain Drummond! "

"What is it?"

"When do you suppose this rock was made?"

"Can't just say, Daisy. Some rocks are young, and some are old, you know. This is one of the old rocks."

"But how do you know, Captain Drummond?"

"I know by the signs," said the Captain.

"What is an old rock? how old?"

"I am sure I can't say, Daisy. Only that a young rock is apt to be a good deal older than Adam and Eve."

"How can you tell that?"

"When you see a man's hair grey, can't you tell that he is old?"

"But there are no grey hairs in rocks?" said Daisy.

"Yes, there are. Trilobites do just as well."

"But, I *say*," said Daisy, laughing, "how can you tell that the rock is old? You wouldn't know that grey hairs were a sign, if you saw them on young people."

"Pretty well, Daisy!" said the Captain, delighted to see her interested in something again; "pretty well! But you will have to study something better than me, to find out about all that. Only it is true."

"And you were not laughing?"

"Not a bit of it. That little fellow, I suppose, lived a thousand million years ago; may as well say a thousand as anything."

"I can't see how you can tell," said Daisy, looking puzzled.

"That was a strange old time, when he was swimming about or when most of them were. There were no trees, to speak of; and no grass or anything but sea-weed and mosses; and no living things but fishes and oysters and such creatures?"

"Where were the beasts then, and the birds?"

"They were not made yet. That's the reason, I suppose, there was no grass for them to eat."

Daisy looked down at the trilobite; and looked profoundly thoughtful. That little, shiny, black, stony thing, *that* had lived and flourished so many ages ago! Once more she looked up into the Captain's face to see if he were trifling with her. He shook his head.

"True as a book, Daisy."

"But, Captain Drummond, please, how do you know it?"

"Just think, Daisy, this little fellow frolicked away in the mud at the bottom of the sea, with his half-moons of eyes and round him swam all sorts of fishes that do not live nowadays; fishes with plate armour like himself; everybody was in

amour."

"Half-moons of eyes, Captain Drummond?"

"Yes. He had, or some of them had, two semi-circular walls of eyes one looked before and behind and all round to the right, and the other looked before and behind and all round at the left; and in each wall were two hundred eyes."

The Captain smiled to himself to see Daisy's face at this statement, though outwardly he kept perfectly grave. Daisy's own simple orbs were so full and intent. She looked from him to the fossil.

"But, Captain Drummond " she began, slowly.

"Well, Daisy? After you have done, I shall begin."

"Did you say that this thing lived at the bottom of the sea."

"Precisely."

"But then how could he get up here?"

"Seems difficult, don't it?" said the Captain. "Well, Daisy, the people that know, tell us that all the land we have was once at the bottom of the sea; so these rocks had their turn."

"All the land?" said Daisy. "Oh, that is what the Bible says!"

"The Bible!" said the Captain, in his turn. "Pray where, if you please?"

"Why, don't you know, Captain Drummond? when God said, 'Let the waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' "

The Captain whistled softly, with an amused face, and stealthily watched Daisy, whose countenance was full of the most beautiful interest. Almost lovingly she bent over the trilobite, thinking her own thoughts; while her friend presently, from observing the expression of her face, began to take notice anew of the thin and pale condition of the cheeks, that had been much healthier a week ago.

"You like to look at armour, Daisy?" he said.

She made no answer.

"Are you still in the mind to 'die on the field of battle'?"

He guessed the question would touch her, but curiosity got the better of sympathy with him. He was not prepared for the wistful, searching look that Daisy gave him instantly, nor for the indescribable tenderness and sorrow that mingled in it. As before, she did not answer.

"Forgive me, Daisy," said the Captain, involuntarily "You know you told me you were a soldier."

Daisy's heart was very tender, and she had been living all the morning in that peculiar nearness to Christ which those know who suffer for Him. She looked at the Captain, and burst into tears.

"You told me you were a soldier " he repeated, not quite knowing what to say.

"Oh, Captain Drummond!" said Daisy, weeping, "I wish you were!"

It stung the Captain. He knew what she meant. But he quietly asked her why?

"Because then," said Daisy, "you would know Jesus; and I want you to be happy."

"Why, Daisy," said Captain Drummond, though his conscience smote him, "you don't seem to me very happy lately."

"Don't I?" she said. "But I am happy. I only wish everybody else was happy too."

She presently wiped her eyes, and stood up. "Captain Drummond," said she, "don't you think we can find another of these things?"

Anything to change the course matters had taken, the Captain thought, so he gave ready assent; and he and Daisy entered upon a most lively renewed quest among the rocks that covered all that mountain-side. Daisy was more eager than he; she wanted very much to have a trilobite for her own keeping; the difficulty was, she did not know how to look for it. All she could do was to follow her friend, and watch all his doings, and direct him to new spots in the mountain that he had not tried. In the course of this business the Captain did some adventurous climbing; it would have distressed Daisy if she had not been so intent upon his object; but as it was she strained her little head back to look at him, where he picked his way along at a precipitous height above her, sometimes holding to a bramble or sapling, and sometimes depending on his own good footing and muscular agility. In this way of progress, while making good his passage from one place to another, the Captain's foot in leaping struck upon a loosely poised stone or fragment of rock. It rolled from under him. A spring saved the Captain, but the huge stone, once set a-going, continued its way down the hill.

"Daisy look out!" he shouted.

"Have you got one?" said Daisy, springing forward. She misunderstood his warning; and her bound brought her exactly under the rolling stone. She never saw it till it had reached her, and knocked her down.

"Hollo, Daisy!" shouted Captain Drummond, "is all right?"

He got no answer, listened, shouted again, and then made two jumps from where he stood to the bottom. Daisy lay on the ground, her little foot under the stone; her eyes closed, her face paler than ever. Without stopping to think how heavy the stone was, with a tremendous exertion of strength the young man pushed it from where it lay, and released the foot; but he was very much afraid damage was done. "I couldn't help it" said the Captain to himself, as he looked at the great piece of rock; but the first thing was to get Daisy's eyes open. There was no spring near that he knew of; he went back to their lunch basket and brought from it a bottle of claret all he could find and with it wetted Daisy's lips and brow. The claret did perhaps as well as cold water; for Daisy revived; but as soon as she sat up and began to move, her words were broken off by a scream of pain.

"What is it, Daisy?" said the Captain. "Your foot? that confounded stone! can't you move it?"

"No," said Daisy, with a short breath, "I can't move it. Please excuse me, Captain Drummond I couldn't help crying out that minute; it hurt me so. It doesn't hurt me so much now when I keep still."

The Captain kept still too, wishing very much that he and Daisy and the trilobites were all back in their places again. How long could they sit still up there on the mountain? He looked at the sun; he looked at his watch. It was three o'clock. He looked at Daisy.

"Let me see," said he, "if anything is the matter. Hard to find out, through this thick boot! How does it feel now?"

"It pains me very much, these two or three minutes."

The Captain looked at Daisy's face again, and then, without more ado, took his knife and cut the lacings of the boot. "How is that?" he asked.

"That is a *great* deal better."

"If it hadn't been, you would have fainted again directly. Let us see Daisy, I think I had better cut the boot off. You have sprained the ankle, or something, and it is swollen."

Daisy said nothing, and the Captain went on very carefully and tenderly to cut the boot off.

It was a very necessary proceeding. The foot was terribly swollen already. Again the Captain mused, looking from the child's foot to her face.

"How is the pain now?"

"It aches a good deal."

He saw it was vastly worse than her words made it.

"My little soldier," said he, "how do you suppose I am going to get you down the hill, to where we left our carriage?"

"I don't know," said Daisy. "You can't carry me."

"What makes you think so?"

"I don't *know*," said Daisy, "but I don't think you can." And she was a little afraid, he saw.

"I will be as careful as I can, and you must be as brave as you can, for I don't see any other way, Daisy. And I think, the sooner we go the better; so that this foot may have some cold or hot lotion or something."

"Wait a minute," said Daisy, hastily.

And raising herself up to a sitting position, she bent over her little head, and covered her eyes with her hand. The Captain felt very strangely. He guessed in a minute what she was about; that in pain and fear, Daisy was seeking an unseen help, and trusting in it; and in awed silence the young officer was as still as she, till the little head was raised.

"Now," she said, "you may take me."

The Captain always had a good respect for Daisy; but he certainly felt now as if he had the dignity of twenty-five years in his arms. He raised her as gently as possible from the ground; he knew the changed position of the foot gave her new pain, for a flush rose to Daisy's brow, but she said not one word either of suffering or expostulation. Her friend stepped with her as gently as he could over the rough way; Daisy supported herself partly by an arm round his neck, and was utterly mute, till they were passing the place of luncheon; then she broke out,

"Oh! the trilobite!"

"Never mind the trilobite."

"But are you going to lose it, Captain Drummond?"

"Not if you want it. I'll come back for it another day if I break my furlough."

"I could hold it in my other hand if I had it."

The Captain thought the bottle of claret might chance to be the most wanted thing; nevertheless he stopped, stooped, and picked up the fossil. Daisy grasped it; and they went on their way down the mountain. It was a very trying way to both of them. The Captain was painfully anxious to step easily, which among rocks and bushes he could not always do, especially with a weight in his arms; and Daisy's foot hanging down, gave her dreadful pain because of the increased rush of blood into it. Her little lips were firmly set together many a time, to avoid giving her friend the distress of knowing how much she suffered; and once the Captain heard a low whisper not meant for his ear but uttered very close to it, "O Lord Jesus, help me." It went through and through the Captain's mind and heart. But he only set his teeth too, and plunged on, as fast as he could softly, down the rough mountain side. And if ever anybody was glad, that was he when they reached the wagon.

There was a new difficulty now, for the little vehicle had no place in which Daisy could remain lying down. The seat was fast; the Captain could not remove it. He did the best he could. He put Daisy sideways on the seat, so that the hurt foot could be stretched out and kept in one position upon it; and he himself stood behind her, holding the reins. In that way he served as a sort of support for the little head, which he sometimes feared would sink in a swoon; for while she lay on the ground, and he was trying measures with the wagon, the closed eyes and pale cheeks had given the Captain a good many desperately uneasy thoughts. Now Daisy sat still, leaning against him, with her eyes open; and he drove as tenderly as he could. He had a frisky horse to manage, and the Captain congratulated himself for this occasion at least that he was a skilled whip. Still the motion of the wagon was very trying to Daisy, and every jar went through the Captain's foot up to his heart.

"How is it, Daisy?" he asked, after they had gone some distance.

"It isn't good, Captain Drummond," she said, softly.

"Bad, isn't it?"

"Rather."

"I have to make this fellow go slowly, you see, or he would shake you too much. Could you bear to go faster?"

"I'll try."

The Captain tried, cautiously. But his question, and possibly Daisy's answer, were stimulated by the view of the western horizon, over which clouds were gathering thick and fast. Could they get home in time? That was the doubt in both minds.

"Captain Drummond," said Daisy, presently, "I can't bear this shaking."

"Must I go slower?"

"If you please."

"Daisy, do you see how the sky bodes yonder? What do you suppose we shall do if those clouds come up?"

"I don't know," she answered. But she said it with such a quiet tone of voice, that the Captain wondered anew. He had hoped that her fears might induce her to bear the pain.

"Daisy, do you think it will come up a storm?"

"I think it will."

"How soon? you know the signs better than I do. How soon will it be here?"

"It will come soon, I think."

Yet there was no anxiety in Daisy's voice. It was perfectly calm, though feeble. The Captain held his peace, looked at the clouds, and drove on; but not as fast as he would have liked. He knew it was a ride of great suffering to his little charge, for she became exceedingly pale; still she said nothing, except her soft replies to his questions. The western clouds rolled up in great volumes of black and grey, rolling and gathering and spreading at a magnificent rate. The sun was presently hid behind the fringe of this curtain of blackness; by and by the mountains were hid beneath a further fringe of rain; a very thick fringe. Between, the masses of vapour in the sky seemed charging for a tremendous outburst. It had not come yet when the slow-going little wagon passed through Crum Elbow; but by this time the Captain had seen distant darts of lightning, and even heard the far-off warning growl of the thunder. A new idea started up in the Captain's mind; his frisky horse might not like lightning.

"Daisy," said he, "my poor little Daisy we cannot get to Melbourne we must stop and wait a little somewhere. Is there any house you like better than another? I had best turn back to the village."

"No, don't, stop!" cried Daisy, "don't go back, Captain Drummond; there is a place nearer. Turn up that road right round there. It is very near."

The Captain obeyed, but pulled in the reins presently as he heard a nearer growl of the coming thunder.

"Daisy, where is it? I don't see anything."

"There it is, Captain Drummond that little house."

"*That?*" said the Captain; but there was no more time now for retreat or question. He sprang out, threw the reins two or three times over the gate-post; then executed the very difficult operation of taking Daisy out of the wagon. He could not do it without hurting her; she fainted on his shoulder; and it was in this state, white and senseless, that he carried her into Mrs. Benoit's cottage. The old woman had seen them, and met him at the door. Seeing the state of the case, she immediately, and with great quickness, spread a clean covering over a comfortable chintz couch which stood under the window, and Daisy was laid there from her friend's arms. Juanita applied water and salts, too, deftly; and then asked the Captain, "What is it, sir?"

"There's a foot hurt here," said the Captain, giving more attention to the hurt than he had had chance to do before. "Pray heaven it is not broken! I am afraid it is, the ankle, or dislocated."

"Then Heaven knows *why* it is broken," said the old woman, quietly. "The gentleman will go for a doctor, sir?"

"Yes, that must be the first thing," said Captain Drummond, gravely. "Where shall I find him?"

"Dr. Sandford the gentleman knows the road to Mr. St. Leonard's?"

"Yes the Craigs I know."

"Dr. Sandford is half way there where the gentleman remembers a great brown house in the middle of the cedar trees."

The Captain beat his brain to remember, thought he did, and was starting away, but turned back to see Daisy's eyes open first; fearing lest she might be alarmed if he were not by her when she came to herself. There was a bright flash and near peal of thunder at the moment. Juanita looked up.

"The gentleman will not fear the storm? There is work *here*" touching the foot.

The Captain remembered that Daisy herself had directed him to the house, and dashed away again. The clouds were growing blacker every moment. In the darkening light, Juanita bent over Daisy and saw her eyes open.

"Does my little lady know Juanita?"

Daisy sighed, looked round the room, and then seemed to recollect herself.

"Oh, I am here!" she said. "Where is Captain Drummond?"

"The gentleman is gone for the doctor, to see to the hurt foot. How is it now, dear?"

"It hurts me a good deal."

Juanita's first business was to take off the stocking; this could only be done by cutting it down. When it was removed, a very sorrowful-looking little foot was seen. Juanita covered it up lightly, and then turned her attention again to Daisy's pale face.

"What can I give my little lady?"

"I am Daisy Randolph."

"What may I do for Miss Daisy, to give her some comfort?"

"Juanita, I wish you would pray for me again."

"What does Miss Daisy want of the Lord?"

"My foot hurts me very much, and I want to be patient. And, Juanita, I want to thank Him too."

"What for, Miss Daisy?"

"Because I love Him; and He has made me so happy."

"Praise the Lord!" came with a most glad outburst from Juanita's lips; but then she knelt down, and so uttered her warm petitions for help needed, and so her deep thanksgiving for help rendered, that Daisy was greatly overcome, and poured out her tears as the prayer went on. When it was ended, Juanita went about her room for a little while, making certain arrangements that she foresaw would be necessary; then came and sat down. All this while the storm had been furious; the lightning hardly ceased, or the thunder, and both were near; but the two inmates of the little cottage seemed hardly to be conscious what was going on outside its walls. There was a slight lessening now of the storm's fury.

"Has it gone well with my little lady then, since she gave Juanita the rose-branch?"

This was the new opening of conversation. Daisy hesitated a little what to answer; not for want of confidence, for there was something about the fine old woman that had won her completely.

"I don't know" she said at length, slowly. "It has been very hard to do right, Juanita."

"But has my little lady kept her Lord's words?"

"Yes, Juanita, I did; but I don't know whether I should, if it hadn't been for what you said."

"And did she meet the trouble too."

Juanita saw that she had, for a flush rose on Daisy's poor pale cheeks, and her face was strangely grave. She did not answer the question, either; only as the flush passed away she looked placidly up and said, "I am not in trouble now, Juanita."

"Bless the Lord!" was the utterance of Juanita's heart. "The Lord knows how to deliver out of trouble, Miss Daisy."

"Yes," said Daisy. "Oh!" she exclaimed, suddenly, with a new light breaking all over her face but then she stopped.

"What is it, my love?"

"Nothing only I am so glad now that my foot is hurt."

Juanita's thanksgiving rose to her lips again, but this time she only whispered it; turning away, perhaps to hide the moisture which had sprung to her eyes. For she understood more of the case than Daisy's few words would have told most people.

Meantime, Captain Drummond and his frisky horse had a ride which was likely to make both of them remember that thunderstorm. They reached Dr. Sandford's house; but then the Captain found that the doctor was not at home; where he was, the servant could not say. The only other thing to do seemed to be to go on to Melbourne, and at least let Daisy have the counsel of her father and mother. To Melbourne the Captain drove as fast as his horse's state of mind would permit.

The drawing room was blazing with lights as usual, and full of talkers.

"Hollo!" cried Gary McFarlane, as the Captain entered, "here he is. We had given you up for a fossil, Drummond and no idea of your turning up again for another thousand years. Shouldn't have known where to look for you either, after this storm among the aqueous or the igneous rocks. Glad to see you! Let me make you acquainted with Dr. Sandford."

"I am glad to see you, sir," said the Captain, involuntarily, as he shook hands with this latter.

"You haven't left Daisy somewhere, changed into a stone lily?" pursued McFarlane.

"Yes," said the Captain. "Dr. Sandford, I am going to ask you to get ready to ride with me. Mr. Randolph, I have left Daisy by the way. She has hurt her foot I threw down a stone upon it and the storm obliged her to defer getting home. I left her at a cottage near Crum Elbow. I am going to take Dr. Sandford to see what the foot wants."

Mr. Randolph ordered the carriage, and then told his wife.

"Does it storm yet?" she asked.

"The thunder and lightning are ceasing, but it rains hard."

The lady stepped out of the room to get ready, and in a few minutes she and her husband, Captain Drummond and the doctor, were seated in the carriage and on their way to Mrs. Benoit's cottage. Captain Drummond told how the accident happened; after that he was silent; and so were the rest of the party, till the carriage stopped.

Mrs. Benoit's cottage looked oddly, when all these grand people poured into it. But the mistress of the cottage never looked more like herself, and her reception of the grand people was as simple as that she had given to Daisy. Little Daisy herself lay just where her friend the Captain had left her, but looked with curious expression at the others who entered with him now. The father and mother advanced to the head of the couch; the Captain and Juanita stood at the foot. The doctor kept himself a little back.

"Are you suffering, Daisy?" Mr. Randolph asked.

The child's eyes went up to him. "Papa *yes!*"

She had begun quietly, but the last word was given with more than quiet expression, and the muscles about her lips quivered.

Mr. Randolph stooped and pressed his own lips upon them.

"I have brought Dr. Sandford to look at your foot, Daisy. He will see what it wants."

"Will he hurt me, papa?" said the child, apprehensively.

"I hope not. No more than is necessary."

"It hurts to have anybody touch it, papa."

"He must touch it, Daisy. Can't you bear it bravely?"

"Wait, papa!"

And again the child clasped her two hands over her face, and was still. Mr. Randolph had no idea what for, though he humoured her, and waited.

The Captain knew, for he had seen more of Daisy that day, and he looked very grave indeed. The black woman knew, for as Daisy's hands fell from her face, she uttered a deep, soft "Amen!" which no one understood but one little heart.

"Papa I am ready. He may look now."

Juanita removed the covering from the foot, and the doctor stepped forward. Daisy's eyes rested on him, and she saw gratefully a remarkably fine and pleasant countenance. Mrs. Randolph's eyes rested on the foot, and she uttered an exclamation. It was the first word she had uttered. Everybody else was still, while the doctor passed his hands over and round the distressed ankle and foot, but tenderly, and in a way that gave Daisy very little pain. Then he stepped back and beckoned Juanita to a consultation. Juanita disappeared, and Dr. Sandford came up to Mr. Randolph, and spoke in a low tone. Then Mr. Randolph turned again to Daisy.

"What is it, papa?" asked the child.

"Daisy, to make your foot well, Dr. Sandford will be obliged to do something that will hurt you a little will you try and bear it? He will not be long about it."

"What is the matter with my foot, papa?"

"Something that the doctor can set right in a few minutes if you will try and bear a little pain."

A little pain! And Daisy was suffering so much all the while!
Again her lip trembled.

"Must he touch me, papa?"

"He must touch you."

Daisy's hands were clasped to her face again for a minute; after that she lay quite still and quiet. Mr. Randolph kept his post, hardly taking his eye off her; Mrs. Randolph sat down where she had stood; behind the head of Daisy's couch, where her little daughter could not see her; and all the party indulged in silence. At length the doctor was ready, and came to the foot, attended by Juanita; and Mr. Randolph took one of Daisy's hands in his own. With the other the child covered her eyes, and so lay, perfectly still, while the doctor set the ankle-bone which had been broken. As the foot also itself had been very much hurt, the handling of necessity gave a great deal of pain, more than the mere setting of the broken bone would have caused. Mr. Randolph could feel every now and then the convulsive closing of Daisy's hand upon his; other than that she gave no sign of what she was suffering. One sign of what another person was feeling, was given as Dr. Sandford bound up the foot and finished his work. It was given in Juanita's deep breathed "Thank the Lord!" The doctor glanced up at her with a slight smile of curiosity. Captain Drummond would have said "Amen," if the word had not been so unaccustomed to his mouth.

Mrs. Randolph rose then, and inquired of the doctor what would be the best means of removing Daisy?

"She must not be moved," the doctor said.

"Not to-night?"

"No, madam; nor to-morrow, nor for many days."

"Must she be left *here*?"

"If she were out in the weather, I would move her," said the doctor; "not if she were under a barn that would shed the rain."

"What harm would it do?"

The doctor could not take it upon him to say.

"But I cannot be with her here," said Mrs. Randolph; "nor anybody else, that I can see."

"Juanita will take care of her," said the doctor. "Juanita is worth an army of nurses. Miss Daisy cannot be better cared for than she will be."

"Will you undertake the charge?" said Mrs. Randolph, facing round upon Daisy's hostess.

"The Lord has given it to me, madam, and I love to do my Lord's work," was Juanita's answer. She could not have given a better one, if it had been meant to act as a shot, to drive Mrs. Randolph out of the house. The lady waited but till the doctor had finished his directions which he was giving to the black woman.

"I don't see," then she said to her husband, "that there is anything to be gained by my remaining here any longer; and if we are to go, the sooner we go the better, so that Daisy may be quiet. Dr. Sandford says that is the best thing for her."

"Captain Drummond will see you home," said her husband. "I shall stay."

"You can't do anything, in this box of a place."

"Unless the child herself desires it, there is no occasion for your remaining here over night," said the doctor. "She will be best in quiet, and sleep, if she can. You might hinder, if your presence did not help her to this."

"What do you say, Daisy?" said her father tenderly, bending over her; "shall I stay or go? Which do you wish?"

"Papa, you would not be comfortable here. I am not afraid."

"Do you want me to go?" said her father, putting his face down to hers.

Daisy clasped her two arms round his neck and kissed him, and held him while she whispered, "No, papa, but maybe you had better. There is no place for you, and I am not afraid."

He kissed her silently and repeatedly, and then rose up and went to look at the storm. It had ceased; the moon was struggling out between great masses of cloud driving over the face of the sky. Mrs. Randolph stood ready to go, putting on her *capuche* which she had thrown off, and Juanita laying her shawl round her shoulders. The doctor stood waiting to hand her to the carriage. The Captain watched Daisy, whose eye was wistfully fixed on her mother. He watched, and wondered at its very grave, soft expression. There was very little affection in the Captain's mind at that moment towards Mrs. Randolph.

The carriage was ready, and the lady turned round to give a parting look at the child. A cold look it was, but Daisy's soft eye never changed.

"Mamma," said she, whisperingly, "won't you kiss me?"

Mrs. Randolph stooped instantly, and gave the kiss; it could not be refused, and was fully given; but then she immediately took Doctor Sandford's arm, and went out of the house. The Captain reverently bent over Daisy's little hand, and followed her.

The drive was a very silent one, till Dr. Sandford was left at his own door. So soon as the carriage turned again, Mrs.

Randolph broke out.

"How long did he say, Mr. Randolph, the child must be left at that woman's cottage?"

"He said she must not be moved for weeks."

"She might as well stay forever," said Mrs. Randolph, "for the effect it will have. It will take a year to get Daisy back to where she was! I wish fanatics would confine their efforts to children that have no one else to care for them."

"What sort of fanaticism has been at work here, Mrs. Randolph?" the Captain enquired.

"The usual kind, of course; religious fanaticism. It seems to be catching."

"I have been in dangerous circumstances to day, then," said the Captain. "I am afraid I have caught it. I feel as if something was the matter with me."

"It will not improve you," said Mrs. Randolph, dryly.

"How has it wrought with Daisy?"

"Changed the child so that I do not recognise her. She never set up her own will before; and now she is as difficult to deal with as possible. She is an impersonation of obstinacy."

"Perhaps, after all, she is only following orders," said the Captain, with daring coolness. "A soldier's duty makes him terribly obstinate sometimes. You must excuse me, but you see I cannot help appreciating military qualities."

"Will you be good enough to say what you mean?" the lady asked, with sufficient displeasure of manner.

"Only, that I believe in my soul Daisy takes her orders from higher authority, than we do. And I have seen today I declare! I have seen a style of obedience and soldierly following, that would win any sort of a field ay, and die in it!" added the Captain, musingly. "It is the sort of thing that gets promotion from the ranks."

"How did all this happen to-day?" asked Mr. Randolph, as the lady was now silent. "I have heard only a bit of it."

In answer to which, Captain Drummond went into the details of the whole day's experience; told it point by point, and bit by bit; having a benevolent willingness that Daisy's father and mother should know, if they would, with what sort of a spirit they were dealing. He told the whole story; and nobody interrupted him.

"It is one thing," said the Captain, thoughtfully, as he concluded, "it is one thing to kneel very devoutly and say after the minister, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these laws in our hearts;' I have done that myself; but it gives one an entirely different feeling to see some one in whose heart they are written!"

"There is only one thing left for you, Captain Drummond," said Mrs. Randolph slightly; "to quit the army and take orders."

"I am afraid, if I did, you would never want to see me settled in Mr. Pyne's little church over here," the Captain answered, as he helped the lady to alight at her own door.

"Not till Daisy is safely married," said Mrs. Randolph laughing.

CHAPTER XVI.

JUANITA'S COTTAGE.

Till the sound of the carriage wheels had died away in the distance, Juanita stood at the door looking after them; although the trees and the darkness prevented her seeing anything along the road further than a few yards. When the rustle of the breeze among the branches was the only thing left to hear, beside the dripping of the rain drops shaken from the leaves, Juanita shut the door, and came to Daisy. The child was lying white and still, with her eyes closed. Very white and thin the little face looked, indeed; and under each eyelid lay a tear glistening, that had forced its way so far into notice. Juanita said not a word just then; she bustled about and made herself busy. Not that Juanita's busy ways

were ever bustling in reality; she was too good a nurse for that; but she had several things to do. The first was to put up a screen at the foot of Daisy's couch. She lay just a few feet from the door, and everybody coming to the door, and having it opened, could look in if he pleased; and so Daisy would have no privacy at all. That would not do; Juanita's wits went to work to mend the matter. Her little house had been never intended for more than one person. There was another room in it, to be sure, where Mrs. Benoit's own bed was; so that Daisy could have the use and possession of this outer room all to herself. Juanita went about her business too noiselessly to induce even those closed eyelids to open. She fetched a tolerably large clothes-horse from somewhere some shed or out-building; this she set at the foot of the couch, and hung an old large green moreen curtain over it. Where the curtain came from, one of Mrs. Benoit's great locked chests knew; there were two or three such chests in the inner room, with more treasures than a green moreen curtain stowed away in them. The curtain was too large for the clothes-horse to hold up; it lay over the floor. Juanita got screws and cords; fixed one screw in the wall, another in the ceiling, and at last succeeded in stretching the curtain neatly on the cords and the clothes-horse, where she wanted it to hang. That was done; and Daisy's couch was quite sheltered from any eyes coming to the door that had no business to come further. When it was finished, and the screws and cords put away, Juanita came to Daisy's side. The eyes were open now.

"That is nice," said Daisy.

"It'll keep you by yourself, my little lady. Now what will she have?"

"Nothing only I am thirsty," said Daisy.

Juanita went to the well for some cold water, and mixed with it a spoonful of currant jelly. It was refreshing to the poor little dry lips.

"What will my love have next?"

"I don't know," said Daisy "my foot aches a good deal, and all my leg. I think Juanita I would like it if you would read to me."

Juanita took a somewhat careful survey of her, felt her hands, and finally got the book.

"Is there too much air for my love from that window?"

"No, it is nice," said Daisy. "I can see the stars so beautifully, with the clouds driving over the sky. Every now and then they get between me and the stars and then the stars look out again so bright. They seem almost right over me. Please read, Juanita."

Mrs. Benoit did not consider that it made much difference to Daisy where she read; so she took the chapter that came next in the course of her own going through the New Testament. It was the eighth chapter of Mark. She read very pleasantly; not like a common person; and with a slight French accent. Her voice was always sweet, and the words came through it as loved words. It was very pleasant to Daisy to hear her; the long chapter was not interrupted by any remark. But when Mrs. Benoit paused at the end of it, Daisy said, "How can anybody be *ashamed* of Him, Juanita?"

The last verse of the chapter has these words "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of Him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

"How can anybody be ashamed of him, Juanita?"

"They not see the glory of the Lord, my lady."

"But we do not see it yet."

"My love will see it. Juanita has seen it. This little house be all full of glory sometimes, when Jesus is here."

"But that is because you love Him, Juanita."

"Praise the Lord!" echoed the black woman. "He do show His glory to His people, before He come with the holy angels."

"I don't see how anybody can be ashamed of Him," Daisy repeated, uttering the words as if they contained a simple impossibility.

"My little lady not know the big world yet. There be ways, that the Lord know and that the people not know."

"What do you mean, Juanita?"

"My lady will find it," said the black woman folding her arms. "When all the world go one way, then folks not like to go another way and be looked at; they be ashamed of Christ's words then, and they only think they do not want to be looked at."

A colour came all over Daisy's face a suffusion of colour; and tears swam in her eyes. "I didn't like to be looked at, the other night!" she said, in a self-accusing tone.

"Did my love turn and go with the world?"

"No, I didn't do that."

"Then Jesus won't turn away neither," said the black woman.

"But I ought not to have felt so, Juanita."

"Maybe. My love is a little child. The good Lord shall 'stablish her, and keep her from evil. Now she must not talk no more, but trust the Lord, and go to sleep."

"I can't sleep, Juanita my leg aches so."

"That will be better. Is my love thirsty again?"

"Vëry thirsty! I wish I had some oranges."

"They would be good," said Juanita, bringing another glass of jelly and water for Daisy.

And then she sat down, and sang softly; hymns in French and English; sweet and low, and soothing in their simple and sometimes wild melody. They soothed Daisy. After a time, wearied and exhausted by all her long day of trial, she did forget pain in slumber. The eyelids closed, and Juanita's stealthy examination found that quiet soft breathing was really proving her fast asleep. The singing ceased; and for a while nothing was to be heard in the cottage but the low rush and rustle of the wind which had driven away the storm clouds, and the patter of a dislodged rain drop or two that were shaken from the leaves. Daisy's breathing was too soft to be heard, and Juanita almost held her own lest it should be too soon disturbed. But the pain of the hurt foot and ankle would not suffer a long sleep. Daisy waked up with a sigh.

"Are you there, Juanita?"

"I am here."

"What o'clock is it?"

Juanita drew back the curtain of the window by Daisy's couch, that the moonlight might fall in and show the face of the little clock. It was midnight.

"It won't be morning in a great while, will it?" said Daisy.

"Does my lady want morning?"

"My foot hurts me dreadfully, Juanita the pain shoots and jumps all up my leg. Couldn't you do something to it?"

"My dear love, it will be better by and by there is no help now for it, unless the Lord sends sleep. I s'pose it must ache. Can't Miss Daisy remember who sends the pain?"

The child answered her with a curious smile. It was not strange to the black woman; she read it, and knew it, and had seen such before; to anybody that had not, how strange would have seemed the lovingness that spread over all Daisy's features, and brightened on her brow as much as on her lips. It was not patient submission; it was the light of joyful affection shining out over all Daisy's little pale face.

"Ay, it isn't hard with Jesus," said the black woman with a satisfied face. "And the Lord is here now, praise his name!"

"Juanita I have been very happy to-day," said Daisy.

"Ay? how has that been, my love?"

"Because I knew He was taking care of me. It seemed that Jesus was so near me all the time. Even all that dreadful ride."

"The Lord is good!" said the black woman, with strong expression. "But my love must not talk."

She began to sing again.

"Oh, what shall I do, my Saviour to praise,
So faithful and true, so plenteous in grace.
So good to deliver, so strong to redeem
The weakest believer that hangs upon him."

"Oh, that's good, Juanita!" said Daisy. "Hush! Juanita, it is very late for anybody to be out riding!"

"Who is out riding, Miss Daisy?"

"I don't know I hear a horse's feet. Don't you hear. there!"

"It's some young gentleman, maybe, going home, from a dinner-party."

"Don't draw the curtain, Juanita, please! I like it so, I can look out. The moonlight is nice. Somebody is very late, going home from a dinner party."

"They often be. Miss Daisy, the moonlight will hinder you sleeping, I am afraid."

"I can't sleep. It's so good to look out! Juanita there's that horse's feet, stopping just here."

Juanita went to her door, and perceived that Daisy spoke truth. Somebody down at her little wicket had dismounted, and was fastening his horse to the fence. Then a figure came up the walk in the moonlight.

"Juanita!" cried Daisy, with an accent of joy, though she could not see the figure from where she lay, "it's papa!"

"Is she asleep?" said the voice of Mr. Randolph the next minute softly.

"No, sir. She knows it's you, sir. Will his honour walk in?"

Mr. Randolph, with a gentle footfall, came in and stood by the side of the couch.

"Daisy my poor little Daisy!" he said.

"Papa! "

This one word was rich in expression; joy and love so filled it. Daisy added nothing more. She put her arms round her father's neck as he stooped his lips to her face, held him fast and returned his kisses.

"Cannot you sleep?" The question was very tenderly put.

"I did sleep, papa."

"I did not wake you?"

"No, papa. I was awake, looking at the moonlight."

"Pain would not let you sleep, my poor darling?"

The sympathy was a little too trying. Tears started to the child's eyes. She said with a most gentle, loving accent, "I don't mind, papa. It will be better by and by. I am very happy."

An indignant question as to the happiness which had been so rudely shaken, was on Mr. Randolph's lips. He

remembered Daisy must not be excited; nevertheless, he wondered, for he saw the child's eyes full, and knew that the brow was drawn with pain; and the poor little thin face was as white as a sheet. What did she mean by talking about being happy?

"Daisy, I have brought you some oranges."

"Thank you, papa! May I have one now?"

Silently, and almost sternly, Mr. Randolph stood and pared the orange with a fruit knife he had thought to bring that too and fed Daisy with it, bit by bit. It was pleasant and novel to Daisy to have her father serve her so; generally others had done it when there had been occasion. Mr. Randolph did it nicely, while his thoughts worked.

"What are you going to do to-night, papa?" she said, when the orange was finished and he stood looking at her.

"Stay here with you."

"But, papa, how can you sleep?"

"I can do without sleeping, if it is necessary. I will take a chair here in the doorway, and be near if you want anything."

"Oh, I shall not want anything, papa, except what Juanita can give me."

He stood still, watching her. Daisy looked up at him with a loving face; a wise little face it always was; it was gravely considerate now.

"Papa, I am afraid you will be uncomfortable."

"Can nobody bear that but you?" said Mr. Randolph, stooping down to kiss her.

"I am very happy, papa," said the child, placidly; while a slight tension of her forehead witnessed to the shooting pains with which the whole wounded limb seemed to be filled.

"If Mr. Randolph pleases," said the voice of Juanita, "the doctor recommended quiet, sir."

Off went Mr. Randolph at that, as if he knew it very well, and had forgotten himself. He took a chair, and set it in the open doorway, using the door-post as a rest for his head; and then the cottage was silent. The wind breathed more gently; the stars shone out; the air was soft after the storm; the moonlight made a bright flicker of light and shade over all the outer world. Now and then a grasshopper chirruped, or a little bird murmured a few twittering notes at being disturbed in its sleep; and then came a soft sigh from Daisy.

On noiseless foot the black woman stole to the couch. Daisy was weeping; her tears were pouring out and making a great wet spot on her pillow.

"Is my love in pain?" whispered the black woman.

"It's nothing I can't help it," said Daisy.

"Where is it in the foot?"

"It's all over, I think; in my head and everywhere. Hush, Juanita; never mind."

Mrs. Benoit, however, tried the soothing effect of a long gentle brushing of Daisy's head. This lasted till Daisy said she could bear it no longer. She was restless.

"Will my love hear a hymn?"

"It will wake papa."

Mrs. Benoit cared nothing for that. Her care was her poor little charge. She began immediately one of the hymns that were always ready on her tongue, and which were wonderfully soothing to Daisy. Juanita was old, but her voice was sweet yet and clear; and she sang with a deal of quiet spirit.

"A few more days or years at most,
My troubles sell be o'er;
I hope to join the heavenly host
On Canaan's happy shore.
My raptured soul shall drink and feast
In love's unbounded sea;
The glorious hope of endless rest
Is ravishing to me."

Mr. Randolph raised his head from leaning against the door-post, and turned it to listen; with a look of lowering impatience. The screen of the hanging curtain was between him and the couch, and the look did nobody any harm.

"Oh, come, my Saviour, come away,
And bear me to the sky!
Nor let thy chariot wheels delay
Make haste and bring it nigh:
I long to see Thy glorious face,
And in Thy image shine;
To triumph in victorious grace,
And be forever Thine."

Mr. Randolph's chair here grated inharmoniously on the floor, as if he were moving; but Juanita went on without heeding it.

"Then will I tune my harp of gold
To my eternal King.
Through ages that can ne'er be told
I'll make Thy praises ring.
All hail, eternal Son of God,
Who died on Calvary!
Who bought me with His precious blood,
From endless misery."

Mr. Randolph stood by Mrs. Benoit's chair. "My good woman," he said, in suppressed tones, "this is a strange way to put a patient to sleep."

"As your honour sees!" replied the black woman, placidly.

Mr. Randolph looked. Daisy's eyes were closed; the knitted brow had smoothed itself out in slumber; the deep breath told how profound was the need that weakness and weariness had made. He stood still. The black woman's hand softly drew the curtain between Daisy's face and the moonlight, and then she noiselessly withdrew herself almost out of sight, to a low seat in a corner. So Mr. Randolph betook himself to his station in the doorway; and whether he slept or no, the hours of the night stole on quietly. The breeze died down; the moon and the stars shone steadily over the lower world; and Daisy slept, and her two watchers were still. By and by, another light began to break in the eastern horizon, and the stars grew pale. The morning had come.

The birds were twittering in the branches before Daisy awoke. At the first stir she made, her father and Mrs. Benoit were instantly at her side. Mr. Randolph bent over her, and asked tenderly how she felt.

"I feel hot, papa."

"Everybody must do that," said Mr. Randolph. "The breeze has died away, and the morning is very close."

"Papa, have you been awake all night?"

He stooped down and kissed her.

"You must go home and get some breakfast, and go to sleep," Daisy said, looking at him lovingly with her languid eyes.

"Shall I bring you anything from home, Daisy?" he said, kissing her again.

The child looked a little wistfully, but presently said no; and Mr. Randolph left her, to do as she had said. Mrs. Benoit was privately glad to have him out of the way. She brought water, and bathed Daisy's face and hands, and gave her a delicate breakfast of orange; and contrived to be a long while about it all, so as to rest and refresh her as much as possible. But when it was all done, Daisy was very hot and weary and in much pain. And the sun was only in the tops of the trees yet. The black woman stood considering her.

"It will be a hot day, Miss Daisy and my little lady is suffering already, when the dew is not dried off the grass. Can she say, 'Thank the Lord?'"

Daisy first smiled at her; then the little pale face grew grave, the eyelids fell, and the black woman saw tears gathering beneath them. She stood looking somewhat anxiously down at the child; till, after a few minutes, the eyelids were raised again, and the eyes gave her a most meek and loving response, while Daisy said faintly, "Yes, Juanita."

"Bless the Lord!" said Juanita, with all her heart. "Then my love can bear it, the hot day and the pain and all. When His little child trust Him, Jesus not stay far off. And when He giveth quietness, then who can make trouble?"

"But I have a particular reason, Juanita. I am very glad of my hurt foot; though it does ache."

"The aching will not be so bad by and by," said the woman, her kindly face all working with emotion.

She stood there by Daisy's couch and prayed. No bathing nor breakfast could so soothe and refresh Daisy as that prayer. While she listened and joined in it, the feeling of yesterday came all back again; that wonderful feeling that the Lord Jesus loves even the little ones that love Him; that He will not let a hair of their heads be hurt; that He is near, and keeps them, and is bringing them to Himself by everything that He lets happen to them.

Greatly refreshed and comforted, Daisy lay quiet looking out of the open window, while Juanita was busy about, making a fire and filling her kettle for breakfast. She had promised Daisy a cup of tea and a piece of toast; and Daisy was very fond of a cup of tea, and did not ordinarily get it; but Mrs. Benoit said it would be good for her now. The fire was made in a little out-shed, back of the cottage, where it would do nobody any harm, even in hot weather.

Daisy was so quieted and comforted, though her leg was still aching, that she was able to look out and take some pleasure in the sparkling morning light which glittered on the leaves of the trees and on the blades of grass; and to hearken to the birds which were singing in high feather all around the cottage. The robins especially were very busy, whistling about in and under the trees; and a kildeer, quite near, from time to time sung its soft sweet song; so soft and tender, it seemed every time to say in Daisy's ears, "What if I am sick and in pain and weary? Jesus sends it and He knows and He is my dear Saviour." It brought the tears into Daisy's eyes at length; the song of the kildeer came so close home into her heart.

Juanita had gone to make the tea. While the kettle had been coming to a boil, she had put her little cottage into the nicest of order; and even filled a glass with some roses and set it on the little table. For, as she said to Daisy, they would have company enough that day, and must be in trim. She had gone now to make the tea, and Daisy lay contentedly looking out of the window, when she heard the swift tread of horses' feet again. Could her father be back from Melbourne already? Daisy could not raise herself up to look. She heard the feet stop in the road before the cottage; then listened for somebody's step coming up to it. She heard the step, but it was none of Mr. Randolph's; it was brisk and firm and measured. She guessed it was somebody's step whose feet had been trained.

Juanita came to open the door at the knock, and Daisy heard her saying something about the doctor's orders, and keeping quiet, and no excitement. Daisy could not stand that.

"Oh, Captain Drummond come in! come in!" she cried. And in came the Captain. He looked wonderfully sober at his poor little playfellow. But Daisy looked all smiles at him.

"Is your furlough over? Are you going, Captain Drummond?"

"I am off, Daisy."

"I am so glad you came to see me," she said, putting out her little hand to him.

The Captain took it, and held it, and seemed almost unable to speak. "Daisy, I would have run the risk of being cashiered, rather than not have done it."

"What is that?"

"Cashiered? Having my epaulettes pulled off."

"Do you care a great deal for your epaulettes?" said Daisy.

The Captain laughed, with the water standing in his eyes. Yes, absolutely, his bright sparkling eyes had drops in them.

"Daisy, I have brought you our land fish that we had such trouble for."

"The trilobite! Oh, did you?" exclaimed Daisy, as he placed it before her. "I wanted to see it again, but I was afraid you wouldn't have time before you went." She looked at it eagerly.

"Keep it Daisy; and keep a little bit of friendship for me with it will you? in case we meet again some day."

"Oh, Captain Drummond don't you want it?"

"No; but I want you to remember the conditions."

"When will you come to Melbourne again?"

"Can't say, Daisy; I am afraid, not till you will have got the kingdom of England quite out of all its difficulties. We were just going into the battle of Hastings, you know; don't you recollect?"

"How nice that was!" said Daisy, regretfully. "I don't think I shall ever forget about the Saxon Heptarchy, and Egbert, and Alfred."

"How about forgetting me?"

"You know I couldn't," said Daisy, with a most genial smile. "Oh, Captain Drummond!" she added, as a flash of sudden thought crossed her face.

"What now, Daisy?"

The child looked at him with a most earnest, inquisitive wistful gaze. The Captain had some difficulty to stand it.

"Oh, Captain Drummond," she repeated, "are you going to be ashamed of Christ?"

The young soldier was strangely enough confused by this simple question. His embarrassment was even evident. He hesitated for a reply, and it did not readily come. When it came, it was an evasion.

"That is right, Daisy," he said; "stand by your colours. He is a poor soldier that carries them behind his back in the face of the enemy. But whatever field you die in, I should like to be alongside of you."

He spoke gravely. And he asked no leave this time, but, clasping Daisy's hand, he bent down and kissed her forehead twice, and earnestly; then he did not say another word, but strode away. A little flush rose on Daisy's brow, for she was a very particular little lady as to who touched her; however she listened attentively to the sound of the retreating hoofs which carried the Captain off along the road; and when Juanita at last came in with her little tray and a cup of tea, she found Daisy's face set in a very thoughtful mood, and her eyes full of tears. The face did not even brighten at her approach.

"Miss Daisy," said the black woman, "I thought you wanted a cup of tea?"

"So I do, Juanita. I want it very much."

Mrs. Benoit made remarks to herself upon the wise little face that met her with such a sober greeting. However, she made none aloud; she supported Daisy nicely with one arm, and set the little tray before her. The tea was excellent; the toast was in dainty, delicate, thin brown strips. Daisy took it soberly.

"Does it seem good to my love?"

"Oh, yes, Juanita!" said the child, looking up gratefully; "it is very good; and you make the prettiest toast I ever saw."

The black woman smiled, and bade her eat it, and not look at it.

"But I think it tastes better for looking pretty, Juanita."

"The Lord knows," said the woman; "and He made the trees in the garden of Eden to be pleasant to the eyes, as well as good for food."

"I am glad He did," said Daisy. "How pleasant the trees have been to my eyes this morning. Then I was sick, and could not do anything but look at them; but they are pleasant to my eyes too when I am well. It is very painful to have one's friends go away, Juanita."

"Has my love lost friends?" said Mrs. Benoit, wondering at this speech.

"Yes," said Daisy. "Mr. Dinwiddie is gone; and now Captain Drummond. I have got hardly anybody left."

"Was Mr. Dinwiddie Miss Daisy's friend?"

Such a bright, warm, glad flash of a smile as Juanita got in answer! It spoke for the friendship on one side.

"But he is gone," said Daisy. "I wish I could see him again. He is gone, and I never shall!"

"Now, Miss Daisy, you will lie still and be quiet, my love, until somebody else comes. The doctor says that's the way.]Mr. Dinwiddie is about his Master's work, wherever he is; and you want to do the same."

"How can I, Juanita, lying here? I cannot do anything."

"Does my love think the good Lord ever give His servants no work to do for Him?"

"Why *here*, Juanita I can only lie here and be still. What can I do?"

"My love pray the dear Master to show her; and now not talk just now." Daisy lay still.

The next comer was the doctor. He came while the morning was still early; made his examinations; and Daisy made hers. He was a very fine-looking man, Thick locks of auburn hair, thrown back from his face; a noble and grave countenance; blue eyes, keen and steady; and a free and noble carriage; there was enough about Dr. Sandford to engage all Daisy's attention and interest. She gave him both, in her quiet way; while he looked not so much at her as at her condition and requirements.

"It is going to be a hot day," he remarked to Juanita, who attended upon him. "Keep her quiet. Do not let more than one other person be here at once. Say I order it."

"Will his honour say it to Miss Daisy's father and mother?"

"I shall not see them this morning. You are armed with my authority, Juanita. Nobody is to be here to talk and excite her; and only one at a time beside you. Have you got fruit for her? Let her live on that as much as she likes; and keep the house empty."

"I will tell papa," said Daisy.

"How do you do?" said the doctor. It was the first question he had addressed to her; and the first attention he had given her otherwise than as a patient. Now the two looked at each other.

"I am better, a little, thank you," said the child. "May I ask something?"

"Ask it."

"Shall I be a long while here?"

"You will be a week or two till your foot gets strong again."

"Will a week or two make it strong?"

The two pairs of eyes looked into each other. The thoughtful grey eyes of the child, and the impenetrable blue orbs of the man. There was mutual study; some mutual recognition.

"You must be a good child and try to bear it."

"Will you come and see me again?" said Daisy.

"Do you desire it?"

"You would not come unless it was necessary," said Daisy; "and if it is necessary, I should like to have you."

The lips of the young man curled into a smile that was very pleasant, albeit a little mocking in its character.

"I think it will be necessary, little one; but if I come to see you, you must be under my orders."

"Well, I am," said Daisy.

"Keep still, then; do not talk to anybody any more than is needful to relieve your impatience."

The doctor went away, and Daisy lay still musing. The morning had gone on a little further, when carriage-wheels stopped at the gate.

"There's mamma " said Daisy.

It was very unconsciously on her part that the tone of these two words conveyed a whole volume of information to Juanita's keen wits. It was no accent of joy, like that which had announced her father last night; neither was it fear or dread; yet the indefinable expression of the two words said that "mamma" had been a trouble in Daisy's life, and might be again.

Juanita went to have the door open; and the lady swept in. Mr. Randolph was behind her. She came to Daisy's side, and the mother and child looked at each other; Daisy with the tender, wistful eyes of last night, Mrs. Randolph with a vexed air of dissatisfaction. Yet, after looking at her a moment, she stooped down and kissed Daisy. The child's eye went to her father then. Mrs. Randolph stood in his way; he came round to the head of the couch, behind Daisy, and bent over her.

"Papa, I can't see you there."

"You can feel, Daisy " said Mr. Randolph, putting his lips to her face. "How do you do?"

"This is a most maladroit arrangement of Captain Drummond's!" said the lady. "What can we do to rectify it? A most stupid place for the child to be."

"She will have to bear the stupidity and we too. Daisy, what would you like to have to help it along."

"Papa, I am not stupid."

"You will be, my little daughter, I am afraid, before the weeks are over. Will you have June come to be with you?"

"Papa," said Daisy, slowly, "I think it would not be considerate."

"Are you comfortable?" said Mr. Randolph, smiling, though his looks expressed much concern.

"No, papa."

"What is the matter?"

"It is hot, papa; and my leg aches; not so much as it did last night sometimes; but it aches."

"It is a cool, fresh morning," said Mrs. Randolph. "She is hot because she is lying in this place."

"Not very cool, with the mercury at eighty-four before eight o'clock You are cool because you have been driving fast."

"Mr. Randolph, this is no proper place for the child to be. I am convinced she might be moved with safety."

"I cannot risk the doctor's convictions against yours, Felicia. That question must be given up."

"He says I am under his orders, papa."

"Undeniable, Daisy. That is true doctrine. What orders does he give you?"

"To eat fruit, and keep quiet, papa. He says there must not be more than one person here at a time, besides Juanita."

"I suppose he does not mean to forbid your mother," said Mrs. Randolph, a good deal incensed. "I will see about that. Here, my good woman where are you? Will you let your cottage to me for the time that this child is confined here and remove somewhere else yourself, that I may put the people here I want about her?"

"Oh, mamma!" said Daisy. But she stopped short; and Mrs. Randolph did not attend to her. Mr. Randolph looked round to see Juanita's answer.

"My lady shall put here who she will please," the woman said, standing before her visitors with the most unruffled face and demeanour.

"And you will leave me the house at once?"

"No, my lady. My lady shall have the house. Juanita will not be in the way."

"You do not seem to understand, my good woman, that I want to be here myself, and have my people here. I want the whole house."

"My lady shall have it she is welcome nobody shall find Juanita trouble them," the black woman said, with great sweetness.

"What will you do with yourself?"

"A little place be enough for me, my lady. My spirit lives in a large home."

Mrs. Randolph turned impatiently away. The manner of the woman was so inexpressibly calm and sweet, the dignity of her beautiful presence was so immovable, that the lady felt it in vain to waste words upon her. Juanita was a hopeless case.

"It is no use for me to be here then," she said. "Mr. Randolph, you may make your own arrangements."

Which Mr. Randolph did. He held a consultation with Juanita, as to what was wanting, and what she would do; a consultation with which he was satisfied. Juanita was left in full charge, with authority to do for Daisy precisely according to Dr. Sandford's instructions, in all matters. Mrs. Randolph meanwhile had a talk with her poor pale little daughter, upon more or less the same subjects; and then the father and mother prepared to go home to breakfast.

"Shall I send you June?" said Mrs. Randolph.

"No, mamma; I think not."

"Be patient a little while, Daisy," said her father, kissing her; "and you will be able to have books and company too. Now for a little while you must keep quiet."

"Juanita will keep me quiet, papa."

"I will come and see you again by and by."

"Papa, I want to tell you one thing. I want to speak to you and mamma before you go."

Mr. Randolph saw that the child's face flushed as if she were making some effort. He bent down over her again.

"Is it something of interest, Daisy?"

"Yes, papa. To me."

"Don't talk of it now then. Lie still, and do not talk at all. By and by you will tell me what it is."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LITTLE CONFESSOR.

Mr. and Mrs. Randolph departed.

"Daisy will be ruined forever!" So said the lady as soon as she was in the carriage.

"I hope not."

"You take it coolly, Mr. Randolph. That woman is exactly the sort to infect Daisy; and you have arranged it so that she will have full chance."

"What is the precise danger you apprehend?" said Mr. Randolph.
"I have not heard it put into words."

"Daisy will be unmanageable. She is nearly that now."

"I never saw a more docile child in my life."

"That is because you take her part, Mr. Randolph. You will find it out in time, when it is too late; and it will be your own doing."

"What?"

"Daisy will be a confirmed piece of superstition. You will see. And you will not find her docile then. If she once takes hold of anything, she does it with great obstinacy."

"But what is she taking hold of now? After all, you do not tell me," said Mr. Randolph, carelessly.

"Of every sort of religious fanatical notion, you will find, Mr. Randolph! She will set herself against everything I want her to do, after the fashion of those people, who think nothing is right but their own way. It will be a work of extreme difficulty, I foresee, to do anything with her after these weeks in this black woman's house. I would have run any risk in removing her, rather than let it be so."

"Well, we shall see," said Mr. Randolph. "I cannot quite take your view of the matter. I would rather keep the child even for my own private comfort than lose her to prevent her from becoming religious."

Mrs. Randolph indignantly let this statement of opinion alone.

Little Daisy had a quiet day, meanwhile. The weather grew excessively hot; her broken ankle pained her; it was a day of suffering. Obligated to lie quite still; unable to change her position even a little, when the couch became very hot under her; no air coming in at the open window but what seemed laden with the heats of a furnace, Daisy lay still, and breathed as well as she could. All day Juanita was busy about her; moistening her lips with orange juice, bathing her hands, fanning her, and speaking and singing sweet words to her, as she could attend to them. The child's eyes began to go to the fine black face that hovered near her, with an expression of love and trust that was beautiful to behold. It was a day that tried poor little Daisy's patience; for along with all this heat, and weary lying still in one position, there were shoots and twitches of pain that seemed to come from the broken ankle and reach every part of her body; and she could not move about or turn over to ease them by some change.

At last the weary hours began to grow less oppressive. The sun got low in the sky; the air came with a little touch of freshness. How good it was to see the sun lost behind the woods on the other side the road. Juanita kindled her fire again, and put on the kettle; for Daisy was to have another cup of tea, and wanted it very much. Then, before the kettle had boiled, came the doctor.

It was a pleasant variety. Dr. Sandford's face was a good one to see come in anywhere, and in Daisy's case very

refreshing. It was so noble a face; the features fine, manly, expressive; with a sedate gravity that spoke of a character above trifling. His calm, forceful eye was very imposing; the thick auburn locks of his hair, pushed back as they were from his face, were beautiful to Daisy's imagination. Altogether he fastened her attention whenever he came within reach of it; she could not read those grave lines of his face; she puzzled over them. Dr. Sandford's appearance was in some way bewitching to her. Truly many ladies found it so.

He examined now the state of her foot; gave rapid comprehensive glances at everything; told his orders to Mrs. Benoit. Finally, paused before going, and looked into the very wise little eyes that scanned him so carefully.

"Is there anything you want, Daisy?" he said, with a physician's familiarity.

"No, sir, I thank you."

"Mrs. Benoit takes good care of you?"

"Very good."

The manner of Daisy's speech was like her looks; childlike enough, and yet with a deliberate utterance unlike a child.

"What do you think about, as you lie there all day?" he said.

The question had been put with a somewhat careless curiosity; but at that he saw a pink flush rise and spread itself all over Daisy's pale face; the grey eyes looked at him steadily, with no doubt of some thoughts behind them. Dr. Sandford listened for her answer. What was the child thinking about? She spoke at last with that same sweet deliberateness.

"I have been thinking, Dr. Sandford, about what Jesus did for me."

"What was that?" said the doctor, in considerable surprise.

"Because it was so hard for me to keep still to-day, I thought you know how it must have been " The flush deepened on the cheeks, and Daisy's eyes were swimming full of tears.

Dr. Sandford looked, in much surprise; perhaps he was at some pains to comprehend what all this meant.

"How it must have been when?" said he, bending over Daisy's couch.

"You know, Dr. Sandford," she said, tenderly. "When He was on the cross and couldn't move "

Daisy gave way. She put her hands over her face. The doctor stood erect, looking at her; glanced his grave eyes at Mrs. Benoit, and at her again; then made a step towards Juanita.

"No excitement is permitted," he said. "You must keep her from it. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," Juanita said. But her face was all alight.

"Have you been reading some of those stories to her?"

"I have not been reading to her at all to-day, if his honour pleases."

"Daisy," said Dr. Sandford, coming back to the couch, "what put such thoughts into your head?"

"I felt so badly to-day." She spoke with her usual collectedness again.

"Well, try and not mind it. You will feel better in a day or two. Do you know when that happened that you were talking about?"

"Yes, sir."

"When was it?"

"More than eighteen hundred years ago."

"Do you think it is worth your while to be troubled for what happened eighteen hundred years ago?"

"I think it is just the same as if it happened now," said Daisy, without moving her eyes.

"Do you? By what power of reasoning?"

"I don't think I know how to reason," said Daisy. "It is feeling."

"How does feeling manage it?"

Daisy discerned the tone of the question, looked at her questioner, and answered with tender seriousness: "I know the Lord Jesus did that for me; and I know He is in heaven now."

The doctor kept silence a minute. "Daisy," said he, "you are under my orders at present. You must mind me. You are to take a cup of tea, and a piece of toast, if you like; then you are to go to sleep and keep quiet, and not think of anything that happened more than an hour ago. Will you?"

"I will try to be quiet," said Daisy.

She and the doctor looked at each other in a dissatisfied manner, she wistfully, he disapprovingly, and then the doctor went out. Daisy's eyes followed, straining after him as long as they could; and when she could see him no longer they filled with tears again. She was looking as intent and wistful as if she might have been thirty years old instead of nine or ten, when Juanita came to her side with the tea she had been making.

The tea and toast did Daisy good; and she was ready to enjoy a visit from her father, who spent the evening with her. But he would not let her talk.

The next day was hot again; however, Daisy felt better. The heat was more bearable. It was a very quiet day. Both she and Juanita obeyed orders, and did not talk much; nevertheless, Juanita sang hymns a great deal, and that was delightful to Daisy. She found Juanita knew one hymn in particular that she loved exceedingly; it was the one that had been sung in the little church the day she had heard Mr. Dinwiddie preach; it fell in with the course of Daisy's thoughts; and several times in the day she had Juanita sing it over. Daisy's eyes always filled when she heard it; nevertheless Juanita could not resist her pleading wish.

"Oh, the Lamb! the loving Lamb!
The Lamb on Calvary!
The Lamb that was slain, but lives again,
To intercede for me."

"I am so happy, Juanita," Daisy said, after one of these times. "I am so happy!"

"What makes it so, my love?"

"Oh, because that is true because He lives up there to take care of me."

"Bless the Lord!" said the black woman.

Towards evening of that day, Juanita had left the room to make her fire and attend to some other things, when Daisy heard her own name hailed softly from the window. She turned her head, and there was Preston's bright face.

"My poor, poor little Daisy!"

"How do you do, Preston?" said Daisy, looking as clear as a moonbeam.

"There you are a prisoner!"

"It is a very nice prison."

"Don't, my dear Daisy! I'll believe you in anything else, you know; but in this I am unable. Tied by your foot for six weeks, perhaps! I should like to shoot Captain Drummond."

"It was not Captain Drummond's fault."

"Is it bad, Daisy?"

"My foot? It has been pretty bad."

"Poor Daisy! And that was all because you would not sing."

"Because I would not sing, Preston!"

"Yes, that is the cause of all the trouble that has been in the house. Now, Daisy, you'll give it up?"

"Give what up?"

"Give up your nonsense, and sing."

"*That?*" said Daisy, and a slight flush came into the pale cheeks.

"Aunt Felicia wants you to sing it, and she will make you do it, when you get well."

Daisy made no answer.

"Don't you see, my dear Daisy, it is foolish not to do as other people do?"

"I don't see what my broken ankle has to do with what you are saying, Preston."

"Daisy, what will become of you all these six weeks? We cannot go a fishing, nor have any fun."

"You can."

"What will you do?"

"I guess I can have books and read, by and by. I will ask Dr. Sandford."

"Suppose I bring some books, and read to you?"

"Oh, Preston! how nice."

"Well, I'll do it then. What shall I bring?"

"I wish you could bring something that would tell about these things."

"These things? What is that?"

"It is a trilobite. Captain Drummond got it the other day. It was a fish once, and now it is a stone; and I would like very much to know about it."

"Daisy, are you serious?"

"Why, yes, Preston."

"My dear little Daisy, do *not* you go and be a philosopher!"

"Why, I can't; but why shouldn't I?"

"Philosophers are not 'nice,' Daisy, when they are ladies," said Preston, shaking his head.

"Why not?"

"Because ladies are not meant to be philosophers."

"But I want to know about trilobites," said Daisy.

"I don't think you do. You would not find the study of fossils interesting."

"I think I should if you would help me, Preston."

"Well, we will see, Daisy. I will do anything for you, if you will do one thing for me. Oh, Daisy, do! Aunt Felicia has not given it up at all."

"Good-bye, Preston," said Daisy. "Now you must go, and not talk to me any more this time."

Preston ran off.

He was not allowed to come again for a day or two; and Daisy was not allowed to talk. She was kept very quiet, until it was found that the broken bone was actually healing, and in a fair way to get well. The pains in it were no longer so trying; the very hot days had given place to a time of milder weather; and Daisy, under the care of the old black woman, enjoyed her solitary imprisonment well enough. Twice a day always her father visited her; once a day, Mrs. Randolph. Her stay was never very long; Juanita's house was not a comfortable place for her; but Mr. Randolph gave a large piece of his time and attention to his suffering little daughter, and was indeed the first one to execute Preston's plan of reading aloud for her amusement. A new and great delight to Daisy. She never remembered her father taking such pains with her before. Then, when her father and mother were gone, and the cottage was still, Juanita and Daisy had what the latter called their "good time." Juanita read the Bible and sang hymns, and prayed. There was no time nor pleasure in all the day that Daisy liked so well.

She had gained strength, and was in a good way to be well again. The first morning this was told her, Daisy said: "Papa, may I speak to you now?"

"About something important, Daisy?"

"Yes, papa, I think so."

"Go on. What is it?"

Juanita was standing near by. The child glanced at her, then at her father.

"Papa," she said, speaking slowly, and with some hesitation, "I want you to know I want to tell you about me, so that you may understand."

"Are you so difficult to understand, Daisy?"

"No, papa; but I want you to know something. I want you to know that I am a Christian."

"Well, so are we all," said Mr. Randolph, coolly.

"No, papa, but I don't mean that."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, papa, that I belong to the Lord Jesus, and must do what He tells me."

"What am I to understand by that, Daisy?"

"Nothing, papa; only I thought you ought to know."

"Do you understand what you are saying yourself, my child?"

"Yes, papa."

"What does it mean, Daisy?"

"Only, papa, I want you to know that I belong to the Lord Jesus."

"Does that imply that you will not belong to me any more?"

"Oh, no, papa!"

"Why do you tell it me, then?"

"Papa, Jesus says He will be ashamed of those who are ashamed of Him; I will not be ashamed of Him; so I want you to know what I am."

"But, Daisy, you and I must come to an understanding about this," said Mr. Randolph, taking a chair. "Does this declaration mean that you are intending to be something different from what I like to see you?"

"I do not know, papa."

"You do not! Does it mean that you are proposing to set up a standard of action for yourself, independent of me?"

"No, papa."

"What then, Daisy?"

"Papa, I do not quite know what you mean by a *standard*."

"I will change the word. Do you mean that your purpose is to make, henceforward, your own rules of life?"

"No, papa; I do not mean that."

"What do you mean?"

"Papa," said Daisy, very deliberately, "if I belong to my Saviour, you know, I must follow His rules."

"Daisy, I shall not cease to require obedience to mine."

"No, papa, but " said Daisy, colouring.

"But what?"

"I don't know very well how to say what I want, papa; it is difficult."

"Try."

"Papa, you will not be displeased?"

"That depends upon what you have to say, Daisy."

"Papa, I do not *mean* to displease you," said the child, her eyes filling with tears. "But suppose "

"Well, suppose anything."

"Suppose *those* rules should be different from your rules?"

"I am to be the judge, Daisy. If you set up disobedience to me, on any pretext, you know the consequences."

Daisy's lip trembled; she put up her hands to her face, and burst into tears. She could not bear that reminder. Her father took one of her hands down, and kissed the little wet cheek.

"Where are you going to find these rules, Daisy," he said, kindly, "which you are going to set up against mine?"

"Papa, I do not set them up."

"Where do you get them?"

"Only in the Bible, papa."

"You are a little child, Daisy; you are not quite old enough to be able to judge properly for yourself what the rules of that book are. While you are little and ignorant, I am your judge, of that and everything else; and your business is to obey me. Do you understand that?"

"But, papa."

"Well what?"

"Papa, I am afraid you will be angry."

"I do not think I shall. You and I had better come to an understanding about these matters Say on, Daisy."

"I was going to say, papa "

Daisy was afraid to tell what. Mr. Randolph again stooped and kissed her; kissed her two or three times.

"Papa, I do not *mean* to make you angry," said the child, with intense eagerness, "but suppose papa, I mean, are you a servant of the Lord Jesus?"

Mr. Randolph drew back. "I endeavour to do my duty, Daisy," he said, coldly. "I do not know what you include in the terms you use."

"Papa, that is what I mean," said Daisy, with a very meek face. "Papa, if I *am*, and you are *not*, then perhaps you would not think the things that I think."

"If you are, and I am not, what?"

"*That*, papa which I wanted you to know I am. A servant of Jesus."

"Then, what?"

"Then, papa, if I am, and you are not, wouldn't you perhaps not think about those rules as I must think of them?"

"You mean that our thoughts would disagree?"

"Papa they might."

"What shall we do, then, Daisy?"

Daisy looked wistfully and somewhat sadly at him. There was more weight of thought under the little brow than he liked to see there. This would not do; yet matters must be settled.

"Do you want to be a different little person from what you have been, Daisy, hitherto?"

"I don't know, papa I think so."

"How do you wish to be different?"

"I can't tell, papa. I might have to be."

"I want you just as you are, Daisy."

Mr. Randolph stooped his head down again to the too thoughtful little face. Daisy clasped her arms around his neck, and held him close. It was only by her extraordinary self-command that she kept from tears; when he raised his head her eyes were perfectly dry.

"Will you be my good little Daisy and let me do the thinking for you?" said Mr. Randolph, tenderly.

"Papa I *can't*."

"I will not have you different from what I like you, Daisy."

"Then, papa, what shall I do?"

"Obey me, and be satisfied with that."

"But, papa, I am a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ," said the child, looking unutterably sober.

"I do not intend my commands shall conflict with any of higher authority."

"Papa suppose they *might*?"

"I must be judge. You are a little child; you must take the law from my mouth, until you are older."

"But, papa, suppose I *thought* the Bible told me to do what you did not think it said?"

"I advise you to believe my judgment, Daisy, if you wish to keep the peace between us. I will not have any more calling of it in question."

Daisy struggled plainly, though she would not cry; her colour flushed, her lip quivered. She was entirely silent for a little while, and Mr. Randolph sat watching her. The struggle lasted some minutes till she had overcome it somewhat she would not speak and it was sharp. Then the child closed her eyes, and her face grew calm. Mr. Randolph did not know what to think of her.

"Daisy."

"What, papa?"

"I do not think we have settled this question yet."

"I do not think we have, papa."

"What is to be done? It will not answer, my little daughter, for you to set up your will against mine."

"Papa, it is not my will."

"What do you call it, then?"

"Papa, it is not my will at all. It is the will of God."

"Take care, Daisy," said her father. "You are not to say that. My will will never oppose itself to that authority you speak of."

"Papa, I only want to obey that."

"But remember, I must be the judge."

"Papa," said Daisy, eagerly, "won't this do? If I think something is in the Bible, mayn't I bring it to you to see?"

"Yes."

"And if you think it *is* there, then will you let me do it?"

"Do what?"

"Do what the Bible says, papa."

"I think I may promise that, Daisy," said Mr. Randolph; though dubiously, as not quite certain what he was promising; "so long as I am the judge."

"Then that will do, papa! That is nice."

Daisy's countenance expressed such utter content at this arrangement, that Mr. Randolph looked grave.

"Now you have talked and excited yourself enough for to-day," he said. "You must be quiet."

"Mayn't I tell mamma when she comes?"

"What, Daisy?"

"I mean what I have told you, papa."

"No. Wait till to-morrow. Why do you wish to tell her, Daisy?"

"Papa, I think I ought to tell her. I want her to know."

"You have very uncompromising notions of duty. But this duty can wait till another day."

Daisy had to wait more than a day for her opportunity; her mother's next visits were too bustling and unsatisfactory, as well as too short, to promise her any good chance of being heard. At last came a propitious morning. It was more moderate weather; Daisy herself was doing very well, and suffering little pain; and Mrs. Randolph looked in good humour, and had sat down with her tettering-work, as if she meant to make her daughter something of a visit. Mr. Randolph was lounging at the head of the couch, out of Daisy's sight.

"Mamma," began the child, "there is something I wish to say to you."

"You have a favourable opportunity, Daisy. I can hear."

Yet Daisy looked a minute at the white hand that was flying the bobbin about. That white hand.

"It isn't much, mamma. It is only that I wish you to know that I am a Christian."

"That you are *what*?" said Mrs. Randolph, coldly.

"A Christian, mamma."

"Pray, what does that mean?"

"That I am a servant of Christ, mamma."

"When did you find it out, Daisy?"

"Some time ago, mamma. Some time a little while before my birth-day."

"You did! What do you think *me*?"

Daisy kept silence.

"Well! why don't you speak? Answer me."

"Mamma, I don't know how to answer you," said Daisy, flushing for an instant. Her mother's eyes took note of her.

"I shall not ask you a third time, Daisy."

"Mamma," said the child low, "I do not think you are what I mean by a Christian."

"You do not. I supposed that. Now you will go on and tell me what you mean by a Christian."

"It means," said Daisy, her eyes filling with tears, "it means a person who loves the Lord Jesus and obeys Him."

"I hope you are gratified, Mr. Randolph," said the lady, "with this specimen of the new Christianity. Dutiful and respectful are happily united; along with a pleasant mixture of modesty. What do you expect me to do, Daisy, with this announcement of yours?"

"Nothing, mamma," said Daisy, faintly.

"I suppose you think that my Christianity must accommodate itself to yours? Did you expect that?"

"No, mamma."

"It would be very foolish of you; for the fact will be the other way. Yours must accommodate itself to mine."

"I only wanted you to know what mine is, mamma."

"Yours is what mine is, Daisy. What I think right for you, that you are to do. I will not hear a whimper from you again about what you are do you understand? Not again. I have listened to you this time, but this is the last. If I hear another syllable like this, about what you are or your Christianity, I shall know how to chastise it out of you. You are nothing at all, but my Daisy; you are a Jewess, if I choose to have it so."

Mr. Randolph made an uneasy movement; but the lady's white fingers flew in and out of her tettering-work without regarding him.

"What do you want to do, that you are asking my permission in this roundabout way? What do you want to do, that you think will not please me."

Daisy at first hesitated; then Mr. Randolph was surprised to hear her say boldly, "I am afraid, a great many things, mamma."

"Well, you know now what to expect. Mr. Randolph," said the lady, letting fall her tettering-work, "if you please, I will go home. The sun will only be getting hotter, if I stay."

Mr. Randolph stood behind Daisy, bending down, and holding her face in his two hands.

"What would you like me to send you from home, Daisy?"

"Nothing, papa."

"Would you like to have Preston come and see you?"

"If he likes to come, papa."

"He has been only waiting for my permission, and if you say so, I will give him yours."

"He may come. I should like to see him very much."

"You may have books too, now, Daisy. Do you not want some books?"

"I should like 'Sandford and Merton,' papa; and when Preston comes I'll tell him what else I want."

Mr. Randolph stood still, smoothing down the hair on each side of the little round head, while Mrs. Randolph was adjusting herself for her drive.

"Are you ready, Mr. Randolph?"

"Cannot say that I am," said the gentleman, stooping to kiss Daisy's forehead, "but I will go with you. One thing I should like understood. For reasons which are sufficient with me, Daisy is to consider herself prohibited from making any music on Sundays henceforward, except she chooses to do it in church. I mention it, lest you should ask her to do what I have forbidden, and so make confusion."

Mrs. Randolph gave no sort of answer to this speech, and walked off to the door. Daisy, whose eyes had brightened with joy, clasped her arms around her father's neck when he stooped again, and whispered, with an energetic pressure, "Thank you, papa!"

Mr. Randolph only kissed her, and went off after his wife. The drive home was remarkably silent.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WONDERFUL THINGS.

It happened that day that Juanita had business on hand which kept her a good deal of the morning in the out-shed which formed part of her premises. She came in every now and then to see how Daisy was doing; yet the morning was on the whole spent by Daisy alone; and when Juanita at last came in to stay, she fancied the child was looking pale and worn more than usual.

"My love do not feel well?"

"Yes I do, Juanita I am only tired. Have you done washing?"

"It is all done. I am ready for whatever my love pleases."

"Isn't washing very disagreeable work, Juanita?"

"I do not think what it be, while it is mine," the woman said, contentedly. "All is good work that I can do for the Lord."

"But *that* work, Juanita? How can you do that work so?"

"When the Lord gives work, He give it to be done for Him.
Bless the Lord!"

"I do not understand, though, Juanita. Please tell me. How can you?"

"Miss Daisy, I don't know. I can do it with pleasure, because it is my Lord's command. I can do it with thanksgiving, because He has given me the strength and the power. And I can do it the best I can, so as nobody shall find fault in His servant. And then, Miss Daisy, I can do it to get money to send His blessed word to them that sit in darkness where I come from. And I can do it with prayer, asking my Lord to make my heart clean for His glory; like as I make soiled things white again. And I do it with joy, because I know the Lord hear my prayer."

"I think you are very happy, Juanita," said Daisy.

"When the Lord leads to living fountains of waters, then no more thirsting," said the black woman, expressively.

"Then, Juanita, I suppose if I get tired lying here, I can do patience-work?"

"Jesus will have His people do a great deal of that work," said Mrs. Benoit, tenderly. "And it is work that pleases Him, Miss Daisy. My love is very weary?"

"I suppose, Juanita, if I was really patient, I shouldn't be.
Should I? I think I am impatient."

"My love knows who carries the lambs in His bosom."

Daisy's tired face smoothed itself out at this. She turned her eyes to the window with a placid look of rest in them.

"Jesus knows where the trouble is," said the black woman. "He knows all. And He can help too. Now I am going to get something to do Miss Daisy good."

Before this could be done, there came a heavy clumping step up to the house, and a knock at the door; and then a person entered whom Juanita did not know. A hard-featured woman, in an old-fashioned black straw bonnet, and faded old shawl drawn tight round her. She came directly forward to Daisy's couch.

"Well, I declare if it ain't true! Tied by the heels, ain't ye?" was her salutation. Juanita looked, and saw that Daisy recognised the visitor; for she smiled at her, half pleasure, half assent to what she said.

"I heerd of it that is, I heerd you'd gone up to the mountain and broke something; I couldn't find out what 'twas; and then Hephzibah she said she would go down to Melbourne Sunday. I said to her, says I, 'Hephzibah, I wouldn't go all that ways, child, for to do nothing; 'tain't likely but that some part of the story's true, if you and me can't find out which;' but Hephzibah she took her own head and went; and don't you think, she came back a cryin'?"

"What was that for?" said Daisy, looking very much interested.

"Why, she couldn't find you, I guess; and she thought you was killed. But you ain't, be you?"

"Only my foot and ankle hurt," said Daisy, smiling; "and I am doing very well now."

"And was you broke anywheres?"

"My ankle was broken."

"I declare! And you couldn't be took home?"

"No."

"So the folks said; only they said that young soldier had killed you. I hope he got hurted himself."

"Why Mrs. Harbonner, *he* did not do it. It was an accident. It wasn't anybody's fault."

"It wouldn't ha' happened if I had been there, I can tell you!" said Hephzibah's mother. "I don't think much of a man if he ain't up to taking care of a woman; and a child above all. Now how long are you goin' to be in this fix?"

"I don't know. I suppose I shall have to lie still for four or five weeks more, before my foot is well."

"It's tiresome, I guess, ain't it?"

"Yes sometimes."

"Well, I used to think, if folks was good, things wouldn't happen to 'em. That's what I thought. That was my study of divinity. And when everything on earth happened to me, I just concluded it was because I warn't a bit too good to deserve it. Now I'm beat to see you lie there. I don't see what is the use of being good, if it don't get none."

"Oh, Mrs. Harbonner!" said Daisy, "I am glad my foot was broken."

"Well, I'm beat!" was all Mrs. Harbonner could say. "You air, be you?"

"It hasn't done me any harm at all; and it has done me a great deal of good."

Mrs. Harbonner stood staring at Daisy.

"The promise is sure," said Mrs. Benoit. "All things shall work together for good to them that love God!"

The other woman wheeled about, and looked at her for an instant with a sharp keen eye of note-taking; then she returned to Daisy.

"Well, I suppose I'll tell Hephzibah she won't see you again till summer's over; so she may as well give over thinking about it."

"Do you think Hephzibah wants to learn, Mrs. Harbonner?"

"Well, I guess she does."

"Wouldn't she come here and get her lessons? Couldn't she come to see me every day, while I am here?"

"I 'spose she'd jump out of her skin to do it," said Mrs. Harbonner. "Hephzibah's dreadful set on seeing you."

"Mrs. Benoit," said Daisy, "may I have this little girl come to see me every day, while I am here?"

"Miss Daisy shall have all, who she will," was the answer; and it was arranged so; and Mrs. Harbonner took her departure. Lingered a minute at the door, whither Juanita attended her, she made one or two enquiries and remarks about Daisy, answered civilly and briefly by Mrs. Benoit.

"Poor little toad!" said Mrs. Harbonner, drawing her shawl tight round her for the last time. "But ain't she little *queer*?"

These words were spoken in a low murmur, which just served to draw Daisy's attention. Out of sight behind the moreen curtain, Mrs. Harbonner forgot she was not beyond hearing; and Daisy's ears were good. She noticed that Juanita made no answer at all to this question, and presently shut the door.

The business of giving Daisy some fruit was the next thing attended to; in the course of eating which Daisy marvelled a little to herself what possible likeness to a *toad* Mrs. Harbonner could have discovered in her. The comparison did not seem flattering; also she pondered somewhat why it could be that anybody found her queer. She said nothing about it; though she gave Mrs. Benoit a little account of Hephzibah, and the reason of the proposed series of visits. In the midst of this came a cheery "Daisy" at the other side of her; and turning her head, there was Preston's face at the window.

"Oh, Preston!" Daisy handed to Mrs. Benoit her unfinished saucer of strawberries "I am so glad! I have been waiting for you. Have you brought my books?"

"Where do you think I have been, Daisy?"

"I don't know. Shooting! Have you?"

Daisy's eye caught the barrel of a fowling-piece showing its end up at the window. Preston, without replying, lifted up his game-bag, and let her see the bright feathers of little birds which partly filled it.

"You have! Shooting!" Daisy repeated, in a tone between disapprobation and dismay. "It isn't September!"

"Capital sport, Daisy," said Preston, letting the bag fall.

"I think it is very poor sport," said Daisy. "I wish they were all alive and flying again."

"So do I if I might shoot them again."

"It's cruel, Preston!"

"Nonsense, Daisy. Don't you be too tender. Birds were made to kill. What are they good for?"

With a wit that served her instead of experience, Daisy was silent, looking with unspoken abhorrence at the wicked muzzle of the fowling-piece.

"Did you bring me 'Sandford and Merton,' Preston?" she said, presently.

"'Sandford and Merton'! My dear Daisy, I have been going all over the world, you know this part of it and I was too far from Melbourne to go round that way for your book; if I had, it would have been too late to get here. You see the sun's pretty well down."

Daisy said no more; but it was out of her power not to look disappointed. She had so counted upon her book; and she was so weary of lying still and doing nothing. She wanted very much to read about the house that Harry and Tommy built; it would have been a great refreshment.

"Cheer up, Daisy," said Preston; "I'll bring you books to-morrow and read to you too, if you like it. What shall I bring?"

"Oh, Preston, I want to know about trilobites!"

"Daisy, you might as well want to know about the centre of the earth! That's where they belong."

"I should like to know about the centre of the earth," said Daisy. "Is there anything there?"

"Anything at the centre of the earth? I suppose so."

"But I mean, anything *but* earth," said Daisy.

Preston burst out laughing. "Oh, Daisy, Daisy! Hadn't you better learn about what is on the outside of the earth, before we dig down so deep into it?"

"Well, Preston, my trilobite was on the outside."

"Daisy, it wouldn't interest you," said Preston, seriously; "you would have to go deep into something else besides the earth so deep that you would get tired. Let the trilobite alone, and let's have Grimm's Tales to-morrow shall we? or what will you have?"

Daisy was patiently silent a minute; and then in came Dr. Sandford. In his presence Preston was mute; attending to the doctor's manipulations as gravely as the doctor himself performed them. In the midst of the general stillness, Dr. Sandford asked, "Who was speaking about trilobites as I came up?"

"Preston was speaking," said Daisy, as nobody else seemed ready to answer.

"What about them?"

"He thinks they would not interest me," said Daisy.

"What do you know about trilobites?" said Dr. Sandford, now raising his blue eyes for a good look into the child's face. He saw it looked weary.

"I have got a beautiful one. Juanita, will you bring it here, please?"

The doctor took it up, and handled it with an eye that said, Daisy knew, that it was a fine specimen. The way he handled it gratified her.

"So this is one of your playthings, is it, Daisy?"

"No, sir; it is not a plaything, but I like to look at it."

"Why?"

"It is so wonderful, and beautiful, I think."

"But do tell Daisy, will you, doctor," said Preston, "that it is a subject she cannot understand yet. She wants me to bring her books about trilobites."

"Time hangs heavy, Daisy?" said the doctor.

"No, sir only when I have nothing to do."

"What have you done to-day?"

"Nothing, sir; except talking to papa and mamma, and some business about a little girl."

The sedateness of this announcement was inexpressible, coming as it did after a little thoughtful pause. Preston burst out laughing. Dr. Sandford did not so far forget himself. He only gave Daisy a rapid look of his grave blue eyes.

"It would be a charity to give you more employment than that," he said. "You like wonderful things, Daisy?"

"Very much, when I understand about them."

"I will agree to tell you anything you please that I know about any wonderful things you can see to-morrow, looking from your window."

The Doctor and Preston went off together, and left Daisy, though without books, in a high state of excitement and gratification. The rest of the evening her little head was busy by turns with fancying the observations of the next day, and wondering what she could possibly find from her window to talk to the doctor about. A very unpromising window Daisy considered it. Nothing was to be seen beside trees and a little strip of road; few people passed by that way; and if there had, what wonder could there have been in that. Daisy was half afraid she should find nothing to talk to the doctor about; and that would be a mortification.

Daisy and Juanita were both apt to be awake pretty early. Lying there on her back all day, without power to run about and get tired, Daisy's sleep was light; and her eyes were generally open before the sun got high enough to look at them. Juanita was always up and dressed earlier even than that; how much earlier Daisy had no means of knowing; but she was sure to hear the murmur of her friend's voice at her prayers, either in the other room or outside of the house. And Juanita did not come in to see Daisy till she had been awake a good while, and had had leisure to think over a great many things. Daisy found that was a good time for her own prayers; there was nothing to disturb her, and nothing to be heard at all, except that soft sound of Juanita's voice, and the clear trills and quavers of the little birds' voices in the trees. There was no disturbance in any of those sounds; nothing but joy and gladness and the voice of melody from them all.

By and by, when the light began to kindle in the tops of the trees, and Daisy was sure to be watching it and trying to get sight of some of the bird singers which were so merry up there, she would hear another sound by her bedside, or feel a soft touch; and there would be Juanita, as bright as the day, in her way of looking bright, bending over to see and find out how Daisy was. Then, having satisfied herself, Juanita would go about the business of the morning. First her fire was made, and the kettle put on for breakfast. Daisy used to beg her to leave the door open, so that, though she could not follow her with her eyes and see, she could yet hear what Juanita was doing. She used to listen to hear the kindling put in the stove, and the wood; she knew the sound of it; then, when the match was lit and applied, she liked the rushing sound of the blaze and kindling fire; it gave pleasant token that the kettle would be boiled by and by. But first she listened to Juanita's feet brushing through the grass to get to the well; and Daisy listened so hard, she could almost tell after a while whether the grass was dry or whether it was heavy with dew. Juanita always carried the kettle to the well; and when she came back, Daisy could hear the iron clink of the stove as the kettle was put on. Presently

Juanita came in then from her kitchen, and began the work of putting the house in order. How nicely she did it! like the perfection of a nurse, which she was. No dust, no noise, no bustle; still as a mouse, but watchful as a cat, the alert old woman went round the room, and made all tidy, and all clean and fresh. Very likely Juanita would change the flowers in a little vase which stood on the mantelpiece or the table, before she felt that everything was as it ought to be.

When all that was done, her next attention was to Daisy herself; and Daisy never in her life had nicer tending than now. If Juanita was a nurse, she was a dressing-maid too, of first-rate qualifications. It was a real pleasure to have her ministering about the couch; and for that matter, the whole work of the morning, as Juanita managed it, was a regular and unfailing piece of amusement to Daisy. And in the midst of it, every look at the black woman's noble, sweet face, warmed Daisy's heart with something better than amusement. Daisy grew to love her very much.

This morning all these affairs had been gone through as usual; and leaving Daisy in a happy, refreshed state, Mrs. Benoit went off to prepare her breakfast. Like everything else, that was beautifully done. By and by, in she came with a tray and white napkin, white as napkin could be, and fine damask too. For Juanita had treasures of various sorts, besides old moreen curtains. On this tray, for instance, there was not only a fine napkin of damask; there was a delicate cup and saucer of fine china, which Daisy thought very beautiful. It was as thin and fine as any cup at Melbourne House, and had a dainty vine of leaves and flowers running round it, in a light red brown colour. The plate was not to match; it was a common little white plate; but that did not matter. The tea was in the little brown cup, and Daisy's lips closed upon it with entire satisfaction. Juanita had some excellent tea too; and if she had not, there was a sufficient supply sent from Melbourne; as well as of everything else. So today there was not only the brown toast in strips, which Daisy fancied; but there were great red Antwerp raspberries for her; and that made, Daisy thought, the very best breakfast that could be eaten. She was very bright this morning.

"Juanita," she said, "I have found something for Dr. Sandford already."

"What does Miss Daisy mean?"

"Don't you know? Didn't you hear him yesterday? He gave me something to do. He said he would tell me about anything wonderful I could see in the course of the day; and I have found something already."

"Seems to me as all the Lord has made is wonderful," said the black woman. "Does Miss Daisy think Dr. Sandford can tell her all about it?"

"Why, I suppose he knows a great deal, Juanita."

"If he knowed one thing more," said the black woman. "Here he is, Miss Daisy. He's early."

Certainly he was; but Dr. Sandford had a long ride to take that morning, and could only see Daisy then on his way. In silence he attended to her, and with no delay; smiled at her; put the tips of his fingers to her raspberry dish, and took out one for his own lips; then went quick away. Daisy smiled curiously. She was very much amused at him. She did not ask Juanita what she meant by the "one thing more." Daisy knew quite well; or thought she did.

All that day she was in an amused state, watching to see wonderful things. Her father's and mother's visits came as usual. Preston came and brought her some books. Hephzibah came, too, and had a bit of a lesson. But Hephzibah's wits were like her hair, straying all manner of ways. It was very difficult to make her understand the difference between a, b, ab, and b, a, ba; and that was discouraging. Daisy toiled with her till she was tired; and then was glad to lie still and rest? without even thinking of wonderful things, till Juanita brought her her dinner.

As the doctor had been early, so he was late to-day. It was near sunset when he came, and Daisy was a little disappointed, fancying that he was tired. He said nothing at first; attended to Daisy's foot in the profoundest gravity; but in the midst of it, without looking up, he asked, "What wonderful things have you seen to-day?"

"I am afraid you are tired, Dr. Sandford," said Daisy, very gently.

"What then?"

"Then it might tire you more to talk to me."

"You have seen something wonderful, have you?" said he doctor, glancing at her.

"Two or three things, sir."

"One at a time," said the doctor. "I am tired. I have ridden nearly seventy miles to-day, one way and another. Have you got a cup of milk for me, Mrs. Benoit?"

Daisy eagerly beckoned Juanita, and whispered to her, and the result was that with the cup of milk came a plate of the magnificent raspberries. The doctor opened his grave eyes at Daisy, and stood at the foot of her couch, picking up raspberries with his finger and thumb, as he had taken that one in the morning.

"Now what are the wonderful things?" said he.

"You are too tired to-night, Dr. Sandford."

"Let us have number one. Promises must be kept, Daisy. Business is business. Have you got such hard work for me? What was the first thing?"

"The first wonderful thing that I saw or at least that I thought of" said Daisy, "was the sun."

The doctor eat half a dozen raspberries without speaking, giving an odd little smile first in one corner of his mouth, and then in the other.

"Do you expect me to tell you about that?" said he.

"You said business was business," Daisy replied, with equal gravity to his own.

"I am glad the idea of the universe did not occur to you," said the doctor. "That might have been rather inconvenient for one evening's handling. What would you like me to tell you about the sun?"

"I do not know anything at all about it," said Daisy. "I would like to know everything you can tell me."

"The thought that first comes to me," said the doctor, "is, that it ripened these raspberries."

"I know *that*," said Daisy. "But I want to know what it is."

"The sun! Well," said the doctor, "it is a dark, round thing, something like this earth, only considerably bigger."

"*Dark!*" said Daisy. "Certainly. I have no reason to believe it anything else."

"But you are laughing at me, Dr. Sandford," said Daisy, feeling very much disappointed and a little aggrieved.

"Am I? No, Daisy if you had ridden seventy miles to-day, you might be tempted, but you would not feel like laughing. Business is business, I must remind you again."

"But you do not mean that the sun is dark?" said Daisy.

"I mean precisely what I say, I assure you."

"But it is so bright we cannot look at it," said Daisy.

"Something is so bright you cannot look at it. The something is not the body of the sun."

"Then it is the light that comes from it."

"No light comes from it, that I know. I told you, the sun is a dark body."

"Not laughing?"

"No," said Dr. Sandford, though he did laugh now; "the sun, you see, is a more wonderful thing than you imagined."

"But sir, may I ask any question I have a mind to ask?"

"Certainly! All in the course of business."

"How do you know that it is dark, sir?"

"Perfectly fair. Suppose that Mrs. Benoit stood behind your curtain there, and that you had never seen her; how could

you know that she has a dark skin?"

"Why, I could not."

"Yes, you could if there were rents in the curtain."

"But what are you talking of, sir?"

"Only telling you, in answer to your question, how I know the sun to be a dark body."

"But there is no curtain over the sun."

"That proves you are no philosopher, Daisy. If you were a philosopher, you would not be so certain of anything. There is a curtain over the sun; and there are rents or holes in the curtain sometimes, so large that we can see the dark body of the sun through them."

"What is the curtain? Is *that* the light?"

"Now you are coming pretty near it, Daisy," said the doctor. "The curtain, as I call it, is not light, but it is what the light comes from."

"Then what *is* it, Dr. Sandford?"

"That has puzzled people wiser than you and I, Daisy. However, I think I may venture to say, that it is something like an ocean of flame, surrounding the dark body of the sun."

"And there are holes in it?"

"Sometimes."

"But they must be very large holes to be seen from this distance?"

"Very," said the doctor. "A great many times bigger than our whole earth."

"Then how do you know but they are dark islands in the ocean?"

"For several reasons," said the doctor, looking gravely funny; "one of which reasons is, that we can see the deep ragged edges of the holes, and that these edges join together again."

"But there could not be holes in *our* ocean?" said Daisy.

Dr. Sandford gave a good long grave look at her, set aside his empty plate which had held raspberries, and took a chair. He talked to her now with serious, quiet earnest, as if she had been a much older person.

"Our ocean, Daisy, you will remember, is an ocean of fluid matter. The ocean of flame which surrounds the sun is gaseous matter or a sort of ocean of air, in a state of incandescence. This does not touch the sun, but floats round it, upon or above another atmosphere of another kind like the way in which our clouds float in the air over our heads. You know how breaks come and go in the clouds; so you can imagine that this luminous covering of the sun parts in places, and shows the sun through, and then closes up again."

"Is that the way it is?" said Daisy.

"Even so."

"Dr. Sandford, you said a word just now I did not understand."

"Only one?" said the doctor.

"I think there was only one I did not know in the least."

"Can you direct me to it?"

"You said something about an ocean of air in a state what state?"

"Incandescence?"

"That was it."

"That is a state where it gives out white heat."

"I thought everything at the sun must be on fire," said Daisy, looking meditatively at the doctor.

"You see you were mistaken. It has only a covering of clouds of fire so to speak."

"But it must be very hot there."

"It is pretty hot *here*," said the doctor, shrugging his shoulders, "ninety five millions of miles away; so I do not see that we can avoid your conclusion."

"How much is ninety five millions?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Dr. Sandford, gravely. "After I have gone as far as a million or so, I get tired."

"But I do not know much about arithmetic," said Daisy, humbly. "Mamma has not wanted me to study. I don't know how much one million is."

"Arithmetic does not help one on a journey, Miss Daisy," said the doctor, pleasantly. "Counting the miles did not comfort me to-day. But I can tell you this. If you and I were to set off on a railway train, straight for the sun, and go at the rate of thirty-two miles an hour, you know that is pretty fast travelling?"

"How fast do we go on the cars from here to New York?"

"Thirty miles an hour."

"Now I know," said Daisy.

"If we were to set off and go straight to the sun at that rate of speed, keeping it up night and day, it would take us how long do you guess? It would take us three hundred years and more; nearly three hundred and fifty years, to get there."

"I cannot imagine travelling so long," said Daisy, gravely. At which Dr. Sandford laughed; the first time Daisy had ever heard him do such a thing. It was a low, mellow laugh now; and she rather enjoyed it.

"I should like to know what a million is," she observed.

"Ten hundred thousand."

"And how many million miles did you say the sun is?"

"Ninety-five millions of miles away."

Daisy lay thinking about it.

"Can you imagine travelling faster? And then we need not be so long on the journey," said Dr. Sandford. "If we were to go as fast as a cannon ball, it would take us about seven years not quite so much to get to the sun."

"How fast does a cannon ball go?"

"Fifty times as fast as a railway train."

"I cannot imagine that either, Dr. Sandford."

"Give it up, Daisy," said the doctor, rising, and beginning to put himself in order for travelling.

"Are you going?" said Daisy.

"Not till you have done with me!"

"Dr. Sandford, have you told me all there is to tell about the sun?"

"No."

"Would it take too long this evening?"

"Considering that the sun will not stay to be talked about, Daisy," said the doctor, glancing out of the window, "I should say it would."

"Then I will ask only one thing more. Dr. Sandford, how can you tell so exactly how long it would take to go to the sun? How do you know?"

"Quite fair, Daisy," said the doctor, surveying her gravely. "I know, by the power of a science called mathematics, which enables one to do all sorts of impossible things. But you must take that on my word; I cannot explain so that you would understand it."

"Thank you, sir," said Daisy.

She wanted further to ask what sort of a science mathematics might be; but Dr. Sandford had answered a good many questions, and the sun was down, down, behind the trees on the other side of the road. Daisy said no more. The doctor, seeing her silent, smiled, and prepared himself to go.

"Shall we finish the sun to-morrow, Daisy?"

"Oh, if you please."

"Very well. Good-bye."

The doctor went, leaving Daisy in a very refreshed state; with plenty to think of. Daisy was quite waked out of her weariness and disappointment, and could do well enough without books for one day longer. She took her own raspberries now with great spirit.

"I have found two more wonderful things to talk to Dr. Sandford about, Juanita; that is three to-day."

"Does Miss Daisy think the doctor can tell her all?"

"I don't know. He knows a great deal, Juanita."

"Seems he knows more than Job did," said Mrs. Benoit, who had her private misgivings about the authenticity of all Dr. Sandford's statements.

Daisy thought a little. "Juanita, Job lived a great while ago."

"Yes, Miss Daisy."

"How much did he know about the sun? does the Bible tell?"

"It tells a little what he didn't know, Miss Daisy."

"Oh, Juanita, after I get through my tea, and when you have had yours, won't you read me in the Bible all about Job and the sun?"

Mrs. Benoit liked nothing better; and whatever other amusements failed, or whatever other parties anywhere in the land found their employments unsatisfactory, there was one house where intent interest and unflagging pleasure went through the whole evening; it was where Daisy and Mrs. Benoit read "about Job and the sun." Truth to tell, as that portion of Scripture is but small, they extended their reading somewhat.

Daisy's first visitor the next day was her father. He came with fresh flowers and fresh fruit, and with "Sandford and Merton," too, in which he read to her; so the morning went well.

"Papa," said Daisy, when he was about leaving her, "do you not think Dr. Sandford is a very interesting man?"

"It is the general opinion of ladies, I believe, Daisy; but I advise you not to lose your heart to him. I am afraid he is not to be depended on."

"Oh, papa," said Daisy, a little shocked, "I do not mean that he is a man one would get *fond* of."

"Pray who do you think is, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph, maintaining his gravity admirably.

"Papa, don't you think Captain Drummond is and "

"And who, Daisy?"

"I was thinking Mr. Dinwiddie, papa." Daisy did not quite know how well this last name would be relished, and she coloured a little apprehensively.

"You are impartial in your professional tastes, I am glad to see," said Mr. Randolph. Then, observing how innocent of understanding him was the grave little face of Daisy, he bent down to kiss her.

"And you are unfortunate in your favourites. Both at a distance! How is Gary McFarlane?"

"Papa, I think he has good nature; but I think he is rather frivolous."

Mr. Randolph looked soberly at the little face before him, and went away, thinking his own thoughts. But he had the cruelty to repeat to Dr. Sandford so much of this conversation as concerned that gentleman; in doing so he unwittingly laid the foundation of more attention to Daisy on the doctor's part, than he probably would ever otherwise have given her. To say truth the idea propounded by Daisy was so very novel to the doctor that it both amused and piqued him.

Mr. Randolph had hardly gone out, when Hephzibah came in. And then followed a lesson the like of which Daisy had not given yet. Hephzibah's attention was on everything but the business in hand. Also, she had a little less awe of Daisy lying on Mrs. Benoit's couch in a loose gown, than when she met her in the Belvedere at Melbourne, dressed in an elegant cambric frock, with a resplendent sash.

"C, a, spells ca, Hephzibah. Now what is that?"

"Over your finger?"

"Yes."

"That's C."

"C, a. And what does it spell?"

"Did the stone fall right onto your foot?"

"Yes partly on."

"And was it broke right off?"

"No. Oh, no. Only the bone of my ankle was broken."

"It smarted some, I guess; didn't it?"

"No. Now Hephzibah, what do those two letters spell?"

"C, a, ca. That don't mean nothin'."

" Now the next. D, a "

"What's D, a?"

"D, a, da."

"What's that?"

"Nothing; only it spells that."

"How soon'll you be up again?"

"I do not know. In a few weeks."

"Before the nuts is ripe?"

"Oh, yes, I hope so."

"Well, I'll show you where there's the biggest hickory nuts you ever see! They're right back of Mr. Lamb's barn only three fields to cross and there's three hickory trees; and the biggest one has the biggest nuts, mother says, she ever see. Will you go and get some?"

"But, Hephzibah, those are Mr. Lamb's nuts, aren't they?"

"I don't care."

"But," said Daisy, looking very grave, "don't you know, Hephzibah, it is wrong to meddle with anything that belongs to other people?"

"He hain't no right to 'em, I don't believe."

"I thought you said they were in Mr. Lamb's field?"

"So they be."

"Then they are his nuts. You would not like anybody to take them, if they belonged to you."

"It don't make no odds," said Hephzibah, sturdily, but looking down at the same time. "He'll get it out of us some other way."

"Get it out of you?" said Daisy.

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"He gets it out of everybody," said Hephzibah. "Tain't no odds."

"But, Hephzibah, if those trees were yours, would you like to have Mr. Lamb come and take the nuts away?"

"No. I'd get somebody to shoot him."

Daisy hardly knew how to go along with her discourse; Hephzibah's erratic opinions started up so fast. She looked at her little rough pupil in absolute dismay. Hephzibah showed no consciousness of having said anything remarkable. Very sturdy she looked; very assured in her judgment. Daisy eyed her rough bristling hair, with an odd kind of feeling that it would not be more difficult to comb down into smoothness than the unregulated thoughts of her mind. She must begin gently. But Daisy's eyes grew most wistfully earnest.

"Would you shoot Mr. Lamb for taking away your nuts?"

"Just as lieves."

"Then, how do you think he would feel about your taking his nuts?"

"I don't care!"

"But, Hephzibah, listen. Do you know what the Bible says? It says, that we must do to other people just what we would like to have them do to us in the same things."

"Then he oughtn't to have sot such a price on his meat," said Hephzibah.

"But, then," said Daisy, "what would it be right for you to do about his nuts?"

"I don't care," said Hephzibah. " 'Tain't no odds. I'm a going to get 'em. I guess it's time for me to go home."

"But, Hephzibah, you have not done your lesson yet. I want you to learn all this row to-day. The next is, f, a, fa."

"That don't mean nothin'," said Hephzibah.

"But you want to learn it, before you can go on to what does mean something."

"I don't guess I do," said Hephzibah.

"Don't you want to learn to read?"

"Yes, but that ain't reading'."

"But you cannot learn to read without it," said Daisy.

Under this urging, Hephzibah did consent to go down the column of two-letter syllables.

"Ain't you going with me after them nuts?" she said, as soon as the bottom of the page was reached. "I'll show you a rabbit's nest. La! it's so pretty!"

"I hope you will not take the nuts, Hephzibah, without Mr. Lamb's leave."

"I ain't going to ask his leave," said Hephzibah. "He wouldn't give it to me, besides. It's fun, I tell you."

"It is wrong," said Daisy. "I don't think there's any fun in doing what's wrong."

"It is fun, though, I tell you," said Hephzibah. "It's real sport. The nuts come down like rain; and we get whole baskets full. And then, when you crack 'em, I tell you, they are sweet."

"Hephzibah, do you know what the Bible says?"

"I don't want to learn no more to-day," said the child. "I'm going. Good bye, Daisy."

She stayed no further instruction of any kind; but caught up her calico sun-bonnet, and went off at a jump, calling out "Good bye, Daisy!" when she had got some yards from the house.

Daisy lay still, looking very thoughtful.

"The child has just tired you, my love!" said the black woman.

"What shall I do, Juanita? She doesn't understand."

"My love knows who opened the eyes of the blind," said Juanita.

Daisy sighed. Certainly teaching seemed to take very small hold on her rough little pupil. These thoughts were suddenly banished by the entrance of Mrs. Randolph.

The lady was alone this time. How like herself she looked, handsome and stately, in characteristic elegance of attire and manner both. Her white morning dress floated off in soft edges of lace from her white arms; a shawl of precious texture was gathered loosely about them; on her head, a gossamer web of some fancy manufacture fell off on either side, a mock covering for it. She came up to Daisy and kissed her, and then examined into her various arrangements, to see that she was in all respects well and properly cared for.

Her mother's presence made Daisy feel very meek. Her kiss had been affectionate, her care was motherly; but with all that there was not a turn of her hand nor a tone of her calm voice, that did not imply and express absolute possession, perfect control. That Daisy was a little piece of property belonging to her in sole right, with which she did and would do precisely what it might please her, with very little concern how or whether it might please Daisy. Daisy was very far from putting all this in words, or even in distinct thoughts; nevertheless, she felt and knew every bit of it; her mother's hand did not touch Daisy's foot or her shoulder, without her inward consciousness what a powerful hand it was. Now it is true that all this was in one way no new thing; Daisy had always known her mother's authority to be just what it was now; but it was only of late that a question had arisen about the bearing of this authority upon her own little life and interests. With the struggle that had been, and the new knowledge that more struggles in the future were not

impossible, the consciousness of her mother's power over her had a new effect. Mrs. Randolph sat down and took out her tettering-work; but she only did a few stitches.

"What child was that I met running from the house as I came up?" she asked, a little to Daisy's discomfort.

"It was a little girl who belongs in the village, mamma."

"How comes she to know you?"

"It happened by accident partly, in the first place."

"What accident?"

"Mamma, I will tell you another time, if you will let me." For Daisy knew that Juanita was not far off.

But Mrs. Randolph only said, "Tell me now."

"Mamma it was partly an accident," Daisy repeated. "I found out by accident that they were very poor and I carried them something to eat."

"Whom do you mean by 'them'?"

"That little girl and her mother Mrs. Harbonner."

"When did you do this?"

"About the time of my birthday."

"And you have kept up the acquaintance since that time?"

"I carried the woman work once, mamma. I had papa's leave to go."

"Did you ask mine?"

"No, mamma. It was papa who had forbidden me to go into any house without leave; so I asked him to let me tell her about the work."

"What was this child here for, to-day?"

"Mamma she is a poor child, and could not go to school; and I was trying to teach her something."

"What were you trying to teach her?"

"To read, mamma and to do right."

"Have you ever done this before?"

"Yes, mamma a few times."

"Can it be that you have a taste for low society, Daisy?"

Mrs. Randolph had been asking questions calmly while going on with her tettering-work: at this one she raised her eyes and bent them full, with steady, cold inquiry, on Daisy's face. Daisy looked a little troubled.

"No, mamma I do not think I have."

"Is not this child very rude and ill-mannered?"

"Yes, ma'am, but "

"Is she even a clean child?"

"Not *very*, mamma."

"You are changed, Daisy," said Mrs. Randolph, with a slight but keen expression of disdain. The child felt it, yet felt it not at all to the moving of her steadfastness.

"Mamma it was only that I might teach her. She knows nothing at all, almost."

"And does Daisy Randolph think such a child is a fit companion for her?"

"Not a *companion*, mamma."

"What business have you with a child who is not a fit companion for you?"

"Only, mamma, to try to be of some benefit to her."

"I shall be of some benefit to you, now. Since I cannot trust you, Daisy since your own delicacy and feeling of what is right does not guide you in such matters, I shall lay my commands on you for the future. You are to have nothing to do with any person, younger or older, without finding out what my pleasure is about it. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, mamma."

"You are to give no more lessons to children who are not fit companions for you. You are not to have anything to do with this child in particular. Daisy, understand me I forbid you to speak to her again."

"Oh, mamma "

"Not a word," said Mrs. Randolph.

"But, mamma, please! just this. May I not tell her once, that I cannot teach her? She will think me so strange!"

Mrs. Randolph was silent.

"Might I not, just that once, mamma?"

"No."

"She will not know what to think of me," said Daisy; her lip trembling, her eye reddening, and only able by the greatest self-control to keep from bursting into tears.

"That is your punishment" replied Mrs. Randolph, in a satisfied, quiet sort of way.

Daisy felt crushed. She could hardly think.

"I am going to take you in hand, and bring you into order," said Mrs. Randolph, with a smile, bending over to kiss Daisy, and looking at her lips and eyes in a way Daisy wished she would not. The meek little face certainly promised small difficulty in her way, and Mrs. Randolph kissed the trembling mouth again.

"I do not think we shall quarrel," she remarked. "But if we do, Daisy, I shall know how to bear my part of it."

She turned carelessly to her tettering again, and Daisy lay still; quiet and self-controlled, it was all she could do. She could hardly bear to watch her mother at her work; the thought of "quarrels" between them was so inevitable and so dreadful. She could hardly bear to look out of her window; the sunshine and bright things out there seemed to remind her of her troubles; for they did not look bright now, as they had done in the early morning. She lay still and kept still; that was all; while Mrs. Randolph kept at her work, amusing herself with it an uncommonly long time. At last she was tired; threw her shawl round her shoulders again, and stood up to go.

"I think we can soon have you home, Daisy," she said, as she stooped to kiss her. "Ask Dr. Sandford when he comes, how soon it will do now to move you; ask him tonight; will you?"

Daisy said, "Yes, mamma," and Mrs. Randolph went.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DOCTOR.

The day was a heavy one to Daisy and Juanita after that. The little cottage was very silent. Daisy lay still, saying nothing, and generally keeping her face turned towards the window so that her friend could not see it; and when Mrs. Benoit proposed, as she several times did, to read to Daisy or sing to her, she was always answered by a gentle, "No, Juanita," which was as decided as it was gentle. The last time, indeed, Daisy had yielded, and given assent to the proposition; but Mrs. Benoit did not feel sure that she gave anything else; either attention or approbation. Daisy's dinner she had prepared with particular care; but it was not enjoyed; Mrs. Benoit knew that. She sighed to herself, and then sang to herself, in a softly kind of way; Daisy gave no heed, and only lay still with her face turned to the window.

By and by, late in the afternoon, the doctor came in. He was not a favourite of Mrs. Benoit, but she was glad to see him now. She withdrew a little out of the way and watched to see what he would say.

The doctor's first care as usual was the foot. That was going on well. Having attended to that, he looked at Daisy's face. It did not seem to him satisfactory, Mrs. Benoit saw; for his next move was to the head of the couch, and he felt Daisy's hand, while his eyes studied her.

"How do you do to-day?"

"I am getting better," said Daisy.

"Are you? Your voice sounds weak to-night."

"I do not suppose I am very strong."

"How many wonderful things have you found to-day?"

"I have not thought about them I have not found any."

Doctor Sandford bent a little over Daisy's couch, holding her hand still, and examining her.

"What is the matter, Daisy?" said he.

Daisy fidgeted. The doctor's fine blue eyes were too close to her and too steady to be escaped from. Daisy turned her own eyes uneasily away, then brought them back; she could not help it. He was waiting for her to speak.

"Dr. Sandford," she said, humbly, "won't you please excuse me?"

"Excuse you what, Daisy?"

"From telling you what you want to know."

"Pray, why should I?"

"It is something that is quite private to myself."

If the doctor's lips remained perfectly still for some moments, it was because they had a private inclination to smile, in which he would not indulge them. Daisy saw nothing but the most moveless gravity.

"Private from all but your physician, Daisy," he said at last.

"Do not you know he is an exception to general rules?"

"Is he?" said Daisy.

"Certainly. I always become acquainted with people's private affairs."

"But I do not want that you should be acquainted with mine."

"No matter. You are under my care," said the doctor. Then after a minute, he added, in a lower tone, "What have you been shedding tears about to-day?"

Daisy's face looked intensely grave; wise and old beyond her days, though the mouth was also sweet. So she faced the doctor, and answered him with the sedateness of fifty years "I can't very well tell you, Dr. Sandford."

"You have been shedding tears to-day?"

"Yes, sir " said Daisy, softly.

"A good many of them? You have been lying here with your face to the window, crying quietly, a good part of the afternoon have you not?"

"Yes, sir," said Daisy, wondering at him.

"Now, I am your physician, and must know what was the matter."

"It is something I cannot tell about, Dr. Sandford."

"Yes, Daisy, you are mistaken. Whatever concerns you, concerns me; if it is the concern of nobody else. Were you tired of lying here so long, day after day?"

"Oh, no, sir! I don't mind that at all. I mean I don't mind it at all, much."

"You do not?" said the doctor. "Have you lost a pet kitten, or a beloved lap-dog?"

"I haven't any, either a kitten or a dog," said Daisy.

"Has that young cavalier, Preston Gary, neglected you?"

"He would not do that," said Daisy; "but he is very fond of shooting."

"He is!" said Dr. Sandford. "Most boys are. You have not felt lonely, then, Daisy?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"I believe I should, in your place. What is the matter, then? I ask as your friend and physician; and you must tell me, Daisy. Who has been to see you to-day?"

"Papa he came and read to me. Then a little girl and mamma."

"Did the little girl trouble you?"

"Not much " said Daisy, hesitatingly.

"In what way?"

"She only would not learn to read as fast as I wanted."

"You were the teacher?"

"Yes, sir I was trying I wanted to teach her."

"And has her obduracy or stupidity caused all this sorrow and annoyance?"

"Oh, no, sir " But Daisy's eyes filled.

"Then has Mrs. Randolph been the trouble-maker?"

Now Daisy flushed, her lip worked tremblingly; she turned her little head to one side, and laid her hand over her brow, to baffle those steady blue eyes of the doctor's. But the doctor left the side of the couch, and took a step or two towards where Juanita was sitting.

"Mrs. Benoit," said he, "has this little patient of yours had her tea?"

"No, sir. His honour knows, it's early yet in the afternoon."

"Not so very. Do you mean she took enough for dinner to last her till to-morrow?"

"No, sir; her dinner was little better than nothing."

"Then make a cup, in your best style, Mrs. Benoit and perhaps you will give me one. And have you got any more of those big raspberries for her? bring them, and a bit of toast."

While Juanita was gone on this business, which took a little time, the doctor slowly paced back and forth through the small cottage room, with his hands behind him, and a thoughtful face. Daisy fancied he was considering her affair; but she was very much mistaken; Dr. Sandford had utterly forgotten her for the moment, and was pondering some difficult professional business. When Juanita appeared with her tea tray, he came out of his abstraction; and, though still with a very unrelaxed face, he arranged Daisy's pillows so that she might be raised up a little, and feel more comfortable. His hands were strong and skilful, and kind too; there was a sort of pleasure in having them manage her; but Daisy looked on with a little wonder to see him take the charge of being her servitor in what came afterwards. He made her a cup of tea; let her taste it from his hands; and gave the plate of raspberries into her own.

"Is it good?" he asked her.

"Very good!" Daisy said, with so gentle and reverential a look at him, that the doctor smiled. He said nothing, however, at present, but to take care that she had her supper; and looked meanwhile to see the colour of Daisy's cheeks change a little, and the worn, wearied lines of her face take a more natural form. His own ministrations were more effectual than the eating and drinking; it was so very odd to have Dr. Sandford waiting upon her that Daisy was diverted, and could not help it.

"Will you take some tea too, Dr. Sandford?" she said, in the midst of this. "Won't you take it now, while it is hot?"

"I take my tea cold, Daisy, thank you. I'll have it presently."

So he poured out his own cup, and left it to cool, while he attended to Daisy; and when she would have no more, he took the cup from the tray, and sent Mrs. Benoit off with the rest of the things.

"Now, Daisy," said he, as he took away her bolstering pillows, and laid her nicely down again, "now, Daisy, I am your confidential friend and physician, and I want to know what command Mrs. Randolph has given to trouble you. It is my business to know, and you must tell me."

He was so cool about it, and so determined, that Daisy was staggered. He stood holding her hand, and waiting for her answer.

"Mamma "

Daisy came to a great stop. The doctor waited.

"It was about the little girl."

"Very well. Go on, Daisy." He took up his cup of tea now and began to sip it.

Poor Daisy! She had never been more bewildered in her life.

"What about the little girl?"

"Mamma doesn't want me to teach her."

"Is it so favourite an amusement?"

"No, sir " said Daisy, hesitatingly.

"Was that all the trouble?"

"No, sir."

The doctor sipped his cup of tea, and looked at Daisy. He did not say anything more; yet his eyes so steadily waited for what further she had to say, that Daisy fidgeted; like a fascinated creature, obliged to do what it would not. She could not help looking into Dr. Sandford's face, and she could not withstand what she saw there.

"Dr. Sandford," she began in her old-fashioned way, "you are asking me what is private between my mother and me."

"Nothing is private from your physician, Daisy. I am not Dr. Sandford; I am your physician."

"But you are Dr. Sandford to mamma."

"The business is entirely between you and me."

Daisy hesitated a little longer, but the power of fascination upon her was irresistible.

"I was sorry not to teach the little girl," she said at length; "but I was particularly troubled because because "

"Mrs. Randolph was displeased with your system of benevolence?"

"No not that. Yes, I was troubled about that too. But what troubled me most was that mamma would not let me speak to her, to tell her why I must not teach her. I must not say anything to her again, at all."

Dr. Sandford's eyes, looking, saw that Daisy had indeed spoken out her trouble now. Such a cloud of sorrow came over her brow; such witnessing redness about her eyelids, though Daisy let the witness of tears get no further.

"What do you suppose was your mother's purpose in making that last regulation?" he went on, in a cool, business tone.

"I don't know I suppose to punish me," Daisy said, faintly.

"Punish you for what?"

"Mamma did not like me to teach that little girl and I had done it, I mean I had begun to do it, without asking her."

"Was it a great pleasure?" said the doctor.

"It would have been a great pleasure if I could have taught her to read," Daisy said, with her face brightening at the idea.

"I presume it would. Well, Daisy, now you and I will arrange this affair. I do not consider it wholesome for you to engage in this particular amusement at this particular time; so I shall endorse Mrs. Randolph's prohibition; but I will go round where does this girl live, and who is she?"

"Her name is Hephzibah Harbonner; she lives in the village, on the road where the Episcopal church is you know; a little way further on. I guess it's a quarter of a mile."

"South, eh? Well, I will go round by her house, and tell the girl that I cannot let you do any such kindnesses just now, and that, till I give her leave, she must not come to see you. How will that do, Daisy."

"Thank you, Dr. Sandford!"

He saw it was very earnestly spoken, and that Daisy's brow looked clearer.

"And instead of that amusement, you must study wonderful things to-morrow. Will you?"

"Oh, yes, Dr. Sandford! But we have not finished about the sun yet."

"No. Well to-morrow, then, Daisy."

"Thank you, sir. Dr. Sandford, mamma wanted me to ask you a question before you go."

"Ask it."

"How soon I can be moved home?"

"Are you in a great hurry?"

"No, sir, but I think mamma is."

"You call bear to wait a little longer, and study wonderful things from your window?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I think I can do it better here than at home, because my bed is so close to the window, I can look right out."

"I shall not let you be moved just yet, Daisy. Good-night. I will see what's her name?"

"Harbonner Hephzibah Harbonner."

"Good-night."

And Daisy watched the doctor as he went down the path, mounted his horse, and rode away, with great admiration; thinking how handsome and how clever and how chivalric he was. Daisy did not use that word in thinking of him; nevertheless, his skilful nursing, and his taking up her cause so effectually, had made a great impression upon her. She was greatly comforted. Juanita, watching her face, saw that it looked so; there was even a dawning smile upon Daisy's lips at one time. It faded however into a deep gravity; and one or two long drawn breaths told of heavy thoughts.

"What troubles has my love?" said the old woman.

Daisy turned her head quick round from the window, and smiled a very sweet smile in her face.

"I was thinking, Juanita."

"My little lady has a cloud come over her again."

"Yes, Juanita, I think I have. Oh, Juanita, I might tell you! What shall I do, when everybody wants me to do what what I don't think is right? What shall I do, Juanita? I don't know what I shall do."

"Suppose Miss Daisy take the Bible to her pa' Miss Daisy knows what her pa' promised."

"So he did, Juanita! thank you; I had forgotten that."

In five minutes more, Daisy was fast asleep. The black woman stood looking at her. There was no cloud on the little face now, but the signs of the day's work were there. Pale cheeks, and weary features, and the tokens of past tears. Juanita stood and looked, and twinkled away one or two from her own eye-lashes; and then knelt down at the head of the bed, and began a whispered prayer. A prayer for the little child before her, in which her heart poured itself out, that she might be kept from evil, and might walk in the straight path, and never be tempted or driven from it. Juanita's voice grew louder than a whisper in her earnestness; but Daisy slept on.

CHAPTER XX.

SUN AND MOON.

The next day was an exceedingly hot and sultry one. Daisy had no visitors until quite late in the afternoon; however it was a peaceful day. She lay quiet and happy, and Juanita was quite as well contented that the house should be empty, and they two alone. Late in the afternoon, Preston came.

"Well, my dear little Daisy! so you are coming home?"

"Arm I?" said Daisy.

"To be sure; and your foot is going to get well, and we are going to have all sorts of grand doings for you."

"My foot is getting well."

"Certainly. Don't be a Quaker, Daisy."

"What sort of doings are you going to have, Preston?"

"First thing as soon as you are well enough for it we are going to have a grand pic-nic party to Silver Lake."

"Silver Lake? what, on the other side of the river?"

"Yes."

"Oh, how delightful! But I shall not be able to go in a long time, Preston."

"Yes, you will. Aunt Felicia says you are coming back to Melbourne now; and once we get you there, we'll cure you up. Why, you must have moped half your wits away by this time. I don't expect to find more than two-thirds of the original Daisy left."

"I haven't moped at all."

"There! that is proof the first. When people are moping, and do not know they are moping, that is the sign their wits are departing. Poor Daisy! I don't wonder. We'll get you to rights at Melbourne."

"Doctor Sandford will not let me be moved."

"Doctor Sandford cannot help himself. When aunt Felicia says so, he will find ways and means."

"Preston," said Daisy, "I do not think you understand what sort of a man Dr. Sandford is."

"Pray enlighten me, Daisy. I thought I did."

But Daisy was silent.

"What sort of a man is he?"

"Preston," said Daisy, abruptly, "I wish you would bring me from Melbourne that tray filled with something, plaster, I don't know what it is, on which Captain Drummond and I studied geography, and history."

"Geography and history on a tray!" said Preston. "That would be one's hands full to carry!"

"Well, but it was," said Daisy. "The tray was smooth filled with something, something a little soft, on which you could mark; and Captain Drummond drew the map of England on it; and we were just getting into the battle what battle was it? when William came over from France, and King Harold met him?"

"Hastings?"

"We were just come to the battle of Hastings, before Captain Drummond went away; and I should like so much to go on with it!"

"But was the battle of Hastings on the tray?"

"No, Preston, but the place was; and Captain Drummond told me about the battles."

"Who is here to tell you about them now, Daisy?"

"Couldn't you? sometimes, now and then?"

"I might; but you see, Daisy, you are coming to Melbourne now, and there will be Silver Lake, and lots of other things to do. You won't want the tray here."

Daisy looked a little wistfully at her cousin. She said nothing. And Preston turned sharply, for he heard a soft rustle coming up the path, and was just in time to spring to the door and open it for his aunt.

"How insufferably hot!" was Mrs. Randolph's remark. "How do you do, Daisy?"

"I think she is bewitched to stay in banishment, aunt Felicia; she will have it she is not coming home."

Mrs. Randolph's answer was given to the doctor, who entered at the instant behind Preston.

"How soon can Daisy be moved, doctor?"

The doctor took a leisurely view of his little patient before he replied. "Not at present."

"How soon "

"If I think her fit for it, in a fortnight; possibly earlier."

"But that is, not till September!"

"I am afraid you are correct," said the doctor, coolly.

Mrs. Randolph stood pondering the question, how far it was needful to own his authority. "It is dreadfully hot here, in this little place! She would be much better if she were out of it."

"How have you found it at Melbourne to-day?"

"Insufferable!"

"How has it been with you, Daisy?"

"It has been a nice day, Dr. Sandford."

The contrast was so extreme between the mental atmosphere of one speaker and of the other, that Dr. Sandford smiled. It was ninety degrees of Fahrenheit and the fall of the dew.

"I have heard nobody say as much for the day before," he remarked.

"But she would be much better at Melbourne."

"As soon as I think that, she shall go."

The doctor was absolute in his sphere, and Mr. Randolph, moreover, she knew, would back him; so Mrs. Randolph held her peace, though displeased. Nay, she entered into a little conversation with the doctor on other subjects, as lively as the day would admit, before she departed. Preston stayed behind, partly to improve his knowledge of Dr. Sandford.

"All has gone well to-day, Daisy?" he asked her, pleasantly.

"Oh, yes. And Dr. Sandford, shall we finish the sun?"

"By all means. What more shall I tell you?"

"How much more do you know, sir?"

"I know that it is globe shaped I know how big it is I know how heavy it is; and I know that it turns round and round continually."

"Oh, sir, do you know all these things?"

"Yes."

"Please, Dr. Sandford, how can you?"

"You would mature into a philosopher, in time, Daisy."

"I hope not," muttered Preston.

"I know that it is globe-shaped, Daisy, because it turns round and lets me see all sides of it."

"Is one side different from another?"

"Only so far, as that there are spots here and there," Dr. Sandford went on, looking at the exceeding eagerness in Daisy's eyes. "The spots appear at one edge pass over to the other edge, and go out of sight. After a certain time I see them come back again where I saw them first."

"Oh, I should like to see the spots on the sun!" said Daisy.

"You said they were holes in the curtain, sir?"

"Yes."

"What curtain?" said Preston.

"You are not a philosopher," said the doctor.

"How long does it take them, the spots, Dr. Sandford, to go round and come back again?"

"A little more than twenty-five days."

"How very curious!" said Daisy. "I wonder what it turns round for the sun, I mean?"

"You have got too deep there," said the doctor. "I cannot tell you."

"But there must be some reason," said Daisy; "or it would stand still."

"It is in the nature of the thing, I suppose," said Dr. Sandford; "but we do not fully know its nature yet. Only what I am telling you."

"How came people to find these things out?"

"By watching and experimenting and calculating."

"Then, how big is the sun, Dr. Sandford?"

"How big does it look?"

"Not very large I don't know I can't think of anything it looks like."

"It looks just about as big as the moon does."

"Is it just the same size as the moon? But Dr. Sandford, it is a great deal further off, isn't it?"

"Four hundred times as far."

"Then, it must be four hundred times as large, I should think."

"It is just about that."

"But I do not know how large that would be. I cannot think."

"Nor can I, Daisy. But I can help you. Suppose we, and our earth, were in the centre of the sun; and our moon going round us at the same distance from us that she is now; there would be room enough for the whole concern, as far as distances are concerned."

"In the sun, Dr. Sandford?"

"In the sun."

"And the moon as far off as she is now?"

"Yes."

"But the *moon* would not be in the sun too?"

"Plenty of room, and to spare."

Daisy was silent now. Preston looked from her face to the doctor's.

"Not only that, Daisy; but the moon then would be two hundred thousand miles within the circumference of the sun; the sun's surface would be two hundred thousand miles beyond her."

"Thank you, Dr. Sandford!"

"What for, Daisy?"

"I am so glad to know all that."

"Why?"

Daisy did not answer. She did not feel ready to tell her whole thought, not to both her friends together, at least; and she did not know how to frame her reply. But then, perceiving that Dr. Sandford was looking for an answer, and that she was guilty of the rudeness of withholding it, she blushed and spoke.

"It makes me understand some things better."

"What, for instance?" said the doctor, looking as grave as ever, though Preston was inclined to laugh.

Daisy saw it; nevertheless she answered, "The first chapter of Genesis."

"Oh, you are there, are you?" said the doctor. "What light have I thrown upon the passage, Daisy? It has not appeared to myself."

Now Daisy hesitated. A sure though childish instinct told her that her thoughts and feelings on this subject would meet with no sympathy. She did not like to speak them.

"Daisy has peculiar views, Dr. Sandford," said Preston.

But the doctor paid him no attention. He looked at Daisy, lifted her up, and arranged her pillows; then as he laid her back said,

"Give me my explanation of that chapter, Daisy."

"It isn't an explanation, sir; I did not know there was anything to explain."

"The light I have thrown on it then out of the sun."

Preston was amused, Daisy saw; she could not tell whether the doctor was; his blue eyes gave no sign, except of a will to hear what she had to say. Daisy hesitated, and hesitated, and then, with something very like the old diplomacy she had partly learned and partly inherited from her mother, she said, "If you will read the chapter, I will tell you."

Now Daisy did not think Dr. Sandford would care to read the chapter, or perhaps have the time for it; but, with an unmoved face, he swung himself round on his chair, and called on Mrs. Benoit for a Bible. Preston was in a state of delight, and Mrs. Benoit of wonder. The Bible was brought, Dr. Sandford took it, and opened it.

"We have only time for a short lecture to-day," he remarked, "for I must be off. Now, Daisy, I will read, and you shall comment."

Daisy felt worried. She turned uneasily, and rested her face on her hand, and so lay, looking at the doctor; at his handsome calm features and glittering blue eyes. What could *she* say to him? The doctor's eye saw a grave sweet little face, a good deal flushed, very grave, with a whole burden of thought behind its unruffled simplicity. It may be said, that his curiosity was as great as Daisy's unwillingness. He began, facing her as he read. Juanita stood by, somewhat anxious.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

The doctor stopped, and looked down at that face of Daisy looking up at him. He waited.

"I did not use to think how much all that meant," said Daisy, humbly.

The doctor went on. He went on with the grand, majestic words of the story, which sounded very strange to Daisy from his lips, but very grand; till he came to the fourteenth verse. " 'And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so.' " The doctor looked at Daisy again.

"There," said she, "that is very different now from what it used to be I didn't know what sort of lights those were; it's a great deal more wonderful now. Won't you read on a little farther?"

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.' "

"That is what I mean," said Daisy, as the doctor paused. "I never knew before what those 'lights' meant I thought the sun was I don't know what; I didn't think much about it; but now I never shall forget again. I know now what sort of a light was made to rule the day; and I don't wonder "

"Do not wonder what, Daisy?"

"I do not wonder that God said that it was good. I am so much obliged to you for telling me about it."

"Never heard a more satisfactory application of knowledge in my life," the doctor remarked, with a smile, as he handed back the Bible to Mrs. Benoit.

And then he and Preston went off; but Daisy lay long very thoughtfully looking after them out of her window. Till the sound of the horses' feet was far out of hearing, Daisy lay there, looking into the evening. She did not stir till Mrs. Benoit brought her supper.

"Isn't it wonderful, Juanita," she said, with a long-drawn breath, "how the sun divides the light from the darkness!"

"Most things is wonderful, that the Lord makes," answered the black woman.

"Are they?" said Daisy.

"But what makes my love sigh?" said Juanita, anxiously; for Daisy's face had not brightened up, though she was taking her tea.

Daisy looked at her. "Oh, Juanita!" she said, "I am afraid that Dr. Sandford is in the darkness!"

"Where the sun don't shine it be darkness, sure!" said Juanita. "And he do not see the Light of the world, Miss Daisy."

Daisy's eyes filled, filled. She liked Dr. Sandford very much. And then, who else that she loved had never seen that Light! Daisy pushed aside her tears, and tried to drink her tea; but at last she gave it up. Her spoon fell into her saucer, and she lay down, and hid her face in the pillow. The black woman stood, with a strange grave look, and with watering eyes, silent for a little time; holding Daisy's tray in her hands, and waiting.

"Miss Daisy "

"What, Juanita?"

"My love take her tea, to be strong; and then see how many she can bring out of the darkness."

"I, Juanita?" said Daisy? rousing up.

"Maybe the Lord send His message by little hands. What hinder?"

"But, Juanita, I can't do anything?"

"Carry the Lord's message, Miss Daisy."

"Can I?"

"Why not, my love? The dear Lord, He do all. And Miss Daisy knows, He hear the prayer of His servants."

The child looked at the black woman, with a wistful, earnest, searching look that it was curious to see. She said nothing more; she eyed Juanita as if she were searching into the depth of something; then she went on with her supper. She was thoughtful all the evening; busy with cogitations which she did not reveal; quiet and absent-minded. Juanita

guessed why; and many a prayer went up from her own secret heart.

But from about this time Daisy began to grow well again. She could not be moved, of course; Dr. Sandford would not permit that; neither to be carried home, nor to change her place and position in the cottage. But she was getting ready for it. The latter half of August cooled off from its fierce heats, and was pleasantly warm. Daisy took the benefit of the change. She had rather a good time, those last weeks at Juanita's house; and perhaps that was one reason why Dr. Sandford, seeing it, chose to let well alone, and would not have anybody take Daisy home. Daisy had a very good time. She had the peace of Juanita's house; and at home she knew there would be things to trouble her. She had books, and could read now as much as she liked; and she was very fond of reading. Preston did not find it expedient to bring the geography tray; on the other hand, Mr. Randolph thought it good to come every day and spend a piece of time with his little daughter; and became better acquainted with her than ever he had been in his life before. He discovered that Daisy was very fond of knowledge; that he could please her no way better than by taking up the history of England and reading to her, and stopping to explain everything by the way which Daisy did not understand.

English history was certainly an old story to Mr. Randolph; but to discuss it with Daisy was a very new thing. He found her eager, patient, intelligent, and wise with an odd sort of child-wisdom which yet was not despicable for older years. Daisy's views of the feudal system, and of the wittenagemot, and of trial by jury, and of representative legislation, were intensely amusing to Mr. Randolph; he said it was going back to a primitive condition of society, to talk them over with her; though there, I think, he was mistaken. If Daisy had read those pages of history to herself, she would have passed over some of these matters at least with little heed; she would not have gone to anybody with questions. But Mr. Randolph reading to her, it was an easy thing to ask the meaning of a word as they passed; and that word would draw on a whole little bit of talk. In this intercourse Mr. Randolph was exceedingly gentle, deliberate, and kind. Daisy had nothing to fear, not even that she might weary him; so those were hours of real enjoyment to both parties.

Preston not very seldom came and made himself agreeable; playing an occasional game of chess, and more often regaling Daisy with a history of his expeditions. Other visitors Daisy had from Melbourne, now and then; but her best friend for real service, after her father and Juanita, was Dr. Sandford. He took great care of his little patient's comfort and happiness; which was a pretty thing in him, seeing that he was a young man, busy with a very good country practice, and, furthermore, busy with the demands made upon him as an admired pet of society. For that was Dr. Sandford, and he knew it perfectly well. Nevertheless his kind care of Daisy never abated.

It was of course partly his professional zeal and care that were called for; but it could not have been those that made him keep up his lectures to Daisy on the wonderful things she found for him, day by day. In professional care those lectures certainly began; but Daisy was getting well now; had nothing more to trouble her, and showed an invariably happy as well as wise little face. Yet Dr. Sandford used to sit down and tell her of the things she asked about, with a sort of amused patience if it was no more; at any rate he was never impatient. He talked to Daisy of the stars, which, with the moon, were very naturally the next subjects of investigation after the sun.

At last Daisy got him upon the subject of trilobites. It was not difficult. Dr. Sandford was far more easy to move than Preston in this matter at least. He only smiled, and slid into the story very simply; the story that Daisy was so eager to hear. And it did not seem less worth hearing than she had expected, nor less wonderful, nor less interesting. Daisy thought about it a great deal, while Juanita listened and doubted; but Daisy did not doubt. She believed the doctor told her true. That the family to which her little fossil trilobite belonged the particular family for they were generally related, he said, to the lobster and crab, were found in the very oldest and deepest down rocks in which any sort of remains of living things have been found; therefore, it is likely they were among the earliest of earth's inhabitants. There were a great many of them, the doctor said, and many different species; for great numbers of them are found to this day in those particular rocks. The rocks must have been made at the time when the trilobites lived, and have somehow shut them in. And the doctor thought it likely that at the time when they lived, there was no dry land in existence, but all covered by the sea. He would not take it upon him to be positive; but this he could tell Daisy; there was never a stick or a leaf to be found in those old rocks that ever lived and grew on dry ground, though there were plenty that grew in the sea, until in the very topmost or latest of those rocks some few bits of fern-growth began to appear.

"But what plants live under water?" said Daisy.

"Sea weeds."

"Oh! So many of them?"

"So many, that the rocks are sometimes darkened by their fossil remains, and in some places those remains form beds of

coal several feet thick."

"And are there a great many remains of the trilobites?"

"There are whole rocks, Daisy, that are formed almost entirely of trilobites."

"Sea-weeds and trilobites what a strange time!" said Daisy.

"Was that all that was living?"

"No; there were other sea creatures of the lower kind, and at last fishes. But when the fishes became very numerous, the trilobites died out and passed away."

That old time had a wonderful charm for Daisy; it was, as she thought, better than a fairy tale. The doctor at last let her into the secret that he had a trilobite too; and the next time he came he brought it with him. He was good enough to leave it with Daisy a whole day; and Daisy's meditations over it and her own together were numberless and profound.

The next transition was somewhat sudden; to a wasp or two that had come foraging on Daisy's window-sill. But Dr. Sandford was at home there; and so explained the wasp's work and manner of life, with his structure and fitness for what he had to do, that Daisy was in utter delight; though her eyes sometimes opened upon Dr. Sandford with a grave wistful wonder in them, that he should know all this so well, and yet never acknowledge the hand that had given the wasp the tools and instinct for his work, one so exactly a match for the other. But Dr. Sandford never did. He used to notice those grave looks of Daisy, and hold private speculation with himself what they might mean; private amused speculation; but I think he must have liked his little patient as well as been amused at her, or he would hardly have kept up as he did this personal ministering to her pleasure, which was one of the great entertainments of Daisy's life at this period. In truth only to see Dr. Sandford was an entertainment to Daisy. She watched even the wave of his long locks of hair. He was a fascination to her.

"Are you in a hurry to get home?" he would ask her every now and then. Daisy always said, "No sir; not till you think it is time;" and Dr. Sandford never thought it was time. No matter what other people said, and they said a good deal; he ordered it his own way; and Daisy was almost ready to walk when he gave permission for her to be taken home in the carriage. However, the permission was given at last.

"To-morrow night I shall not be here, Juanita," Daisy remarked as she was taking her supper.

"No, Miss Daisy."

"You will be very quiet when I am gone."

It had not been a bustling house, all those weeks! But the black woman only answered. "My love will come to see Juanita sometimes?"

"Oh, yes. I shall come very often, Juanita if I can. You know when I am out with my pony, I can come very often, I hope."

Juanita quite well understood what was meant by the little pauses and qualifying clauses of this statement. She passed them over.

But Daisy shed a good many tears during Juanita's prayer that night. I do not know if the black woman shed any; but I know that some time afterwards, and until late in the night, she knelt again by Daisy's bedside, while a whisper of prayer, too soft to arouse the child's slumbers, just chimed with the flutter and rustle of the leaves outside of the window moving in the night breeze.

CHAPTER XXI.

TEA AT HOME.

The next day turned out so warm, that the carriage was not brought for Daisy till late in the afternoon. Then it came, with her father and Dr. Sandford; and Daisy was lifted in Mr. Randolph's arms, and carefully placed on the front seat of the carriage, which she had all to herself. Her father and the doctor got in and sat opposite to her; and the carriage drove away.

The parting with Juanita had been very tenderly affectionate, and had gone very near to Daisy's heart. Not choosing to show this more than she could help, as usual, Daisy at first lay still on the cushions with an exceedingly old-fashioned face; it was as demure and sedate as if the gravity of forty years had been over it. But presently the carriage turned the corner into the road to Melbourne; Daisy caught sight for a second of the houses and church spires of Crum Elbow, that she had not seen for so long. A pink flush rose over her face.

"What is it, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph, who had been watching her.

"Papa it's so nice to see things again!"

"You had a pretty dull time of it at Mrs. Benoit's?" remarked the doctor.

"No Oh, no, I didn't. I did not have it dull at all."

"How did you escape that, Daisy?"

"I do not know, Dr. Sandford. There was no room for dulness."

The gentlemen smiled, but Daisy's father with a not altogether satisfied expression. He grew satisfied, as he marked the changes in Daisy's face. The ride was delightful to her. The carriage was easy; she was nicely placed; and through the open glass before her she could look out quite uninterruptedly. It was so pleasant, she thought, even to see the road and the fences again. That little bit of view before Mrs. Benoit's window she had studied over and over, till she knew it by heart. Now every step brought something new; and the roll of the carriage-wheels was itself enlivening. There was a reaped grain-field; there a meadow, with cattle pasturing. Now they passed a farm wagon going home, laden with sheaves; next came a cottage, well known, but not seen for a long time, with its wonted half-door open and the cottager's children playing about. Then came patches of woodland, with the sun shining through; and a field of flourishing Indian corn with the sunlight all over it; then more meadows with cattle.

"Do you ride comfortably, Daisy?" her father asked, bending over to her.

"Yes, papa. It is so nice!"

Mr. Randolph gave up care about Daisy, and the two gentlemen fell into a conversation which did not regard her, and lasted till the carriage stopped at the door of Melbourne House. And there was her mother, and there were Preston and his mother and sister, and Gary McFarlane, who had been away, and come back again, all waiting to welcome her; besides some other guests who were now at Melbourne.

Mr. Randolph got out of the carriage first. Dr. Sandford followed him; but then, without giving place to anybody else, he himself took Daisy carefully off the seat where she lay, lifted her out in his arms, and carried her into the house. All the others trooped around and after him, through the hall and into the drawing-room, where the doctor laid his little charge on the sofa and put the pillows behind her so that she could sit up comfortably. Then he stood back and let the others come to her. Mrs. Randolph gave her some very contented kisses; so did Mr. Randolph. Very glad and tender his were, at having his little daughter back there again.

"We are very much pleased to see you here, Daisy," her aunt said.

"Poor Daisy," said Eloise.

"Glad to come back to life and the world again, Daisy." said Preston, standing at the back of her sofa and drumming on it.

"I understand, Daisy," said McFarlane, "that you have been an enchanted beauty, or a sleeping princess, during these weeks of my absence under the guardianship of an old black witch, who drew incantations and water together from her well every morning."

"I can answer for the incantations," said Preston. "I have heard 'em."

Daisy's face flushed all over. "Preston, you do very wrong," she said, turning her head round to him. But Preston only burst into a fit of laughter, which he turned away to hide.

Others of the company now came up to take Daisy's hand, and kiss her, and say how glad they were to see her; these people were very much strangers to Daisy, and their greeting was no particular pleasure; but it had to be attended to.

Then tea came in, and Daisy was well petted. It was very pleasant to have it so; after the silence and quiet of Juanita's little cottage, the lights and dresses and people and silver urn and tea service and flowers made quite a picture. Flowers had been in the cottage too, but not such wealth of them. Just opposite to Daisy, in the middle of the floor, stood a great stone basket, or wide vase, on a pedestal; and this vase was a mass of beautiful flowers. Trailing wreaths of roses and fuchsias and geraniums even floated down from the edges of the vase and sought the floor; the pedestal was half draped with them. It was a very lovely sight to Daisy's eyes. And then her mother ordered a little stand brought to the sofa's side; and her father placed it; and Gary brought her cup of tea, and Dr. Sandford spread her slice of toast. Daisy felt as if she loved everybody, and was very happy. The summer air floated in at the long windows, just as it used to do. It was *home*. Daisy began to realise the fact.

Meanwhile attention ceased to be filled with her particular affairs, and conversation flowed off as usual, away from her. Preston still held his station at the back of the sofa, where he dipped sponge-cake in tea with a wonderful persistency; in fact, the question seemed to be whether he or the cake basket would give out first; but for a while Daisy eat her toast in happy quiet; watching everybody and enjoying everything. Till Gary McFarlane drew near, and took a seat, as if for a regular siege.

"So what about those incantations, Daisy?" he said.

"I do not know what you mean, Mr. McFarlane."

"No? don't you? That's odd. You have been so long in the witch's precincts. You have heard them, of course?"

"I do not know what you mean, Mr. McFarlane."

"Why, you must have been bewitched. I wonder, now, if the witch's house did not seem to you a palace?"

"It seemed a very nice place."

"And the witch herself a sable princess?"

"I think she is a great deal better than a princess."

"Exactly so," said Gary, with a perfectly sober face. "The witch drew water, didn't she?"

"I don't know what you mean. Mrs. Benoit used to bring pails of water from her well."

"Very good. And you never heard her incantations, muttering in the morning before the dew was off the grass, or at night just as the first beams of the moon lighted on the topmost boughs of the trees?"

Daisy was confounded. "Mr. McFarlane," she said, after a moment's looking at him "I hope I do not know what you mean."

At that, Gary McFarlane went off into an ecstasy of laughter, delighted and amused beyond count. Preston interrupted the sponge-cake exercise, and Daisy felt her sofa shaking with his burden of amusement. What had she done? Glancing her eye towards Dr. Sandford, who sat near, she saw that a very decided smile was curling the corners of *his* mouth. A flush came up all over Daisy's face; she took some tea, but it did not taste good any longer.

"What did you think I meant? come, Daisy, tell me," said Gary, returning to Daisy as soon as he could get over his paroxysm of laughter. "What did you think I meant? I shouldn't wonder if you had some private witchcraft of your own. Come! what did you *think* I meant?"

While he had been laughing, Daisy had been trying to get command of herself, and to get her throat clear for talking; there had been a very uncomfortable thick feeling in it at first. Now she answered with simple dignity and soberness, "I did not know, Mr. McFarlane, but you meant Juanita's prayers."

"Does she pray?" said Gary, innocently.

"Yes."

"Long prayers, Daisy?"

"Yes," unwillingly now.

"Then, that must have been what you heard!" Gary said, looking up to Preston. No answer came from him. Gary was as sober now as seven judges.

"Did she speak her prayers where you could hear her, Daisy?"

"I used to hear her "

"Mornings and evenings?"

"Yes."

"But you heard her in broad day, Preston?"

"Yes; one afternoon it was. I heard her as soon as I got near the house. Daisy was asleep, and I went away as wise as I came."

"This grows interesting," said Gary, returning to Daisy.

"Could you hear the words that were said?"

"No."

"Only a muttering?"

Daisy was silent. The tears came into her eyes.

"Depend upon it, Daisy, it was incantations you heard. Description agrees exactly. Confess now, didn't a sort of feeling grow over you creep over you whenever you heard that muttering sound, as if you would do anything that black woman told you?"

Daisy was silent.

"Don't you know it is not proper to pray so that people can hear you? 'tisn't the way to do. Witches pray that way not good Christian people. I regard it as a very fortunate thing, Daisy, that we have got you safe out of her hands. Don't you think that prayer ought to be private?"

"Yes," said Daisy. She was overwhelmed with the rapidity and liveliness of Gary's utterances, which he rattled forth as lightly as if they had been the multiplication table.

"Yes, just so. It is not even a matter to be talked about too sacred so I am offending even against my own laws; but I wanted to know how far the old witch had got hold of you. Didn't you feel when you heard her mutterings, as if some sort of a spell was creeping over you?"

Daisy wished some sort of a spell could come over *him*; but she did not know what to say.

"Didn't you gradually grow into the belief that she was a sort of saint, Daisy?"

"What is a saint, Mr. McFarlane?"

Gary at that wheeled partly round, and stroked his chin and moustache with the most comical expression of doubt and confusion.

"I declare I don't know, Daisy! I think it means a person who is too good for this world, and therefore isn't allowed to live here. They all go off in flames of some sort may look like glory, but is very uncomfortable and there is a peculiar odour about them. Doctor, what is that odour called?"

Gary spoke with absurd soberness, but the doctor gave him no attention.

"The odour of sanctity! that is it!" said Gary. "I had forgot. I don't know what it is like, myself; but it must be very disagreeable to have such a peculiarity attached to one."

"How can anybody be too good for this world?" Daisy ventured.

"Too good to live in it! You can't live among people unless you live like them so the saints all leave the rest of the world

in some way or other; the children die, and the grown ones go missionaries or become nuns they are a sort of human meteor shine and disappear, but don't really accomplish much, because no one wants to be meteors. So your old woman can't be a saint, Daisy, or she would have quitted the world long ago."

Something called off Gary. Daisy was left feeling very thoroughly disturbed. That people could talk so and think so about what was so precious to her; talk about being saints, as if it were an undesirable thing; and as if such were unlovely. Her thought went back to Juanita, who seemed now half a world's distance away instead of a few miles; her love and gentleness and truth and wisdom, her prayers and way of living, did seem to Daisy somewhat unearthly in their beauty, compared with that which surrounded her now; but so unearthly, that it could not be understood, and must not be talked about. Juanita could not be understood here; could Daisy? She felt hurt, and troubled, and sorry; she did not like to hear such talk, but Gary was about as easy to stop as a cataract.

Dr. Sandford, lifting his eyes from what had occupied them, though his ears had not been stopped, saw that the face of his little charge was flushed with pain, and her eyes glistening. He came and took Gary's place, and silently felt of her hand and looked at her; but he did not ask Daisy what was the matter, because he pretty well knew. His own face, as usual, showed nothing; however, Daisy's came back to its accustomed expression.

"Dr. Sandford," said she softly, "what is a meteor?"

"Meteors are fiery stones which fall on the earth occasionally."

"Where do they come from?"

"Doctors are divided."

"But where do *you* think they come from?"

If Dr. Sandford's vanity could be touched by a child, it received a touch then. It was so plain, that what satisfied him would satisfy her. He would not give the sceptical answer which rose to his lips. Looking at the pure, wise little face which watched his, he made answer simply, not without a smile: "I am inclined to think they are wandering bodies, that we fall in with now and then, in our journey round the sun."

"Dr. Sandford, what do they look like?"

"You have seen shooting-stars?"

"Yes are those meteors?"

"Those are meteors that do not come to the earth. Sometimes they are nearer, and look like great fire-balls."

"Have you seen them."

"Yes, a great many."

"And have you seen them after they fell on the ground?"

"Yes."

"What are they like then?"

"A very black stone, on the outside, and made up of various metals and earths within."

"But then, what makes them look like fire-balls, before they fall?"

"Can't tell, Daisy. As I said, the doctors are divided; and I really have no opinion that you would understand if I gave it."

Daisy would have liked to hear all the opinions, but she did not ask for them. Preston was still standing at the back of the sofa, and started a new subject.

"Dr. Sandford, how soon will Daisy's foot let her go to Silver Lake?"

"In what way do you propose to get there?"

"By boat, sir, across the river; and the rest of the way is walking."

"On plain ground?"

"Not exactly!" said Preston.

"How far do you call it?"

"Three miles."

"Of walking! I think Daisy may walk across this floor by next week; and in a little while after she may go up and down stairs."

"Oh, doctor!" exclaimed Preston. "Why, at that rate, she cannot go to Silver Lake at all!"

"Does she want to go very much?" said the doctor. The question was really put at Daisy's face, and answered by a little flush that was not a flush of pain this time. He saw what a depth of meaning there was in it; what a charm the sound of Silver Lake had for Daisy. No wonder, to a little girl who had lain for so many weeks looking out of one window, where there was not much to be seen, either.

"Who is going, Daisy?" said the doctor.

"Mamma means to make up a large party I do not know exactly who."

"Then I think I can promise that you shall go too. You may count upon me for that."

Daisy's eyes shone and sparkled, but she said not a word.

Preston was less sagacious.

"Will you do something to make her foot strong, sir?" he asked.

"When you have studied in my profession, you will know more about a physician's powers," was all the answer he got.

The doctor turned off to conversation with other people, and Daisy was left to herself again. She was very happy; it was very pleasant to lie there comfortably on the sofa, and feel that her long imprisonment was over; it was amusing to look at so many people together, after having for days and days looked at only one; and the old wonted scene, the place and the lights, and the flowers and the dresses, yes, and the voices, gave her the new sense of being at home. Nevertheless, Daisy mused a little over some things that were not altogether pleasant. The faces that she scanned had none of them the placid nobleness of the face of her black nurse; no voice within her hearing had such sweet modulation; and Daisy felt a consciousness that Juanita's little cottage lay within the bounds of a kingdom which Mrs. Randolph's drawing-room had no knowledge of. Gradually Daisy's head became full of that thought; along with the accompanying consciousness, that a subject of that kingdom would be alone here and find nobody to help her.

"Daisy, what's the matter?" whispered Preston. "You are as sober as a judge."

"Am I?" said Daisy.

"What's to pay?"

"Nothing. I feel very nicely."

"Why don't you look like other people, then?"

"I suppose," said Daisy, slowly, "I do not feel like other people."

"I wish you'd make haste about it, then," said Preston. "Do be my own dear little old Daisy! Don't be grave and wise."

"Are you going to spend the night here, Daisy?" said Dr. Sandford, coming up to the sofa.

"No, sir," said Daisy, smiling.

"Where then?"

"I suppose, in my room, sir up-stairs."

"I must see you there before I go; and it is time now. Shall I carry you up?"

"If you please, sir."

"Pray do not, Dr. Sandford!" said Mrs. Randolph. "Mr. Randolph will do it, or one of the servants. There is no occasion for you to trouble yourself."

"Thank you, ma'am, but I like to see after my patients myself. Unless Daisy prefers other hands."

Mrs. Randolph protested. The doctor stood quiet, and looked at Daisy, waiting for her to say what she would like. Now Daisy knew, that of all hands which had touched her, the doctor's and Juanita's were far the best; and of those two, the doctor's; perhaps because he was the strongest. Her father was very kind and tender, but he did not understand the business.

"I should like Dr. Sandford to take me," she said, when she found she must speak.

"Then I will trouble you, Mrs. Randolph, for somebody to show me the way." And the doctor stooped, and put his strong arms under Daisy, and lifted her up.

"Quite a conquest, I declare, you have made, Dr. Sandford!" said Mrs. Randolph, laughing. "Preston, show the way, and I'll send June."

So the doctor marched off with Daisy, Preston going before to show the way. He carried her, without the least jar or awkwardness, through the company, out into the hall, and up the stairs. There June met him, and took Preston's office from him. Into Daisy's own room at last they came, and Dr. Sandford laid his little charge at once on her bed.

"You must not try to move, Daisy, until I see you again. Stay here till then."

"Yes, sir."

"Good-night."

"Good-night. Thank you, sir, for bringing me up."

Dr. Sandford smiled. "Thank you," said he, and with a wave of his hand, away he went.

"Oh, June!" said Daisy, "how glad I am to see you."

June had seen Daisy only once during her abode at Mrs. Benoit's cottage; and now Daisy squeezed her hands, and welcomed the sight of her with great affection; and June on her part, though not given to demonstrations, smiled till her wrinkles took all sorts of queer shapes, and even showed her deep black eyes twinkling with something like moisture. They certainly were; and putting the smiles and the tears together, Daisy felt sure that June was as glad to see her as she was to see June. In truth, Daisy was a sort of household deity to June, and she welcomed her back accordingly, in her secret heart; but her words on that subject, as on all others, were few. The business of undressing, however, went on with great tenderness. When it was finished, Daisy missed Juanita. For then Juanita had been accustomed to bring her Bible, and read and pray; and that had been a time Daisy always enjoyed wonderfully. Now, in bed, at night, she could not see to read for herself. She dismissed June, and was left alone in her old room, with, as she justly thought, a great deal to pray for. And praying, little Daisy went to sleep.

CHAPTER XXII.

BEING ROBBED.

The next day Daisy felt very much at home. Her orders were not to stir till the doctor came. So after breakfast, and after receiving visits from everybody in the house, she was left to her own devices, for it happened that everybody had something on hand that morning, and nobody staid with her.

Left with June, Daisy lay for awhile feasting her eyes on all the pleasant wanted objects around her. She was a particular little body, and very fond of her room and its furniture and arrangements. Then came a hankering for the sight of some of her concealed treasures from which she had been separated so long.

"June, I wish you would open the drawer of my bureau, the second drawer from the top, and put your hand back at the left side, and give me a book that lies there."

June got the key and rummaged. "Don't feel nothing, Miss Daisy."

"Quite back, June, under everything."

"Why, Miss Daisy, it's tucked away as though you didn't mean nobody should never find it!"

Precisely what Daisy did mean. But there it was, safe enough Mr. Dinwiddie's Bible. Daisy's hands and eyes welcomed it. She asked for nothing more in a good while after that; and June curiously watched her, with immense reverence. The thin pale little face, a little turned from the light, so that she could see better; the intent eyes; the wise little mouth, where childish innocence and oldish prudence made a queer meeting; the slim little fingers that held the book; above all, the sweet calm of the face. June would not gaze, but she looked and looked, as she could, by glances; and nearly worshipped her little mistress in her heart. She thought it almost ominous and awful to see a child read the Bible so. For Daisy looked at it with loving eyes, as at words that were a pleasure to her. It was no duty-work, that reading. At last Daisy shut the book, to June's relief.

"June, I want to see my old things. I would like to have them here on the bed."

"What things, Miss Daisy?"

"I would like my bird of paradise first. You can put a big book here for it to stand on, where it will be steady."

The bird of paradise June brought, and placed as ordered. It was a bird of spun glass only, but a great beauty in Daisy's eyes. Its tail was of such fine threads of glass that it waved with the least breath.

"How pretty it is! You may take it away, June, for I am afraid it will get broken; and now bring me my Chinese puzzle, and set my cathedral here. You can bring it here without hurting it, can't you?"

"Where is your puzzle, Miss Daisy?"

"It is in the upper drawer of my cabinet," so Daisy called a small chest of drawers which held her varieties "and the cathedral stands on the top, under the glass shade. Be very careful, June."

June accomplished both parts of her business. The "cathedral" was a beautiful model of a famous one, made in ivory. It was rather more than a foot long, and high, of course, in proportion. Every window and doorway and pillar and arcade was there, in its exact place and size, according to the scale of the model; and a beautiful thing it was to look upon for any eyes that loved beauty. Daisy's eyes loved it well, and now for a long time she lay back on her pillow watching and studying the lights among those arcades, which the rich colour of the ivory, grown yellow with time, made so very pleasant to see. Daisy studied and thought. The Chinese puzzle got no attention. At last she cried, "June, I should like to have my Egyptian spoon."

"What is that, miss Daisy?"

"My Egyptian spoon; it is a long, carved, wooden thing, with something like a spoon at one end; it is quite brown. Look for it in the next drawer, June, you will find it there. It don't look like a spoon."

"There is nothing like it in this drawer, Miss Daisy."

"Yes, it is. It is wrapped up in paper."

"Nothing here wrapped in paper," said June, rummaging.

"Aren't my chessmen there? and my Indian canoe? and my moccasins? "

"Yes, Miss Daisy, all them's here."

"Well, the spoon is there too, then; it was with the canoe and the moccasins."

"It ain't here, Miss Daisy."

"Then look in all the other drawers, June."

June did so; no spoon.

Daisy half raised herself up for a frightened look towards her "cabinet." "Has anybody done anything to my drawers while I have been away?"

"No, Miss Daisy, not as I know of."

"June, please, look in them all every one."

"Taint here, Miss Daisy."

Daisy lay down again and lay thinking. "June, is mamma in her room?"

"Yes, Miss Daisy."

"Ask her tell her I want to speak to her very much."

Mrs. Randolph came.

"Mamma," said Daisy, "do you know anything about my Egyptian spoon?"

"Do you want it, Daisy?"

"Oh, yes, mamma! I do. June cannot find it. Do you know where it is?"

"Yes it is not a thing for a child like you, Daisy, and I let your aunt Gary have it. She wanted it for her collection. I will get you anything else you like in place of it."

"But, mamma, I told aunt Gary she could not have it. She asked me, and I told her she could not have it."

"I have told her she might, Daisy. Something else will give you more pleasure. You are not an ungenerous child."

"But, mamma! it was *mine*. It belonged to me."

"Hush, Daisy; that is not a proper way to speak to me. I allow you to do what you like with your things in general; this was much fitter for your aunt Gary than for you. It was something beyond your appreciation. Do not oblige me to remind you that your things are mine."

Mrs. Randolph spoke as if half displeased already, and left the room. Daisy lay with a great flush upon her face, and in a state of perturbation.

Her spoon was gone; that was beyond question, and Daisy's little spirit was in tumultuous disturbance very uncommon indeed with her. Grief, and the sense of wrong, and the feeling of anger strove together. Did she not appreciate her old spoon? when every leaf of the lotus carving and every marking of the duck's bill had been noted and studied over and over, with a wondering regard to the dark hands that so many, many years and ages ago had fashioned it. Would Mrs. Gary love it as well? Daisy did not believe any such thing. And then it was the gift of Nora and Mr. Dinwiddie, and precious by association; and it was *gone*.

Daisy lay still on her pillow, with a slow tear now and then gathering in her eyes, but also with an ominous line on her brow. There was a great sense of injustice at work the feeling that she had been robbed; and that she was powerless to right herself. Her mother had done it; in her secret thought Daisy knew that, and that she would not have done it to Ransom. Yet in the deep-fixed habit of obedience and awe of her mother, Daisy sheered off from directly blaming her as much as possible, and let the burden of her displeasure fall on Mrs. Gary.

She was bitterly hurt at her mother's action, however; doubly hurt, at the loss and at the manner of it; and the slow tears kept coming and rolling down to wet her pillow. For a while Daisy pondered the means of getting her treasure back; by a word to her father, or a representation to Preston, or by boldly demanding the spoon of Mrs. Gary herself.

Daisy felt as if she must have it back somehow. But any of these ways, even if successful, would make trouble; a great deal of trouble; and it would be, Daisy had an inward consciousness all the time, unworthy of a Christian child. But she felt angry with Mrs. Gary, and as if she could never forgive her. Daisy, though not passionate, was persistent in her character; her gentleness covered a not exactly yielding disposition.

In the midst of all this, Dr. Sandford came in, fresh from his morning's drive, and sat down by the bedside.

"Do you want to go downstairs, Daisy?"

"No, sir; I think not."

"Not? What's the matter? Are you of a misanthropical turn of mind?"

"I do not know, Dr. Sandford; I do not know what that is."

"Well, now you have got back to human society and fellowship, don't you want to enjoy it?"

"I should not enjoy it to-day."

"If I do not see you downstairs, you will have to stay up till another day."

"Yes, sir."

"What is the matter, Daisy?" And now the doctor bent over and looked hard in her face. The wet spot in her pillow no doubt he had seen long ago. Daisy's eyes drooped.

"Look up here, and give me an answer."

"I can't very well tell you, sir."

"Why do you not want to go downstairs?"

"Because, Dr. Sandford, I am not good."

"Not good!" said he. "I thought you always were good."

Daisy's eye reddened, and her lip twitched. He saw that there was some uncommon disturbance on hand; and there was the wet spot on the pillow.

"Something has troubled you," he said; and with that he laid his hand it was a fresh, cool hand, pleasant to feel upon Daisy's forehead, and kept it there; sometimes looking at her, and as often looking somewhere else. It was very agreeable to Daisy; she did not stir her head from under the hand; and gradually she quieted down, and her nerves, which were all ruffled, like a bird's feathers, grew smooth. There were no lines in her forehead when Dr. Sandford took away his hand again.

"Now tell me," said he, smiling, "what was the matter? Shall I take you down to the library now?"

"Oh, no, sir, if you please. Please do not, Dr. Sandford! I am not ready. I am not fit."

"Not fit?" said the doctor, eyeing her, and very much at a loss what to make of this. "Do you mean that you want to be more finely attired before you make your appearance in company?"

"No, sir," said Daisy. It struck her with a great sorrow, his saying this. She knew her outward attire was faultless; bright and nice as new silver was every bit of Daisy's dress, from her smooth hair to her neat little slippers; it was all white and clean. But the inward adorning which God looked at in what a state was that? Daisy felt a double pang; that Dr. Sandford should so far mistake her as to think her full of silly vanity, and, on the other hand, that he should so much too well judge of her as to think her always good. The witnessing tinge came about Daisy's eyelids again.

"Dr. Sandford, if people tell you their private affairs, of course it is confidential?"

"Of course," said the doctor, without moving a muscle.

"Then I will tell you what I meant. I am not good. I am dressed well enough; but I have anger in my heart."

Dr. Sandford did not say how much he was surprised; for Daisy looked as meek as a lamb. But he was a philosopher, and interested.

"Then I am sure you have had reason, Daisy."

"I think I had," said Daisy, but without looking less sorrowful.

"Do you not consider that one has a right to be angry when one has a reason?"

"But one shouldn't stay angry," said the child, folding her hands over her heart.

"How are you going to help it, Daisy?"

"There is a way, Dr. Sandford."

"Is there? But you see I am in the dark now. I am as much abroad about that, as you were about a journey of three hundred years to the sun. When I am angry I never find that I can help it. I can maybe help using my horsewhip; but I cannot manage the anger."

"No " said Daisy, looking up at him, and thinking how terrible it must be to have to encounter anger from his blue eye.

"What then, Daisy? how do you make out your position."

Daisy did not very well like to say. She had a certain consciousness or fear that it would not be understood, and she would be laughed at not openly, for Dr. Sandford was never impolite; but yet she shrunk from the cold glance of unbelief, or of derision, however well and kindly masked. She was silent.

"Haven't we got into a confidential position yet?" said the doctor.

"Yes, sir, but "

"Speak on."

"Jesus will help us, Dr. Sandford, if we ask Him." And tears, that were tears of deep penitence now, rushed to Daisy's eyes.

"I do not believe, Daisy, to begin with, that you know what anger means."

"I have been angry this morning," said Daisy, sadly. "I am angry now, I think."

"How do you feel when you are angry?"

"I feel wrong. I do not want to see the person I feel she would be disagreeable to me, and if I spoke to her I should want to say something disagreeable."

"Very natural," said the doctor.

"But it is wrong."

"If you can help it, Daisy. I always feel disagreeable when I am angry. I feel a little disagreeable now that you are angry."

Daisy could not help smiling at that.

"Now, suppose we go downstairs."

"Oh, no, sir. Oh, no, Dr. Sandford, please! I am not ready I would rather not go downstairs to-day. Please don't take me!"

"To-morrow you must, Daisy. I shall not give you any longer than till then."

Away went Dr. Sandford to the library; kept Daisy's counsel, and told Mrs. Randolph she was to remain in her room to-day.

"She thinks too much," he said. "There is too much self-introversion."

"I know it! but what can we do?" said Mr. Randolph. "She has been kept from books as much as possible."

"Amusement, and the society of children."

"Ay, but she likes older society better."

"Good-morning," said the doctor.

"Stay! Dr. Sandford, I have great confidence in you. I wish you would take in hand not Daisy's foot merely, but the general management of her, and give us your advice. She has not gained, on the whole, this summer, and is very delicate."

"Rather " said the doctor. And away he went.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MAP OF ENGLAND.

Meanwhile Daisy turned away from her beautiful little ivory cathedral, and opened Mr. Dinwiddie's Bible. Her heart was not at all comforted yet; and indeed her talk with Dr. Sandford had rather roused her to keener discomfort. She had confessed herself wrong, and had told him the way to get right; yet she herself, in spite of knowing the way, was not right, but very far from it. So she felt. Her heart was very sore for the hurt she had suffered; it gave her a twinge ever time she thought of the lotus carving of her spoon handle, and those odd representations of fish in the bowl of it. She lay over on her pillow, slowly turning and turning the pages of her Bible, and tear after tear slowly gathering one after another, and filling her eyes, and rolling down to her pillow to make another wet spot.

There was no harm in that, if that had been all. Daisy had reason. But what troubled her was, that she was so strongly displeased with her aunt Gary. She did not want to see her or hear her, and the thought of a kiss from her was unendurable. Nay, Daisy felt as if she would like to punish her, if she could; or at least to repossess herself of her stolen property by fair means or by foul. She was almost inclined to think that she must have it at all events. And at the same time, she had told Dr. Sandford that she was not right. So Daisy lay slowly turning the pages of her Bible, looking for some word that might catch her eye and be a help to her.

There were a good many marks in the Bible, scattered here and there, made by its former owner. One of these stopped Daisy's search, and gave her something to think of. It stood opposite these words: "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Daisy considered that. What "vocation" meant, she did not know, nor who was "the prisoner of the Lord," nor what that could mean; but yet she caught at something of the sense. "Walk worthy," she understood that; and guessed what "vocation" stood for. Ay! that was just it, and that was just what Daisy was not doing. The next words, too, were plain enough. "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love."

"Forbearing one another" easy to read, how hard to do! Mrs. Gary's image was very ugly yet to Daisy. Could she speak pleasantly to her aunt? could she even look pleasantly at her? could she "forbear" all unkindness, even in thought? Not yet! Daisy felt very miserable, and very much ashamed of herself, even while her anger was in abiding strength and vigour.

She went on, reading through the whole chapter; not because she had not enough already to think about, but because she did not feel that she could obey it. Some of the chapter she did not quite understand; but she went on reading, all the same, till she came to the last verse. That went through and through Daisy's heart, and her eyes filled so full that by the time she got to the end of it she could not see to read at all. These were the words: "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

That quite broke Daisy's heart. She rolled herself over upon her open Bible, so as to hide her face in her pillow, and there Daisy had a good cry. She standing out about a little thing, when Jesus was willing to forgive such loads and loads of naughtiness in her! Daisy would have no friendship with her resentment any more. She turned her back upon it, and fled from it, and sought eagerly that help by which, as she had told Dr. Sandford, it might be overcome. And she had said right. He who is called Jesus because He saves His people from their sins, will not leave anybody under their power who heartily trusts in Him for deliverance from them.

Daisy received several visits that day, but they were all flying visits; everybody was busy. However, they put to the proof the state of her feeling towards several persons. The next day, the first person she saw was the doctor.

"How do you do, Daisy? Ready to go downstairs to-day?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you got the better of your anger?"

"Yes, sir."

"Pray, at what hour did your indignation take flight?" said the doctor, looking at the gentle little face before him.

"I think about three hours after you were here yesterday," said Daisy, soberly.

The doctor looked at her, and his gravity gave way, so far at least as to let the corners of his lips curl away from some very white teeth. Dr. Sandford rarely laughed. And there was nothing mocking about his smile now, though I have used the word "curl;" it was merely what Daisy considered a very intelligent and very benign curve of the mouth. Indeed she liked it very much.

"Have you seen the offending party since that time, Daisy?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did you feel no return of displeasure?"

"No, sir."

There was something so exceedingly sweet in Daisy's expression of face, so unruffled in its loving calm and assurance, that Dr. Sandford received quite a new impression in his views of human character.

"I shall have an account to settle with that young Preston one of these days," he remarked, as he took Daisy's little form in his arms.

"Oh, he did nothing!" said Daisy. "It wasn't Preston at all. He had nothing to do with it!"

"He had not?" said the doctor.

"Not at all; nor any other boy."

"Beyond my management, then!" said the doctor; and he moved off.

He had stood still to say that word or two; Daisy's arm was round his neck to help support herself; the two looked into each other's faces. Certainly that had come to pass which at one time she had thought unlikely; Daisy was very fond of the doctor.

He carried her now down to the library, and laid her on a sofa. Nobody at all was there. The long windows were standing open; the morning sweet air blew gently in; the books, and chairs, and tables which made the room pretty to Daisy's eyes, looked very pleasant after the long weeks in which she had not seen them. But along with her joy at seeing them again was mixed a vivid recollection of the terrible scene she had gone through there, a few days before her accident. However, nothing could make Daisy anything but happy just now.

"You must remain here until I come again," said the doctor; "and now I will send some of the rest of the family to you."

The first one that came was her father. He sat down by the sofa, and was so tenderly glad to have her there again, that Daisy's little heart leaped for joy. She put her hand in his, and lay looking into his face.

"Papa, it is nice," she said.

"What?"

"Oh, to be here, and with you again."

Mr. Randolph put his lips down to Daisy's, and kissed them a good many times.

"Do you know we are going to Silver Lake with you as soon as you are strong enough?"

"Oh, yes, papa! Dr. Sandford says he can manage it. But I don't know when."

"In a week or two more."

"Papa, who is going?"

"Everybody, I suppose."

"But I mean, is anybody to be invited?"

"I think we must ask Dr. Sandford."

"Oh, yes, papa! I wish he would go. But is anybody else to be asked?"

"I do not know, Daisy. Whom would you like to have invited?"

"Papa, I would like very much to have Nora Dinwiddie. She has come back."

"Well, tell your mother so."

Daisy was silent a little; then she began on a new theme.

"Papa, what is a 'vocation'?"

"What is what, Daisy?"

"Vocation, papa."

"Where did you get that word?"

"I found it in a book."

"It means commonly a person's business or employment."

"Only that, papa?"

"There is another sense in which it is used, but you would hardly understand it."

"Please tell me, papa."

"Why?"

"Papa, I like to know the meanings of things. Please tell me."

"Daisy, it means a 'calling' in the idea that some persons are particularly appointed to a certain place or work in the world."

Daisy looked a little hard at him, and then said, "Thank you, papa."

"Daisy, I hope you do not think you have a 'vocation,'" said Mr. Randolph, half smiling.

"Papa," said the child, "I cannot help it."

"No, perhaps not," said Mr. Randolph, stooping again to Daisy's lips. "When you are older and wiser you will know better. At present your vocation is to be a good little daughter. Now what are you going to do to-day? Here is Preston if you want him; or I will do for you what you please."

"Yes, Daisy, what shall we do?" said Preston.

"Oh, are you at leisure?"

"All your own, Daisy, for this morning at any rate. What shall we do?"

"Preston, would you mind getting my tray for me; and let us go on with the battle of Hastings?"

"With what?" said Mr. Randolph, laughing.

"The battle of Hastings, papa English history, you know.
Captain Drummond and I got just there, and then we stopped.
But Harold was killed wasn't he, papa?"

"I believe he was, Daisy."

"Good for him, too," said Preston. "He was nothing but a usurper. William the Conqueror was a great deal more of a man."

"But he was just as much of a usurper, wasn't he?" said Daisy.

"You must mind your ethics, Preston," Mr. Randolph said, laughing. "Daisy is on the Saxon side."

"Preston, will you get the tray, please? June will give it to you."

Preston did not quite understand the philosophy of the tray; however, Daisy must be humoured. It was brought. By Daisy's order it had been carefully protected from dust and danger; and the lineaments of England, as traced by the captain some time ago, were fresh and in good order.

Daisy hung over the map with great interest, renewing her acquaintance with various localities, and gradually getting Preston warmed up to the play. It was quite exciting; for, with every movement of William's victorious footsteps, the course of his progress had to be carefully studied out on a printed map, and then the towns and villages which marked his way noted on the clay map, and their places betokened by wooden pins. Daisy suggested that these pins should have sealing-wax heads of different colours to distinguish the cities, the villages, and the forts from each other. Making these, interrupted doubtless the march of the Conqueror and of history, but in the end much increased Daisy's satisfaction, and if the truth be told, Preston's too.

"There, now you can see at a glance where the castles are; don't their red heads look pretty! And, Oh, Preston! we ought to have some way of marking the battle-fields; don't you think so?"

"The map of England will be nothing but marks then, by and by," said Preston.

"Will it? But it would be very curious. Preston, just give me a little piece of that pink blotting paper from the library table; it is in the portfolio there. Now I can put a little square bit of this on every battle-field, and pressing it a little, it will stick, I think. There! there is Hastings. Do you see, Preston? That will do nicely."

"England will be all pink blotting paper by and by," said Preston.

"Then it will be very curious," said Daisy. "Were new kings *always* coming to push out the old ones?"

"Not like William the Conqueror. But yet it was something very like that, Daisy. When a king died, two of his children would both want the place; so they would fight."

"But two men fighting would not make a battlefield."

"Oh, Daisy, Daisy!" cried Preston; "do you know no better than that?"

"Well, but who else would fight with them?"

"Why, all the kingdom! Part would fight for the right, you know, as the Saxons did with Harold; and part would fight to be the best fellows, and to get the fat places."

"Fat places?" said Daisy. At which Preston went off into one of his laughs. Daisy looked on. How could she be expected to understand him?

"What is the matter, my dear? What are you doing?" Daisy started. "We are studying English history, aunt Gary."

"*History*, my dear? And what is all this muss, and these red and black spots? does your mamma allow this in the library?"

"Just the place to study history, I am sure, mamma," said Preston; "and you cannot have less muss than this where people are fighting. But I really don't know what you mean, ma'am; there cannot be a cleaner map, except for the blood shed on it."

"Blood?" said Mrs. Gary. "My dear" as Preston burst into another laugh "you must not let him tease you."

Daisy's look was so very unruffled and gentle that perhaps it put Mrs. Gary in mind of another subject.

"Did you know, Daisy, that I had robbed you of your old-fashioned spoon?"

"I found it was not among my things," said Daisy.

"My dear, your mother thought you would not value it; and it was very desirable to my collection. I took it with her consent."

"I am willing you should have it, aunt Gary."

"Were you very angry, my dear, when you found where it had gone?"

"I am not angry now, aunt Gary."

Certainly Daisy was not; yet something in the child's look or manner made the lady willing to drop the subject. Its very calm gentleness did not testify to anything like unconcern about the matter; and if there had been concern, Mrs. Gary was not desirous to awaken it again. She kissed Daisy, said she was a good girl, and walked off. Daisy wondered if her aunt had a fancy for trilobites.

"What was all that about, Daisy?" Preston asked.

"Oh, never mind let us go on with William the Conqueror."

"What spoon of yours has she got?"

"My Egyptian spoon."

"That old carved thing with the duck's bill?"

"Yes. Now, Preston, what comes next?"

"Didn't you say she could not have it?"

"No matter what I said, if I say that she can have it now."

"Did you give it to her?"

"Preston, that has nothing to do with William the Conqueror. Please let us go on."

"Daisy, I want to know. Did you give it to her?"

"I am willing she should have it. Now, Preston, go on."

"But, I say, did you give my mother that spoon."

"Preston," said Daisy, "do you think it is quite proper to question me in that manner about what you see I do not wish to have you know?"

Preston laughed, though he looked vexed, and kissed her, nobody being in the library; he was too big a boy to have done it if anybody had been looking on. And after that he played the historico-geographical play with her for a very long time; finding it, with Daisy's eagerness and freshness, a very good play indeed. Only he would persist in calling

every cause of war, every disputed succession, every rivalry of candidates, an *Egyptian spoon*. Daisy could not prevent him.

She had a very happy morning; and Dr. Sandford was well satisfied with her bright face when he came, towards night, and carried her up stairs again.

But Daisy was getting well now. It was only a few days more, and Dr. Sandford permitted her to walk a little way herself on her own feet. A little way at first, across the floor and back; no more that day; but from that time Daisy felt whole again. Soon she could walk to please herself, up and down stairs, and everywhere; though she was not allowed to go far enough to tire her foot while it was yet unused to exercise.

Now all her home ways fell again into their accustomed order. Daisy could get up, and be dressed; nobody knows what a luxury that is unless he has been hindered of it for a good while. She could stand at her window and look out; and go down on her own feet to join the family at breakfast. Her father procured her a seat next himself now, which Daisy did not use to have; and she enjoyed it. She knew he enjoyed it too; and it made breakfast a very happy time to Daisy. After breakfast she was at her own disposal, as of old. Nobody wished her to do anything but please herself.

At this moment nothing pleased Daisy better than to go on with English history. With Preston, if she could get him; if not, alone, with her book and her tray map. Poring over it, Daisy would lie on the sofa, or sit on a little bench with the tray on the floor; planting her towns and castles, or going back to those already planted with a fresh interest from new associations. Certain red-headed and certain black-headed and certain green-headed pins came to be very well known and familiar in the course of time. And in course of time, too, the soil of England came to be very much overspread with little squares of pink blotting-paper. To Daisy it grew to be a commentary on the wickedness of mankind. Preston remarked on the multitude there was of Egyptian spoons.

"What do you mean by that, Preston?" said his aunt.

"Causes of quarrel, ma'am."

"Why do you call them Egyptian spoons?"

"Causes of trouble, I should say, ma'am."

"And again I say, why do you call them Egyptian spoons?"

"I beg your pardon, aunt Felicia. Egypt was always a cause of trouble to the faithful; and I was afraid little Daisy had had just a spoonful of it lately."

"Daisy, what have you been saying to your cousin?"

"Nothing, mamma, about that; only what Preston asked me."

"I am sure you did not say what I asked of you, Daisy. She told me nothing at all, aunt Felicia, except by what she did not tell me."

"She behaved very sweetly about it, indeed," said Mrs. Gary. "She made me feel quite easy about keeping it. I shall have to find out what I can send to Daisy that she will like."

"What are you and Preston doing there?" Mrs. Randolph asked with a cloudy face.

"Studying, mamma; I am. English history."

"That is no way of studying; and that tray what have you got in it?"

"England, mamma!"

Preston laughed. Mrs. Randolph did not join him.

"What have you got in that thing, Daisy? sand?"

"Oh, no, mamma it's something it's prepared clay, I believe."

"Prepared!" said Mrs. Randolph. "Prepared for something besides my library. You are hanging over it all day, Daisy I do

not believe it is good for you."

"Oh, mamma, it is!"

"I think I shall try whether it is not good for you to be without it."

"Oh, no, mamma." Daisy looked in dismay. "Do ask Dr. Sandford if he thinks it is not good for me."

"There he is, then," said Mrs. Randolph. "Doctor, I wish you would see whether Daisy is occupying herself, in your judgment, well, when she is hanging over that thing half the day."

Dr. Sandford came up. Daisy was not afraid of his decision, for she knew he was on her side. Mrs. Randolph, on the other hand, did not wish to dispute it, for she was, like most other people, on the doctor's side. He came up and looked at the tray.

"What is this?"

"The map of England, sir."

"Pray, what are you doing with it?"

"Making it, sir, and studying English history."

"What are these pins? armies? or warriors? they are in confusion enough."

"Oh, there is no confusion," said Daisy. "They are castles and towns."

"For instance? "

"This is Dover Castle," said Daisy, touching a redheaded pin; "and this is Caernarvon, and Conway; and these black ones are towns. There is London and Liverpool and York and Oxford don't you see?"

"I see, but it would take a witch to remember. What are you doing?"

"Studying English history, sir; and as fast as we come to a great town or castle we mark it. These bits of paper show where the great battle-fields are."

"Original!" said the doctor.

"No sir, it is not," said Daisy. "Captain Drummond taught it to me."

"What, the history?"

"No; but this way of playing."

Preston was laughing and trying to keep quiet. Nothing could be graver than the doctor.

"Is it interesting, this way of playing."

"Very!" said Daisy, with a good deal of eagerness, more than she wished to show.

"I wish you would forbid it, Dr. Sandford," said Daisy's mother. "I do not believe in such a method of study, nor wish Daisy to be engrossed with any study at all. She is not fit for it."

"Whereabouts are you?" said the doctor to Daisy.

"We are just getting through the wars of the Roses."

"Ah! I never can remember how those wars began can you?"

"They began when the Duke of York tried to get the crown of Henry the Sixth. But I think he was wrong don't you?"

"Somebody is always wrong in those affairs," said the doctor. "You are getting through the wars of the Roses. What

do you find was the end of them?"

"When the Earl of Richmond came. We have just finished the battle of Bosworth Field. Then he married Elizabeth of York, and so they wore the two roses together."

"Harmoniously?" said the doctor.

"I don't know, sir. I do not know anything about Henry the Seventh yet."

"What was going on in the rest of the world while the Roses were at war in England?"

"Oh, I don't know, sir!" said Daisy, looking up with a sudden expression of humbleness. "I do not know anything about anywhere else."

"You do not know where the Hudson River was then."

"I suppose it was where it is now?"

"Geographically, Daisy; but not politically, socially, or commercially. Melbourne House was not thinking of building; and the Indians ferried their canoes over to Silver Lake, where a civilised party are going in a few days to eat chicken salad under very different auspices."

"Were there no white people here?"

"Columbus had not discovered America, even. He did that just about seven years after Henry the Seventh was crowned on Bosworth Field."

"I don't know who Columbus was," Daisy said, with a glance so wistful and profound in its sense of ignorance, that Dr. Sandford smiled.

"You will hear about him soon," he said, turning away to Mrs. Randolph.

That lady did not look by any means well pleased. The doctor stood before her looking down, with the sort of frank, calm bearing that characterised him.

"Are you not, in part at least, a Southerner?" was the lady's first question.

"I am sorry I must lose so much of your good opinion as to confess myself a Yankee," said the doctor, steadily.

"Are you going to give your sanction to Daisy's plunging herself into study, and books, and all that sort of thing, Dr. Sandford?"

"Not beyond *my* depth to reach her."

"I do not think it is good for her. She is very fond of it, and she does a great deal too much of it when she begins; and she wants strengthening first, in my opinion. You have said enough now to make her crazy after the history of the whole world."

"Mrs. Randolph, I must remind you that though you can hinder a tree from growing, in a particular place, you cannot a fungus; if the conditions be favourable."

"What do you mean?"

"I think this may be a good alternative."

The lady looked a little hard at the doctor. "There is one book I wish you could hinder her from reading," she said, lowering her tone.

"What is that, madam?"

"She is just the child not to bear it; and she is injured by poring over the Bible."

"Put the Bibles out of her way," suggested the doctor.

"I have, as much as I can; but it is not possible to do it perfectly."

"Then I counsel you to allow her the use of this medicine," said Dr. Sandford, glancing towards the tray, which no longer held Daisy's attention. For, together with her mother's lowering of voice, the one word "Bible" had come to her consciousness.

Daisy was at no loss to guess what it meant. The low tones of the speakers gave her sufficient information. Thus far; that her Bible was reckoned an undesirable treasure for her by her mother. Was her own dear little particular Bible in danger? the one that Mr. Dinwiddie had given her? Daisy was alarmed. She did not enjoy any more battle-fields, nor enter with good heart into her history work from that time, until she could get up stairs again and see that it was safe, and contrive some way or place to keep it safe in time to come. Where could such a place be? It was a puzzle, because all Daisy's things were, of course, open to her mother. Perhaps Daisy's fears were needless; but, after the affair of her Egyptian spoon, she looked with jealous eyes not only on her Bible, but on her trilobite.

She sat down with a dismayed little face, to think where she could find a hiding-place. She thought of putting the Bible under her bed or pillow; but the bed was turned over every morning, and the servants would find it. None of her bureau drawers or cabinet drawers were secure. Daisy pondered all manner of impossible places. At last fixed upon a spot of the floor covered by an ottoman. The ottoman was hollow and not very heavy, and never moved after the room was put in order every day. Till the room was put in order Daisy hid her Bible in a drawer; then took it out, and consigned it to the obscurity of the ottoman.

She was greatly afraid, then, of being found reading it. She had not heard the words which passed between the doctor and her mother; only the word "Bible;" but the low tones made her well enough aware that the matter of their talk was somehow adverse; it boded nothing kindly to her and the Bible. So Daisy was in another perplexity; and resolved that to be as safe as she could, she would read with locked doors for the future. And as doors must not be locked at times when her mother might be coming and going, Daisy chose early morning and late evening for her Bible-reading. She used to let June undress her, and finish all her duties of dressing-maid; then she sent her away, and locked her doors, and read in comfort. This lasted a little while; then one unlucky night Daisy forgot to unlock her doors. The morning came, and June with it; but June could neither get in nor dare knock loud enough to make Daisy hear; she was obliged to come round through her mistress's dressing-room. But Daisy's door on that side was locked too! June was going softly away.

"What do you want?" said her mistress.

"If you please, ma'am," said June, stopping very unwillingly
"I thought it was time to wake Miss Daisy."

"Why do you not go in, then?"

"Ma'am the door is locked," said June, in a scarce audible undertone.

"Locked? knock." June went back and knocked.

"Louder," said Mrs. Randolph, who was under her maid's hands; "you would not waken a cat at that rate. Make yourself heard."

June's taps, however, continued so fearfully gentle, that Mrs. Randolph arose and came to the door herself. One or two of the touches of her imperative fingers brought a little figure in white night-dress and just-awakened face, to open the door.

"Daisy," said her mother, "what is your door fast for?"

"Mamma I wanted it fast for a few minutes."

"Did you lock it last night or this morning?"

"Last night I thought I meant to have opened it."

"Both your doors?"

"Yes, mamma."

"All night locked! Now, Daisy, I forbid you ever to turn the key in your door again, night or day."

"Oh, mamma! I want it shut sometimes."

"Hush. Go and let June dress you."

June was vexed enough with herself to have inflicted some punishment on her awkward tongue and head, when she saw that Daisy was for some reason or other deeply grieved. The tears gathered and fell, quietly, all through the process of dressing; and a sort of sob heaved from the child's breast now and then, without words and most involuntary. Juanita's cottage was a palace to Melbourne House, if peace made the furniture. But June did not know what to say; so she was silent too.

When June was gone, Daisy went to her beloved window, and stood there. She did not like to kneel, because her mother might come in, or even June, while she was doing so. She stood at the sweet open window, and prayed that the Lord would take care of her, and help her to pray however she could. And then the thought of those words came to Daisy: "Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." She remembered very well how Captain Drummond had described the way a good soldier takes things hard and disagreeable things, as well as others. It is part of his business to endure them; he expects them, and minds them not at all in comparison with the service in which he is engaged. And a soldier of Jesus Christ has only to obey Him, and take willingly whatever comes in the line of his service. What matter? The only thing was to obey orders, and do the work she was set upon. Hardships did not seem much like hardships when she thought of them in this way. And then it occurred to Daisy, that, if she *could* not fasten her doors, she had better just kneel down as usual with them open. She could not do without praying; and if she must be intruded upon, why, it was a little hardship that she had better not mind. And when she had thought that, Daisy kneeled down; and she never had any more trouble about it. She did fancy, even that first morning, that she heard the lock of her door turn; but she did not move to see, and hearing nothing more, she soon forgot it. Nobody wore such a bright and fresh face at the breakfast-table as Daisy; such a glad and uncareful face; and Mrs. Randolph, seeing it, was reassured; though she had just seen her little daughter at her prayers, on her knees, by the window. She looked so happy now, that the lady was inclined to hope her religion was a childish folly, which would pass away and be forgotten in time.

But for the present Daisy was a soldier; and meditating much on a service which she had to perform. That very day, if you had been there, and worn an invisible cap, you might have gone into her room, and seen what she was about. On the ottoman aforesaid Daisy's writing-desk was placed; and before it, on a cricket, sat Daisy, with a face, oh, how grave and busy! A very weight of care of some sort seemed to lie under her childish little brow. She was opening her desk and looking out paper; some she felt and rejected it was too thin or too blue, or something; she tried her pen on another kind; it did not go well. At last a thick little sheet of note paper was chosen; and Daisy began to write. Or rather, sat over the paper with her pen in her fingers, thinking how to write. She looked very anxious; then took bits of paper and a pencil, and tried different forms of a sentence. At last, with slow care, and fingers that trembled, a line or two was inscribed on the beautiful thick little sheet of English note-paper.

"Dear papa, won't you think about being a Christian? Do not be displeased with

"DAISY."

It was written all out, as fair as she could; and then you might have seen Daisy's little round head go down on her hands on the desk. It did not move for a good while. When it was lifted up, she sought out an envelope rather hurriedly, directed it, folded and put in her note, and sealed it.

Daisy shut her desk then, and with a manner not quite as calm and careless as usual, went to her father's dressing table, and stood considering where she should put the note. Under the cushion, it might be seen first by a servant, and then delivered to Mr. Randolph in the midst of company. Under his dressing-box, the same fate threatened it. Daisy peered about, and thought, and trembled for several minutes. She had a fancy that she did not want him to get it before the next morning, when he would be quietly dressing here alone. He would certainly be opening his dressing-box before that. The only place Daisy could be sure would not be invaded before that, was the place she chose; she took off the cover of his box of shaving soap, and with some trouble squeezed the note in so that it would lie safely hid; then put on the cover, and put the box in its place, and went away with light hands and a heavy heart. Heavy, that is, with a burden of doubt mingled with fear. Would Mr. Randolph be angry? Daisy could not feel sure that that would not be the

consequence of her proceeding. Perhaps he would be very much displeased, and think it very disrespectful and improper that his little daughter should take so much upon herself. Daisy knew quite well all that. But who else in the world would take the responsibility if she did not? No one; and Daisy with all her fear did not once think of going to get her note away again before it should be read.

Her heart yearned towards her father. He was so very gentle and tender in his manner with her, more than ever, Daisy thought; she felt that the love between them was growing, strong and deep, even beyond what it used to be. And while he knew nothing of the joy that filled her own heart, and while he refused obedience to the laws that she knew were binding on him as well as on her, he must be also, she knew, without the favour and blessing of God. He had no part in it; nothing to do with it; and Daisy's heart swelled with childish sorrow and longing. She had thought a great deal about it, and concluded that she must bear "the message," even plainly in words, to her father, before she could feel satisfied. Little hands might take the message, Juanita had said; so humbly Daisy's took it; and then she prayed that it might not be for nothing.

She knew all her hands could do was not much. All the remainder of that day, Daisy never forgot her note in the box of shaving soap. She knew it was extremely unlikely that the box would be opened sooner than the next morning; nevertheless, whenever Mr. Randolph came near where she was, Daisy looked up with something like a start. There was nothing in his face to alarm her; and so night came, and Daisy kissed him twice for good night, wondering to herself whether he would feel like kissing her when they met again. Never mind, the message must be delivered, cost what it might. Yes, this was soldier's service. Daisy was going into the enemy's country.

Mr. Randolph had felt the lingering touch of Daisy's lips, and the thought of it came to him more than once in the course of the evening "like the wind that breathes upon a bank of violets" with a breath of sweetness in the remembrance. Nevertheless, he had pretty well forgotten it, when he pulled off the cover of his box of shaving soap the next morning. He was belated, and in something of a hurry. If ever a man suddenly forgot his hurry, Mr. Randolph did, that morning. He knew the unformed, rather irregular and stiff handwriting in a moment; and concluded that Daisy had some request to make on her own account which she was too timid to speak out in words. That was what he expected when he opened the paper; but Eve could not have been much more surprised when the serpent spoke to her in the garden of Eden, than was Mr. Randolph at finding that his little lamb of a child had dared to open her mouth to him in this fashion.

"Mr. Randolph, you will be late," said the lady who owned that name, coming to his door. And, seeing her husband standing still, with his elbow leaning on his dressing-table, she walked in.

"You will assuredly be late! what have you got there?"

The little sheet of English note-paper lay spread out on the dressing-table. Mr. Randolph was looking at it. He did not answer, and the lady bent nearer for a moment and then stood upright.

"Daisy!" exclaimed Mrs. Randolph.

Her husband made an inarticulate sort of a noise, as he turned away and took up his neglected shaving soap.

"What is this?" said the lady, in astonishment.

"What you see " said Mr. Randolph.

"Where did it come from?"

"The signature tells you."

"But where did you get it?"

"Here this moment."

"The impertinent little minx!"

"Hush. She does not mean to be impertinent, Felicia."

"Do you like misbehaviour that is not meant, Mr. Randolph?"

"Better than that which is meant."

"I told you the child would get ruined in that place," said Mrs. Randolph, after musing a few minutes over the little sheet of note-paper.

Mr. Randolph made a lather, and applied it. That might be the reason why he made no answer.

"I call it impertinence," the lady went on, "and very well-grown impertinence too from a child like that! It is the trick of all religious people, to think themselves better and wiser than the rest of the world; but I think Daisy has learnt the lesson early!"

Still silence on Mr. Randolph's part, and steady attention to his toilet duties.

"What notice do you mean to take of this?"

"I think, none at all."

"Mr. Randolph, Daisy is ruined!"

"I do not quite see it yet."

"I wish you would see it. She is full of stupid stiff ways, which will be habits fixed as iron in a little time, if we do not break them up. She does not act like a child."

"She is very like a child to me," said Mr. Randolph.

"You do not see. Do you observe her way whenever she sits down to table? She covers her face, and remains in silent prayer, I suppose, a minute or so." A slight laugh came from Mrs. Randolph with the words.

Mr. Randolph could not well laugh, for he was shaving. He remarked that he had never seen it.

"I wish you would remember and take notice. She does it regularly. And she is not a docile child any longer, I give you warning. You will find it very difficult to do anything with her in the way of breaking up this religious stiffness of hers."

Mr. Randolph was silent a while, and Mrs. Randolph looked vexed. At length he remarked that indirect ways were the best.

"It will take both," said his wife; "direct and indirect." And after that they went down to breakfast.

Mr. Randolph was the last, and he was not early; but this morning Daisy was later still. Her father watched for her coming, and did not see it after all; Daisy stole in so quietly, she was in her seat by his side before he had noticed her. Then, perceiving the gentle, sweet, quiet little face beside him, and recognising the timid feeling which made Daisy afraid to meet his eye, he could not refrain; he bent down and gave her a kiss. He was very much touched by the little fluttering start and glance which Daisy returned to this salutation, and he saw that a pink flash of pleasure came into her cheeks. Perhaps all this put the subject of watching her out of Mr. Randolph's head; he certainly did not see the minute, a few minutes later, when Daisy's hand stole to her brow, and her eyes were for a short space hidden and her hand moveless. Mrs. Randolph saw it, and saw that he did not. Daisy had forgotten that anybody could see her. The thanksgiving of her heart had more burden to-day than the ordinary gifts of the morning which she was wont to remember. Her father was not angry with her! It took a load off Daisy's heart; and she looked so happy all breakfast time that Mr. Randolph was very much inclined to slight his wife's fears.

Juanita's constant habit of thankfulness and of expressing her thankfulness, during the weeks Daisy had spent with her, had gone down into the child's heart. With every meal, though taken by herself all alone, Daisy had seen the old woman acknowledging gratefully from whose hand she got it. And with other things beside meals; and it had seemed sweet and pleasant to Daisy to do so. At home, when she was suddenly transferred to her father's stately board, where every beauty and luxury were gathered together, and an array of friends to help each other enjoy it; and no one remembered, no one acknowledged that any gratitude was due to the hand that had supplied the board and given the friends, Daisy's heart was pained by a great sense of want. Not thank God for all these things? give no acknowledgment of praise to Him? She could not bear to have it so.

She thought nobody would notice her, or know what she was doing if they did notice her; and she used to put her hand over her brow, and comfort her own heart with giving the thanks she wanted to express. She soon forgot to be afraid anybody would notice her. But Mrs. Randolph marked it all, and now never missed the minute when Daisy's face was shielded.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PIC-NIC PARTY.

The thing on hand now was the expedition to Silver Lake. Daisy's foot and ankle were getting sufficient strength to bear all the work that need be asked of them; and it was best to go while the hot weather still lingered. It was early in September, and the day was fixed. Quite a party was going. There were no visitors at Melbourne House now except Mrs. Gary and her children; but that brought the home party up to seven. Dr. Sandford was going, of course. Then some other neighbours. Mrs. Stanfield had promised to go, with her little daughter Ella, and her older daughter Theresa. Mrs. Fish was coming from another quarter of the country, with her children, Alexander and Frederica. Mr. Fish and Mr. Stanfield were to go too; and Mr. and Mrs. Sandford, the doctor's brother and sister-in-law. However, though this was to be such a strong muster, Daisy thought of only two or three of the number that concerned her personally. Preston and Ransom, of course; Alexander Fish; though the two latter she thought of as likely to make disturbance more than anything else; and Daisy liked a most lady-like quietness and propriety in everything in which she was engaged. But, besides these, there was only Ella Stanfield whose age would bring her into contact with Daisy; and Daisy, very much of late accustomed to being alone or with older people, looked with some doubtfulness at the prospect of having a young companion to entertain. With that exception, and it hardly made one, nothing could look brighter in the distance than Silver Lake.

Several days passed between Daisy's giving the note to her father and the one fixed on for the expedition. In all that time Daisy was left to guess whether or not it had been seen and read by him. No sign or token told her; there was none; and Daisy could only conclude that he *must* have seen it, because he could not very well help doing so. But she was not at all discouraged. Rather the contrary; seeing that certainly her father was not displeased with her.

In all these days too, Mr. Randolph had ample time and chance to observe Daisy's action which had so disturbed her mother at meal times. Yet hitherto he had never spoken of it. In fact it was so quietly done that often the moment escaped him; and at other times, Daisy's manner so asked for a shield rather than a trumpet, and the little face that looked up from being covered with her hand was so bright and sweet, that perhaps his heart shrank from saying anything that would change the expression. At any rate, Daisy had been safe thus far.

Great preparations were making for the Silver Lake day. Thursday it was to be. Wednesday evening, Dr. Sandford was at Melbourne. Daisy was considering the arrangements of a little packed basket of her own.

"Are you expecting to have a good time to-morrow, Daisy?" he asked.

Daisy smiled as she said yes.

"But you will have to keep quiet. I shall not let you run about like the rest."

"I can sit quiet and look at the lake," said Daisy; with so absolutely contented a face, that the doctor smiled.

"But in parties of pleasure, do you know, my friend, it generally happens that people cannot do what they expected to do."

"Then I can do something else," said Daisy, looking very fearless of anything disagreeable.

"Will you let your old friend, Nora Dinwiddie, join the party?"

"Nora! Oh, is Nora coming?" exclaimed Daisy.

"Mrs. Sandford commissioned me to make the enquiry, Mrs. Randolph, whether one more would be too many? Her little relation, Daisy's friend I believe, has returned to her for the rest of the season."

"Certainly!" Mrs. Randolph said, "there was room for everybody."

The lady's manner told nothing; but, nevertheless, Daisy did not venture to show her joy. She did not say another word about Nora. The hour of meeting was determined, and the doctor withdrew. Daisy looked over the contents of her basket again with fresh satisfaction, made sure that all was right and everything there; and went to bed happy.

Thursday morning broke fair as eye could see. The September sun rose in a haze of warm rays; promising, as Mrs. Randolph said, that the heat would be stifling by and by. Daisy did not care, for her part. They had breakfast earlier than usual; for the plan was to get on the other side of the river before the sun should be too oppressive. They had scarcely risen from the table when the Sandford party drove up to the door. These were to go in a boat with the party from Melbourne House. Mr. and Mrs. Fish, from higher up the river, were to cross in their own boat, and join the rest at the spot appointed on the opposite shore. The Stanfields were to do the same, starting from a different point; friends having arrived that would swell their numbers beyond the original four.

Of all this, Daisy cared just for one thing; that Nora was come, and was to go in the boat with her, and no other. The meeting between the two children, on the steps at Melbourne, was most joyous. "Oh, Nora! I'm so glad you have come!" and, "Oh Daisy! I'm so glad to be here!" and a small host of small questions and answers, that indeed meant a great deal, but would not read for much.

"Oh, Nora, isn't it nice!" said Daisy, as they stood on the steps, while the carriages waited below before the door.

"It's grand," said Nora. "Why, aunt Frances says we shall be gone all day."

"To be sure, we shall," said Daisy. "Papa is going to fish; and so is Preston, and Dr. Sandford, and other people, I suppose; and some of the men take their tackle along too. There is nice fish in the Lake."

"What men do you mean?" said Nora.

"Oh, the men that manage the boat, and carry the baskets; there are ever so many baskets to go, you know; and the men must carry them; because the path won't let a wagon go."

"Who is going to carry you?" said Dr. Sandford coming out behind them.

"Me?" said Daisy.

"Yes."

"Why, I do not want anybody to carry me, Dr. Sandford."

"Don't you? I do. And I shall want two men to do it. Whom will you have? I have arranged a mountain chair for you, Daisy."

"A chair!" said Daisy. How could that be? And then she saw in Dr. Sandford's wagon, a chair to be sure; a common, light, cane-bottomed arm-chair; with poles sticking out before and behind it very oddly. She looked up at the doctor, and Nora demanded what that was?

"Something like the chairs they use in the mountains of Switzerland, to carry ladies up and down."

"To carry me?" said Daisy.

"For that purpose. Now see whom you will have to do it."

Daisy and Nora ran away together to consult her father. The matter was soon arranged. James the footman, and Michael the coachman, were to go to carry baskets, and help manage the boat; James being something of a sailor. Now Logan and Sam were pressed into the service; the latter to take James's business, as porter, and leave the latter free to be a chair-bearer.

"I don't see how the boat is to carry all the people," Nora remarked.

"Oh, yes," said Daisy, "it is a big boat; it will hold everybody, I guess; and it goes with a sail, Nora. Won't that be nice? Papa knows how to manage it."

"It will want a very large boat to take us all," Nora persisted. "I went out with Marmaduke in a sail-boat once he knows how to manage a sail-boat too; and I am sure it wouldn't have held half as many people as we have got here. No, nor a quarter as many."

"Oh, yes, but our boat is bigger, I suppose," said Daisy.

"Don't you like to go in a boat, Nora?"

"I like it if it don't lean over too far," said Nora. "I thought it was going to turn over once or twice, when I was out with Marmaduke that time. I was afraid."

"I am not afraid with papa," said Daisy. "I know he can manage it."

"Why, so can Marmaduke manage it," said Nora; "and he said I needn't be afraid; but I was."

The carriages took the whole party down to the shore in a few minutes. There lay the sail-boat all ready, her sails shaken out; and James and Sam, on board already, received basket after basket from the hands of Logan and the coachman, and stowed them away in what seemed to be a place of ample accommodations.

Daisy and Nora, hand in hand, stood on the shore looking at all that was done, and with eager eyes. The summer breeze just played lightly and rippled the water, on which the morning sun made a warm glow, early in the day as it was.

"What *could* so many baskets be wanted for?" said Nora.

"Why, to carry all the things. You know there will be a great many people to eat dinner at Silver Lake."

"Dinner?" said Nora; "do people eat dinner when they go to a pic-nic?"

"Why, yes. What do you think they do?"

"I thought it was just a pie-nic."

"What is that?" said Daisy, curiously.

But just then there was a stir; the ladies and gentlemen were getting into the boat, and the children had to be ready for their turn. It came; and Mr. Randolph handed one after other safe over the gunwale of the big sail-boat, and placed them happily beside each other in the middle space, where they could have an excellent time for talking. But they wanted no talking at first.

When all were aboard and ready, the boat was cast loose from the shore, and her sail trimmed to catch the soft northerly air that came blowing down the river. Slowly the sail caught the breeze would it be strong enough to take her? the children thought slowly, very slowly, the boat edged its way out from the shore then the breeze filled the sail full, took good hold, and began to push the little vessel with a sensible motion out towards the river channel. Steady and sweet the motion was, gathering speed. The water presently rippled under the boat's prow, and she yielded gently a little to the pressure on the sail, tipped herself gracefully a little over, and began to cleave her way through the rippling water in good earnest. Then how the waves sparkled! how cheery the movement was! how delicious the summer air over the water! although the sun was throwing down his beams with great power already, and the day promised to be sultrily hot.

"It is going to be intense," said Mrs. Randolph.

"Melting!" said Mrs. Gary.

"You will have enough of it before the end of the day " remarked Mr. Sandford.

Mr. Sandford was a good-humoured looking gentleman, with a sensible face and black whiskers; but he was a gentleman, and Daisy approved of him. He was very unlike his brother. His wife was a very plain person, in feature, and not very talkative; letting her husband do that for her; but kindly and pleasant, nevertheless; and Daisy approved of her too.

"At what hour do you expect the day *will* end, practically?" inquired Mrs. Randolph of her husband.

He smiled. "I should say judging from present tokens not till the sun gets well down on his western way."

"First-rate!" said Preston, aside. "We'll have a good time for fishing."

"But that will make it very late crossing the river, Mr. Randolph? will it not?"

"It may."

"There is a moon," said Mrs. Sandford.

"Moon! I hope we are not to be beholden to the moon's good offices!" exclaimed the other lady. "It is only ten o'clock now not that. We shall be tired to death of the woods before we have done with them."

"You must try fishing, aunt Felicia," said Preston.

"Yes a good idea," remarked Mr. Sandford. "I do not know how the ladies can get along without some sport ha, ha! There is a boat on the lake isn't there?"

"They say so," Mr. Randolph returned. "I have not been there for a long time."

"Then I shall take the charge of your entertainment, Mrs. Randolph," Mr. Sandford went on. "I shall persuade you to put yourself under my guidance, and let me initiate you into the mysteries of pickerel catching."

"I do not think you can persuade me out of the shade if once I get in it again " said the lady.

"Why, mamma," said Ransom, "pickerel-fishing is splendid!"

Mr. Randolph looked at Daisy. No heat nor shadow too much for her! With one hand clasped in Nora's, her little face was a pattern of perfect content; nay, it was full of delighted joy. Mr. Randolph thought he could endure his portion of the heat.

"Nora," said Daisy, "isn't it nice?"

"It goes nicely now," said Nora.

"But isn't it pleasant?"

"Yes. It is a great deal pleasanter than in a little boat. This one is good and large."

"Isn't the water pretty?"

"I like the green grass better," said Nora.

"Oh, yes! but then I like this too. I like it very much. Nora, what did you mean by a pic-nic?"

"A pic-nic?" said Nora.

"Yes; you said you thought people did not eat dinner, but it was a pic-nic."

"Well, I thought they didn't."

"What did you mean by a pic-nic?"

"Why I meant just that. You know what a pic-nic is."

"We always have dinner when we go on a pie-nic," said Daisy.

"Then I don't think it is a pic-nic."

"What is it?"

"I don't know. Daisy, are you going to ride in that queer chair?"

"I suppose so. My ankle isn't quite strong yet, you know. Wasn't it nice of Dr. Sandford to prepare it for me?"

"I don't know. *I* don't think he is nice," said Nora. Which expression of opinion was so very startling to Daisy that it took her some time to recover from it. She sought out the doctor with her eye where he was sitting forward of the mast, somewhat hid from her by a piece of the sail; she scanned his countenance, with its calm nobleness of feature, and steadfast, reserved, beautiful blue eyes. Doubtless, he was not everything Daisy wished him; nevertheless, to her he

was very "nice" indeed. Her eye came back satisfied.

At the other end of the boat the party were talkative and gay. Mr. Randolph held the main sheet in his own hand; Mr. Sandford had the rudder; neither of them had much to do; for the wind was gentle and fair, and the boat kept her straight course for the opposite shore. The river was wide, however, at this place; the other shore was an object in view for a good while before they reached it. Slowly and steadily the little skiff skimmed over; they got to the middle of the river; then the trees before them on the other side, with the cleared fields in one or two spots, began to show in more distinct forms and colours. The sun was very hot! So hot, that it seemed to kill the breeze. As they drew near their place of disembarkation, the motion of the vessel grew slack; the sail fluttered now and then; the propelling force just lasted till they got to shore, and then nobody said anything more of any air felt to be stirring.

"I think we had better stay on the water," said Mrs. Gary. "It is positively stifling here."

"It will be better when we get in the woods," suggested Mr. Sandford.

"No, begging your pardon," Mr. Randolph answered.

"No? will it be worse, Mr. Randolph?" said his wife.

"I hope not for I think you could broil a beefsteak here in another hour; when the sun gets on the meridian."

"Then do let us move away from here at once! it is oppressive. I do not know how we are going to walk, but I suppose we shall find out. We may hope there will be a little freshness by the lake."

Mr. Stanfield's boat however had to be waited for a few minutes. It got to shore just as Mr. Fish's skiff appeared in sight coasting down on the same side, from behind a point. The whole party were soon together, exchanging shakes of the hand and puffs of condolence on the state of the atmosphere. There was presently a division of forces. All the boys, Preston, Ransom, and Alexander Fish, compared notes and fishing tackle. The ladies and gentlemen, with one or two elder girls, Frederica Fish and Theresa Stanfield and Eloise Gary, congregated into a moving mass of muslins and parasols. While Daisy and Nora were joined by Ella Stanfield; and a great constraint fell upon all three. Ella was a comparative stranger; a nice-looking child, thoughtful and old beyond her years. She looked like gravity; Nora liked gaiety; while Daisy was most like the thing that bears her name.

They stood like little pinks of propriety, without saying anything to each other. This constraint was soon broken up by the preparations for the march. On enquiry it was found that there were two or three ways to the lake. One was short and easy in comparison but very narrow; a mere footpath through the woods. Another had a wider track; but it had also a rough footing of rocks and stones, and was much longer; taking a circuit to reach the place. Another still was only used by eager lovers of the picturesque, though it was said to reward them.

As soon as all this was explained to the understanding of the company, the larger division set off immediately for the easiest and quickest road to the lake; no other recommendation was worth a moment's considering. With quick disappearance one after another muslin dress and gay parasol was lost within the edge of the woods which their chosen path immediately entered. They vanished from the shore. Every one of them was presently out of sight. Mr. Randolph had seen that Dr. Sandford was putting Daisy into her travelling conveyance; and thinking no attention of his own could be needful, he had gone on in advance of the party with Mrs. Stanfield. The very last of them, muslins and parasols and all, was swallowed up in the enclosing woods, almost before Daisy was established in her chair. Her bearers lifted it then to receive instructions from Dr. Sandford as to their method of playing their part. They were Logan and Sam; James was devoted to his own particular charge.

"Why, where are Nora and Ella?" Daisy suddenly exclaimed.

"Everybody seems to have gone on," answered the doctor. "Except the boys. Now Daisy, are you comfortable? is it all right?"

"It is nice, Dr. Sandford!" But at the same time Daisy wondered much, and grieved not a little that her companions should have left her to go alone. Was that kindness? or good manners?

"Did they know which way I was going?" she said.

"I fancy so," said the doctor; "they have done as everybody else does gone with the crowd. Now, you fellows, you know the way."

"Yes, sir."

"When you come to a house, remember, you must turn sharp to the right. Boys, you must go with the chair as a body-guard."

"Why must we?" said Ransom.

"You would not have your sister go alone?"

"You are going that way."

"You are mistaken. I am not."

"She has got Logan and Sam to take care of her. Girls always have to be taken care of!" exclaimed Ransom, in disgust.

"I am astonished at your want of gallantry. Preston, I shall depend on you to see that the chair is properly attended."

"Which way are you going, sir?"

"By myself to see if I can get a shot at something."

Preston did not look delighted, Daisy saw, though he accepted the charge the doctor gave him. The doctor himself strode off with his gun, disappearing in the woods at the nearest point. Daisy was left with her two bearers and her three attendants.

"Well, boys, we may as well get along," said Ransom, discontentedly. "There is no occasion that we should keep poking on behind this concern."

They passed it and took the lead. Preston as he passed asked Daisy how it went, and if she were comfortable. It went very nicely, and she was very comfortable; and receiving this assurance, Preston sprang forward to regain Alexander Fish's company, with whom he was holding an animated discourse on the making and using of artificial flies. The three boys trudged along in advance; the motions of their busy heads, and of their active feet, telling that there was no lack of interest or excitement there.

The chair followed steadily with its little burden. It went nicely; she was very comfortable; it was a new and most pleasant mode of getting over the ground; and yet there was something at work in Daisy's heart that was not pleasure. She was sadly disappointed. She was left alone. It had tried her a good deal that Nora and Ella should have run after the larger party with so cavalier an abandonment of her, when they knew her chair must go another road. Then she was very sorry that the doctor had seen good to forsake her; and felt that from the thoughtfulness or unselfishness of boys she had little to hope for. Look at them! there they went before her, putting more and more distance between them and the chair every minute. Perhaps they would entirely forget their little convoy? and be out of sight in a trifle more time. And in all that big party of pleasure, everybody engaged with somebody else, she was left with no one to speak to her, and no company at all but that of Logan and Sam. Daisy two or three times put up her hand stealthily to her face to get rid of a tear that had found its way there.

Daisy thought at first that she would not have done so to her friends, as they had done to her; but then presently she reflected what reason she had to know better and to do better, that they had not; and instead of anything like resentment, a very gentle and tender feeling of pity and kindness arose in Daisy's mind toward them.

Her hurt sense of unfriendliness quite soothed itself away; and now Daisy began to enjoy herself and the day and the party of pleasure. Her share of it, at least. Her chair was under shadow of the tall woods now. It is true, it was very hot there. No air seemed moving. The chair-bearers often raised an arm to their brows to wipe away the heated moisture that stood there and ran down their faces. But Daisy had no exertion to make; and instead of that, her own motion seemed to give a little life to the lifeless air. Then she was at leisure to look and enjoy; not having even to take care of her own footing. The depth of green leafage over her head when she looked up; the depth of green shade on either hand of her, pierced by the endless colonnade of the boles of trees; how wildly beautiful it was!

Daisy thought of a good many things she would like to ask Dr. Sandford if she had the liberty; but he did not talk about wonderful things to her now that she was well, and had her own means of amusement.

Now and then Daisy had the sight of a red squirrel, running along a tree bough, or scampering over the ground from one rock to another. What jumps he would make to get out of her way! And birds were singing too, sometimes; and

mosses were spread out in luxuriant patches of wood carpeting in many places; and rocks were brown and grey, and grown with other mosses and ferns; and through all this fairy work of beauty, Daisy's chair went at an easy, quiet pace, with a motion that she thought it very pleasant to feel.

It was a wild old wood, which nobody had ever meddled with. Things were just as nature's work had made them. The path the little party were travelling was a wood road merely, where country wagons had made a track; or more properly, where the country people had made a track for their wagons. It was but a rough way; stumps of trees that had been cut down stood right in the middle of it; and rocks and stones were in some places very thickly strewn over it. After some time of wandering over level ground, the path took a turn and began to get among the hills. It wound up and down, and was bordered now by steep hillsides and sharp-rising rocks. It was all the wilder and prettier. The house Dr. Sandford spoke of had been passed; the turn had been taken; there was nothing to do now but follow on till they found the lake; but there were no signs of it yet, nor any sound of voices to be heard in the distance. Even the boys were gone on out of sight; the stillness of summer noon was all through the deep woods, for it is a time of day when the birds do not feel like singing much. Daisy enjoyed it. She thought no one of all their company was having a better time probably than she.

Suddenly Sam, who was foremost of the bearers, gave a great shout; and at the same instant dropped his end of Daisy's chair and sprang to one side. Then stood still.

"What for air ye playing capers like that?" inquired Logan, with an ail of great disgust and a strong Scotch accent.

Sam stood still, drawing his countenance into all manner of grimaces.

"Speak then, can't ye! What ails ye? Don't stand there like a Merry Andrew, boy!"

"I've hurted myself!" Sam groaned.

"And how did ye hurt yourself? When ye were walking along, couldn't ye go for'rard quietly? Where's the hurt?"

"My foot!" said Sam, bending down to it. "I can't stir it. Oh!"

"Did ye hurt yourself before or after ye gave such a loup?" Logan grunted, going over, however, now to bring his own wisdom to bear on Sam's causes of trouble. "Whatever possessed ye, boy, with the end of the chair in your hand?"

"I see a sarpent " said Sam, submissively.

"A sarpent!" echoed Logan "it's not your pairt to be frighted if you see a sarpent. What hurt would the sight of the brute do ye? There's no harm come to ye, boy, but the start."

"I can't move it " repeated Sam, under his breath.

"Logan, perhaps he has sprained his ankle," said Daisy from her chair; where at first she had been pretty well frightened.

"Weel I don't see it," replied Logan, slowly and unbelievably.

"How does it feel, Sam?" Daisy asked.

"It don't feel without I stir it, Miss Daisy and then, it's like a knife."

"He has sprained it, I am afraid, Logan," said Daisy, getting out of her chair and coming to the consultation. "I think it is swelling now."

Sam had bared his unfortunate ankle. Logan looked up from it to the little speaker whose words were so quietly wise, with unspoken admiration.

"Can't ye walk then, Sam?" he urged. "Here is Miss Daisy in the middle of the road, and wanting to be at the Lake and how much further it may be to the Lake is a subject unknown to me. Can't ye bear your foot surely?"

Sam's reply was sorrowful but decided; he could not bear it at all, with any weight upon it.

"Never mind, Logan," said Daisy; "I can wait. You had better go forward and see if you can find the boys. They can take care of me."

Logan felt the justness of this proposition, and at once put his long legs in swift motion to overtake the advance party; exercising a good strong voice too presently in hallooing to them. Daisy was left with Sam. The thought crossed her mind that this was getting to be an odd party of pleasure; but her real concern was for the sprained ankle. That, she was very sorry for. Her own delay and disappointment she took patiently.

Logan's halloos brought the boys to a stand. They waited till he came up to them, not deeming it necessary on their part to go back to see what was the matter. When they heard his news there was a disagreeable pause. What was to be done?

"Daisy can walk the rest of the way," was the decision of her brother.

"How far is it?" said Preston.

"I don't know! it's no great things of a walk anyhow. Girls are always getting into trouble!"

"But what has got to be done with Sam?" said Preston.

"He can take care of himself," said Sam's young master

"He can't move, sir, on his own feet," said Logan.

"You'll have to carry him, then. I suppose we cannot leave him in the woods, for humanity."

"There's Miss Daisy, sir."

"What a plague!" exclaimed Ransom. "Daisy can walk. She must, at any rate; and you can bring her chair along to make firewood. Boys, we ought to be there this minute at the Lake. We shall be cheated out of all our fishing before dinner. That's along of mounting guard on a girl! And after dinner there won't be two inches of time."

"Hush, Ransom!" said Preston.

At this point the consultation was enlarged, and its character somewhat modified by the coming of Dr. Sandford upon the scene. From a height not far off, where he was roaming with his gun, he had perceived the group, discerned that something was wrong, and come down with a quick step to reach them. His eye rather than his voice asked what was the matter. He was answered in various styles by the different members of the group.

"Here is a muss!" said Ransom.

"Miss Daisy, sir she is left standing in the middle o' the forest!" said Logan.

"Sam has very stupidly sprained his ankle," said Preston, "and cannot move."

The doctor without a word turned in the direction from which Logan had come. "Follow me, young gentlemen," said he, looking over his shoulder, "I shall need your help." So, unwillingly enough, the boys, fishing tackle and all, turned back upon their steps, and followed. They soon came to Daisy's emptied chair, where she stood mounting guard over Sam.

The ankle was badly sprained; there was no doubt of that. Sam not only could carry nobody; he must himself be carried. The doctor ordered that Logan should take him on his back and convey him as far as the poor little house they had passed on the way. A good lift it was, for Sam was a well grown, stout fellow; but Logan was a long-limbed, sinewy, brawny Scotchman, and he made no difficulty of the job. The doctor in the first place deposited his gun against a tree, and did what was needful for the hurt ankle.

"Now," said he to Daisy, "how are you going to get forward?"

"I can walk the rest of the way," said Daisy.

"Pardon me. Not with my leave. Boys, which of you will take the honour of being chair-bearers? I have my gun to care for."

"I will be one," said Preston.

"And Ransom will be the other. Come, sir!"

"Honour!" said Ransom, as he moved sullenly forward. "I think girls ought to stay at home when there is anything going on. They are plaguily in one's way!"

"That is a very womanish speech," said the doctor; "in so far as that it is very unmanly."

Ransom's temper nowise improved by this reply, he took up sulkily his ends of the chair-poles; and once more the party set forward. It was not quite so pleasant now for Daisy; her chair was no longer carried smoothly. Preston, who was in advance, did his part perfectly well; but Ransom, behind her, let the chair go up and go down and sway about very unsteadily, besides that every step was with a jolting motion. It kept Daisy in constant uneasiness. Dr. Sandford walked on just before with his gun; Alexander Fish came after, laughing and jesting with the other boys.

"How does it go, Daisy?" said the doctor, stopping after a while to inquire.

"Mayn't I get out and walk, Dr. Sandford?"

"What for?"

"I should like it very much!"

"Do you not ride easily."

"Not quite," said Daisy. "It throws me about a good deal."

"Ah! Did it do so when Logan and Sam carried you?"

"I did not feel it then," said Daisy, unwillingly.

"Your porters are unskilled."

The doctor took his station by Ransom's hand, remarking that he would see that he did his work well. And he was as good as his word. He kept a constant eye on the management of the chair; and when Ransom neglected his duty, gave him a word of admonition or advice, so keen and contemptuous in its rebuke, though slight and dry, that even Ransom's thickness of apprehension felt it, and sheered off from meeting it. The last part of the distance Daisy was thoroughly well cared for, and in silence; for the doctor's presence had put a stop to all bantering between the boys. In furious silence on Ransom's part this last portion of the way was accomplished.

At the lake at last! And in Daisy's breast at least, everything but pleasure was now forgotten. A very beautiful sheet of water, not very small either, with broken shores, lay girdled round with the unbroken forest. Close to the edge of the lake the great trees rose up and flung their arms over; the stems and trunks and branches were given back again in the smooth mirror below. Where the path came out upon the lake, a spread of greensward extended under the trees for a considerable space; and this was spotted and variegated now with the scattered members of the pleasure party. Blue and pink and white and green, the various light muslins contrasted with the grey or the white dresses of the gentlemen; while parasols were thrown about, and here and there a red shawl lay upon the ground, for somebody's reclining carpet. To add to all this, which made already a very pretty picture under the canopy of the great trees, a boat lay moored at a little point further on; baskets and hampers congregated with great promise in another quarter under guard of James and one or two of his helpers; and upon it all the sunlight just peeped through the trees, making sunny flecks upon the ground. Nobody wanted more of it, to tell the truth; everybody's immediate business upon reaching the place had been to throw himself down and get cool. Daisy and Dr. Sandford were the two signal exceptions.

Nora and Ella came running up, and there was a storm of questions. "Oh, Daisy, isn't it beautiful?" "How came you to be so long getting here?" "Did you have a nice ride?" "Oh, Daisy, what are we going to do, you and Ella, and I? Everybody else is going to do something."

"What are they going to do?" said Daisy.

"Oh, I don't know! everything. Mr. Randolph is going out in the boat to fish, and all the ladies are going with him. Mrs. Sandford and Mrs. Stanfield and your mother; only Mrs. Fish isn't going; but Mr. Sandford is. And Eloise, your cousin, is going to see about having the dinner ready; and Theresa Stanfield is in that too; I think they have got the most fun; but nobody is doing anything yet. It's too hot. Are you hot, Daisy?"

"Not very."

"Oh, Daisy," said Ella Stanfield, "couldn't we fish?"

"There are so many boys " said Daisy; "I do not believe there will be any fishing tackle for us."

"Can you fish, Daisy?" asked the doctor, who stood near, looking after his gun.

"No, sir. I did catch a fish once but it was only my line caught it."

"Not your hand at the end of the line?"

"My hand was not there. The line was lying on the bank and my hook in the water."

"Oh! that was it!"

Away went the doctor with his gun, and the boys sped off with their fishing rods. The heat was too great for anybody else to move. Nevertheless, what are parties of pleasure for *but* pleasure? they must not let the whole day slip away with nothing done but lying in the shade of the trees. There was a little island in the lake, well wooded like its shores. It was proposed that the ladies' fishing party should row over to the island, and there, under another shady grove, carry on their designs against the pickerel. Daisy's wish was to go with that party in the boat and watch their sport; especially as Mr. Randolph was the leader and manager of it. She was not asked to go there was no room for the little people; so they stood on the shore and saw the setting off, and watched the bright dimples every stroke of the oars made in the surface of the lake.

The people were pretty well scattered now. Nobody was left on the ground but Mrs. Gary and Mrs. Fish, sitting under a tree at some distance, talking; and Eloise and Theresa, who were charged to superintend the laying of the cloth. Having nothing particular to do, the three children became hangers-on, to watch how this business would be conducted; ready to help if they got a chance.

It was found a difficult business to arrange places for so many people on the grass; and the girls finally and wisely gave it up. They determined to set out the eatables only, on a tablecloth spread to receive them; but to let everybody eat where he felt disposed, or where he could find the best bit of shade. Shade was the best thing that day, Theresa Stanfield declared. But the first thing of all was to light a fire; for coffee must be boiled, and tea made. The fire was not a troublesome thing to have, for dead wood was in plenty for the gathering. James and Logan, who had come to the scene of action, soon had that going; and the children forgot that it was hot, in the beauty and the novelty of the thing, and laughed at Theresa's red cheeks as she stooped over the coals with her coffee-pot. About coffee Daisy was ignorant. But tea had been made in her behalf by Juanita too many times for her, not to have the whole proceeding fixed in her memory.

"Oh, Eloise, you must not make that tea now!" she exclaimed.

"Mustn't I!"

"No. It will be spoiled."

"Some other things have had the same fate," said Eloise.

"It will not be good for anything, Eloise," Daisy persisted, gently. "It should not be made but just before you want it just a few minutes."

"You are wise, Daisy," returned her cousin. "I do not know so much as you do, you see."

Daisy fell back a little. Eloise and Theresa went to unpacking the hampers; and James, acting under their direction, carried and placed the various articles they took out, placed and replaced; for as new and unlooked-for additions were made to the stock of viands, the arrangement of those already on the tablecloth had to be varied. There was a wonderful supply; for a hamper had come from every house that had sent members to the party.

"What shall we do with it all?" said Eloise. "Find out what people like or are expected to like. Just look at the cold chickens! and the ham! I am so thankful for that red lobster, to make a variety. There are three boxes of sardines and what is that?"

"Anchovy paste."

"Well! and look at the other things! We want an army to eat them. There is a dog, to begin with."

Theresa said it with comical coolness; but Eloise screamed, as a little spaniel was perceived to be snuffing round the tablecloth.

"It's Ransom's dog! Run, Daisy, run, and keep him off. Just stay there and keep watch of him, or he'll be all over everything. Daisy, run!"

Daisy left the hampers, and walked, or indeed obeyed orders and ran, to where the little spaniel was threatening a rout among the whole army of cold chickens. Daisy called him off, and then stood by to take care of him. It was very amusing to see Eloise and Theresa unpack the hampers; and Ella and Nora, finding it so, made no move to join Daisy in her distant watch. The men were busy running to and fro with the unpacked eatables, and keeping up the fire, and setting piles of plates everywhere, and laying glasses all round the tablecloth for they would not stand up and putting wine in coolers, that is to say, in pails of ice water. Daisy felt alone again, left out of the play. She looked at Nora and Ella in the distance that is, just far enough away to be out of her society, eagerly standing over the hampers; and for a moment felt not very well pleased, either with them or her cousin Eloise. But then she remembered that she was tired, and sat down with her back against a tree; resolved to take all things patiently, if she could; and she very soon found enough to do, and amusing enough, in ordering the arrangement of the dishes on the tablecloth. Logan was sure to set a thing down in the wrong place, if he set it anywhere; and even James was confused in such a very novel state of his department. Daisy found exercise for all her wisdom, and full content came with full employment, naturally.

You can make pleasure out of almost anything, if you set about it. In the intervals, she rested, and watched the distant figures of the fishing party on the island; and gladdened herself with the beauty and the sweet air of the wood, and the flecks of sunshine and moving shadow on the ground beneath the trees. I am afraid nobody else found the air sweet, unless it were the doctor. He was hardy, and besides had a philosophical way of looking at things. Daisy watched for his coining, afraid that he might wander off beyond luncheon time; but he did not come. The three boys, however, a less welcome sight, had recollected that there was something forward besides fishing; and came strolling along through the trees towards the tablecloth. Preston was stopped to speak to his mother; the other two approached Daisy.

"Hollo!" said Ransom, "here we are! now where's everybody else? I'm furious as a lion."

"A hungry lion," said Alexander Fish. "I wish we had got some fish for the people to cook. That's fun. I tell you, Ransom, it's fun to see the work they make with it."

"Fish is no count, I think," said Ransom. "Its only good to catch. I can stand a lobster salad, though. But I can't stand long without something. What's the use of waiting? They aren't coming back yonder till night. They haven't stirred yet."

Ransom's eyes indicated the party on the island. And acting upon his announced opinion, Ransom paid his respects in a practical form, not to cold chicken and bread, but to a dish of cream cakes which stood conveniently near. And having eaten one, in three mouthfuls, he stretched out his hand, and took another. Happily then, some meringues attracted his attention; and he stood with a cream cake in one hand, and a meringue in the other, taking them alternately, or both together. The meringues began to disappear fast. Daisy warned him that the only dish of those delicacies in all the entertainment was the one into which he was making such inroads. Ransom paid her no heed, and helped himself to another.

"Ransom, that is not fair," said his sister. "There are no more but those, and you will have them all gone. Just look, now, how the dish looks!"

"How the dish looks!" said Ransom, mockingly. "None of your business."

"It is not right. Don't, Ransom!" Daisy said, as his hand was extended for a fourth meringue.

"Want 'em for yourself?" said Ransom, sneeringly. "I say, Alexander here's a game! Here's something just fit for a man's luncheon in a summer day something nice and light and nourishing. Here's a lark pie I know what it is, for I saw Joanna making it. Now we'll have this and be off."

"You must not, Ransom," Daisy urged, anxiously.

But Ransom seized the pie from its place, and proceeded to cut into it, seeing that nobody was near to hinder him.

"Ransom, you ought not to do it," pleaded Daisy. "You ought to wait your turn. You are worse than Fido."

"Am I?" said Ransom, fiercely. "Take that! Mind your own affairs, and let mine alone. You are not queen here yet, if you think you are."

A tolerably smart box on the ear was the accompaniment to this speech. Nobody was near. Alexander, after joining his friend in a meringue or two with a cream cake, not feeling quite comfortable in the connection, had moved off. So did Ransom now, but he carried his pie with him, and called the other two boys to bear him company in making lunch of it. Preston was much too gentlemanly a fellow to take part even of a lark pie in such circumstances; he walked off in disdain, leaving Ransom and Alexander to do what they liked. And they liked the pie, so well that I am bound to say nothing of it remained very soon excepting the dish. Even the bones were swallowed by Fido.

Daisy was left alone under the tree with her occupation gone; for Fido was after the lark bones. Her ear rang a few minutes from the application of Ransom's hand; but that effect had passed off long before Daisy's mind was quieted. For, gentle as she was, Daisy was a little lady who had a very deep and particular sense of personal dignity; she felt wronged as well as hurt. Her father and mother never indulged in that method of punishment; and if they had, Ransom's hand was certainly not another one to inflict it.

Daisy was quite as much stung by the insult as by the unkindness; but she felt both. She felt both so much that she was greatly discomposed. Her watch over the feast was entirely forgotten; luckily Fido had gone off with his master, and chickens were no longer in immediate danger. Daisy rubbed away first one tear and then another, feeling a sort of bitter fire hot at her heart; and then she began to be dissatisfied at finding herself so angry. This would not do; anger was something she had no business with; how could she carry her Lord's message, or do anything to serve Him, in such a temper? It would not do; but there it was, offended dignity and pride, hot at her heart. Nobody would have thought perhaps that Daisy was proud; but you never can tell what is in a person's heart till it is tried; and then the kinds of pride are various. It does not follow because you have none of one sort that you have not plenty of another sort. However, finding this fire at her heart quite too much for her to manage, Daisy went away from her watching-place; crept away among the trees without any one's observing her; till she had put some distance between her and the party, and found a further shelter from them in a big moss-grown rock and large tree. There was a bed of moss, soft and brown, on the other side of the rock; and there Daisy fell down on her knees and began to remember "Thou therefore endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XXV.

A SHOWER.

Certainly the sun was very hot that day. The fishers on the island found it so, notwithstanding that they had sought out every one for himself the shadiest, freshest nook that could be found. Nothing was fresh; and if the trees did hinder the sunshine from falling on some parts of the ground, they kept off none of it from the water; and the glare from that was said to be unendurable. Even where there was not much glare strictly speaking; people were not particular in their speech that day. At last they voted that holding lines in the water was of no use; fish could not be expected to leave their cool depths below to seek the sunny regions near the surface of the water; "they would be fools if they did," one of the ladies remarked. Fish never were supposed to be very wise creatures, Mr. Sandford informed her; but, nevertheless, it was resolved not to reckon upon their want of wisdom at this time, but to put up and go back to shore, and try what cold chicken would do. So just about the hour when the sun's work for the day verges towards the hottest, the little boat was seen again stealing over the sunny surface of the lake, back to where the tablecloth lay spread for the tired people.

A little while before it reached that place, Dr. Sandford arrived upon the scene. He looked a little warm in the face; but his white shooting coat did not seem less affected by the state of the weather than the doctor's temper. Mrs. Gary and Mrs. Fish he found sunk in somnolency at the foot of the tree where they had been talking. The young ladies were sitting by the emptied hampers, deep in confab. The boys and Fido, over against the outspread feast, were arranging fishing-tackle, and watching the return of the boat; with eyes of anticipation. To them came the doctor.

"Where is your sister, Ransom?"

"I don't know." The tone meant, "I don't care."

"I do not see her anywhere."

"No more do I," said Ransom, without raising his eyes from his fishing line.

"Where is she?"

"I told you, I don't know."

"Did she go with the fishing party?"

"No, sir; she was here when we came," Alexander Fish spoke up.

"Yes, I remember she was here," said Preston. "I remember seeing her. She cannot be far off. It's hot enough to keep people from straying far."

The doctor, being not absolutely satisfied with this reasoning, and having nothing better to do, occupied himself with a search after the missing Daisy. It lasted some time, and he was beginning to be not quite easy in his mind; when, being a sportsman, his eye detected something at a distance which was not moss nor stone. In two minutes the doctor came up with it. It was Daisy, fast asleep on her moss bed behind the rock. Her head lay on her arm which was curled up under it; and profound slumber had left the little pale face as serene as usual. The doctor was warm by this time. He sat down on the moss beside her; and putting his arm under Daisy's shoulders lifted her up, by way of waking her, speaking to her at the same moment. But to his amusement, Daisy no sooner got her eyes well open than she shook herself free of him, and sat as demure as possible opposite to him on the moss.

"Dr. Sandford! I believe I got asleep," she said, in a bewildered kind of way.

"How did you get *here*, Daisy?"

"I came here, sir."

"What for did you come here?"

Daisy looked troubled; glanced at the doctor's face, and then rested her head on her hand.

"Who has been vexing you now?" said he at haphazard.

"I am not vexed," said Daisy, in the gentlest of all possible tones.

"Tired?"

"I think I am tired."

"Honour bright, Daisy! has not some one been vexing you?"

"I ought not to have been vexed," said Daisy, slowly.

"I will wager that you are wrong there, and that you ought to have been vexed. Who was it, Daisy?"

"Never mind, please, Dr. Sandford! It is no matter at all now."

She put her little hand confidingly in the doctor's as she spoke, and looked very earnest. He could not resist her.

"I wish I had come sooner," he said. "I shall be suspicious of everybody, Daisy. Come you and I must go to dinner, or there will be a hue and cry after us."

Indeed by this time the whole party were gathered, and in impatient expectation that the dinner would make up to them in some degree for the various disappointments of the morning.

All were gathered and had arranged themselves conveniently upon the grass, around the feast which was spread out upon the tablecloth, before anybody knew that two of their number were wanting. The cry was just raised, "Where is the doctor?" when the doctor hove in sight, with Daisy by his side. Everybody was placed already; and it was very natural that the doctor, keeping hold of Daisy's hand, led her with him to the spot that seemed to be left for his occupancy, and seated her there beside him. On the other side of Daisy was Mrs. Stanfield. She was very well satisfied with this arrangement, seeing that her father was surrounded by people, and busy besides; and that Nora and Ella were with Alexander and Ransom.

What a gay tableful they were! all talking and laughing, though everybody declared himself exceeded by the heat, and bored by the fishing, and generally tired of everything but eating and drinking. But iced champagne was now at the parched lips, and boned turkey and jellied ham were waiting attention, and a good time had come.

It was some while, of course, before Daisy could be served. She waited, feeling very happy and amused; for a party of people taking a cold dinner out of doors do not look nor act exactly like the same people taking a hot dinner in the house. Daisy never dreamed that anybody was noticing her. She had a disagreeable surprise.

"Daisy," said Mrs. Randolph, from a little distance, and across several people, "Daisy, what did you do that for?"

"Mamma!" said Daisy. "What, mamma?"

"Have you a headache?"

"Oh, no, mamma."

"What did you put up your hand to your brow for?"

"Mamma?" said Daisy, very much bewildered. For she knew nothing was the matter, and she could not guess what her mother was thinking of. Moreover, somehow, Mrs. Randolph's words or manner had acted to stop the voices of all the company in her neighbourhood; and everybody was waiting and looking to see what the subject of interest might be. Mrs. Randolph's words could come now with their usual calm distinctness; and Daisy's answers, no matter how softly spoken, could be well heard. In a good deal of wonder Daisy repeated, "Mamma?"

"You put up your hand and sat with your eyes covered did you not, just now?"

"Yes, mamma."

No need to bid anybody look and listen now; the rosy flush that had spread itself all over Daisy's pale cheeks sufficiently aroused curiosity.

"I notice that you do so before every meal is it not the case?"

"Yes, mamma."

Dr. Sandford could hear the caught breath. He did not look, except by a glance, but he listened.

"What does that mean, Daisy?"

"Mamma?" said the child in distress.

"I ask you, what that means? what is it for?"

"Mamma may I come round there and speak to you?"

"Certainly not. Sit still in your place and answer."

But Daisy was silent, very flushed.

"Do you hear, Daisy? what does that action mean? I wish to know."

"Mamma, may I speak to you in private and tell you?"

"Are you ashamed of it? are you ashamed to tell me?"

"No, mamma."

"Then, do it at once."

But everybody waited in vain to hear the answer. It did not come.

"I shall not ask you again, Daisy."

"Mamma," said the child, low and modestly, but with steadiness, "I was praying."

"Praying! were you! Why do you choose that particular time for your private devotions?"

It was almost too much. The tears started in Daisy's eyes; but presently she answered, "Because God is good to us, mamma."

"He is always good," said Mrs. Randolph. "That is a very silly practice of yours, Daisy, and very unbecoming. There is a proper way of doing everything."

The lady's manner said that the subject was dismissed, and her guests returned to their ordinary conversation. Except the doctor and Daisy. She was overwhelmed, and he was gravely unsocial.

Was it silly? that bound her heart had made up to the feet of her King? That joyful thanksgiving, and expression of love, and pledge of obedience, and prayer for help? It was something better than the meal often to Daisy; something sweeter and happier. Was it silly? and must she do so no more except when she was alone?

Daisy had quite forgotten that eating and drinking was part of the present matter in hand, when Dr. Sandford softly asked her what she would like to have. Daisy said anything he pleased; not caring herself, and indeed in too much confusion of mind yet to know or think about the business. And her appetite was gone. Dr. Sandford provided for her with kind care, what she liked too; but nothing was good to Daisy. She broke bread and swallowed milk mechanically; the more substantial food she refused utterly. Bread and milk and grapes were Daisy's dinner.

"It's good to be somebody's favourite," Ransom said to her after the meal was over. "Nobody got any grapes but you."

"Nobody? Why, Ransom, I thought everybody had them."

"I didn't, nor Preston, nor Alexander not a berry; and Nora and Ella Stanfield didn't. You are the favourite."

"Oh, Nora," said Daisy, "didn't you have any grapes? I'm sorry!"

"I had peaches," said Nora. "I like peaches a great deal the best. Daisy, what shall we do now?"

"Suppose we sit down, and have a talk."

"A talk?" said Nora. "Suppose we have a game of hide and seek? It's such a good place."

"Or forfeits?" said Ella. "It is too hot to play hide and seek."

"I don't think it is hot," said Nora. "The sun don't shine now."

"Daisy, don't you want to go out with me in the boat?" said Preston, coming up. "We'll get in the shade, and see if you can catch a pickerel as well as you did a trout."

"Oh, I should like that!" said Daisy, eagerly. She saw the kindness of Preston's meaning. He wanted to make her forget her vexations.

"And may we go too?" Nora asked.

"Certainly; but Daisy and I are going to do the fishing. You must be content to look on. We will go round to the other side of the island, Daisy; it is pretty there, I know. And we shall have a better chance for the pickerel, for the sun is gone under a cloud."

So the sun had; but at that very moment the cloud passed off and the brilliant hot beams fell with what seemed renewed brilliancy on the lake, and on all the ground which they could touch.

"It will go under again," said Preston. "We do not mind trifles. Come, Daisy."

"Daisy, you must not go," said Dr. Sandford, looking round. He was just moving away to see some one else, and was gone in a minute.

"The doctor is all very well when one is sick," said Preston; "but I never heard he had a right to command people when they are well. Daisy, we will not mind him."

"I must," said Daisy, meekly. "But you can go without me, if you want to."

"Nonsense, dear little Daisy! you are not obliged to do what *everybody* says," her cousin urged. "Dr. Sandford has no more business to say what you shall do than what I shall do. I will not let him rule you so. Come! we will go try for the pickerel. Go, Nora and Ella, run away with the baskets to the boat. Come, Daisy, come!"

"No, Preston, I cannot."

"Because of what that stupid man says? or don't you want to go!"

"I would like to go very much, thank you, Preston."

"Then you shall!"

"No. I cannot."

"Daisy, you might as well obey me as Dr. Sandford."

"I do not think so."

"Nora and Ella are going. You will be left alone."

"I hope you will catch some pickerel," said Daisy, steadily.

But Preston was vexed. He did not like it that his word should not have as much weight with his little cousin as any other person's, after her father and mother. Like other boys, and men, for the most part, he was fond of having his own way even in little things; though he sought it in a polite fashion. And Daisy was very fond of him, and always followed his lead; but now he could not move her. He went off at a bound, and soon was out upon the water, with the girls, and Alexander and Ransom also who had joined him.

Daisy would have liked the shelter of her mossy hiding-place again. She stood in the shade of a tree looking after the boat; feeling very much left alone and greatly disposed to have a good crying time; but that was not her way of meeting trouble. What a strange day of pleasure this Silver Lake business had turned out! Yet Daisy had enjoyed many things in it; but her mother's attack upon her at luncheon had sobered her completely. It was such a sign of what she might expect. Daisy presently fell to considering what she should do; and then remembered her old refuge, prayer; and then concluded that she was a very happy little girl after all. And instead of being hurt that Nora had been with her so little that day, it was very natural, Daisy said to herself. Of course, Nora wanted to go in the boat with Preston after fish; it was too good an opportunity to be lost; and of course she had liked the walk in the morning with the larger and gayer party. It was all right, Daisy decided, although not what she herself would have done in the circumstances. Would her note to her father have been reckoned "silly" too? Very likely. Daisy turned her wistful eyes to where he was; sitting in a group of ladies and gentlemen, talking. Daisy could not go to him. Further along, Mrs. Gary was fighting the heat under a tree by herself. No attraction there. Still further the doctor was standing talking to the two young ladies. As Daisy looked, he quitted them and came towards her.

"Have I spoiled all your pleasure, Daisy?"

"No, sir."

"Are you angry with me?"

The answer this time was given with such an affectionate bright smile that the doctor must have been hard not to feel it.

"You do not seem to have much pleasure on hand just now," said he; "would you like to take a little walk with me, and see if we can find any wonderful things?"

Daisy's face was quite answer enough, it was so full of content. The doctor had no intention to tire her; he strolled along the borders of the lake, which was wild and lovely all the more as they got further away from the picnic ground. Firs and oaks stood thick all along, with many other trees also; the ground was carpeted with layers of moss; great rocks rose up by the water's edge, grey and brown with lichens. It was not so hot now. The sun's glare was shielded off. On a mossy carpet beside the water's edge the doctor and Daisy sat down.

Undoubtedly the doctor had never taken so much trouble with a child before; but Daisy was a study to him.

"We do not find the wonderful things, Daisy," he remarked, throwing himself back upon the moss with his hands under his head. His cap fell off; his blue eyes looked at her with a sort of contented laziness; never sleepily.

Daisy smiled at him. "I do," she said.

"You do! What have you found?"

"I think everything is wonderful."

"A profound truth," said the doctor; "but you are very young to find it out. Instance, Daisy."

"But you want to go to sleep, sir."

"How dare you say so? No, I don't. I want to have a talk with you about something wonderful."

Daisy thought he looked a little sleepy, for his eyelids drooped well over his eyes; nevertheless, the eyes saw keenly enough the start of pleasure into hers. And they had seen the pale, subdued look of the face that it had worn before. Nevertheless, in spite of that start, Daisy remained as quiet as a mouse, looking at him.

"Don't you think I can talk while I am enjoying myself in this fashion?" said the doctor.

"I think you can talk any way," said Daisy; "but you look a great deal more like sleeping, sir."

"None of that. Go on, Daisy. Only do not say anything about the sun, now that it has gone under a cloud. Let us forget it for a little while."

"What shall I take, then?"

"I don't care. Something green and refreshing."

Daisy looked around her. On every side she saw things that she had no doubt would be very interesting to talk about; she did not know which to choose. There were the trees; the firs and hemlocks, and the oaks and maples, growing thick on every hand. No doubt those beautiful structures had uses and characters of wonder; she had a great mind to ask the doctor to tell her about them. But the great boulder beside which they were hid from view, divided her attention; it was very large, and rounded off on all sides, lying quietly on the ground; and Daisy was curious to know how it came to be so grown over with green things; mosses and ferns draped it all over; how could they grow on the bare rock?

"Well, Daisy?" said her friend, watching how Daisy's countenance woke up from its subdued expression.

"Dr. Sandford, how could these things grow on the rock? these green things?"

"What green things?"

"Why, ever so many sorts. Here is moss, a great deal of it, of different kinds; and there is beautiful brake at the top, like plumes of feathers. How can they grow there?"

"Why not?"

"I thought everything wanted some earth to grow in."

"Have they none?"

"I don't know. I thought not. They must have very little indeed, Dr. Sandford."

"Very little will do, I suppose."

"But I do not see how any earth got there," said Daisy. "It was only a bare rock at first, of course."

"At first," repeated the doctor. "Well, Daisy, I suppose it was no more. But there is something else growing there, which you have not spoken of."

"Is there?" said Daisy. "I do not see anything else."

"Pardon me you do see it."

"Then I do not know what it is," said Daisy, laughing. Absolutely, the sober, sober little face had forgotten its care, and the eyes were alight with intelligence and curiosity, and the lips were unbent in good honest laughter. The doctor raised himself up to a sitting posture.

"What do you call those grey and brown patches of colour that hide your rock all over?"

"Grey and brown?" said Daisy, wistfully "those are just the colours of the rock, aren't they?"

"No. Look close.

"Why, Dr. Sandford, what is it? It is not the rock some of it is not but here is a spot of yellow that is nothing else, I think."

"You must learn not to trust your eyes, Daisy. That is something that grows; it is not rock; it is a vegetable. If I had my pocket lens here I would show you; but I am afraid yes, I have left it at home."

"Why, it is!" cried Daisy. "I can see now it is not rock. What is it, Dr. Sandford?"

"Lichen."

"What is that, sir?"

"It is one of the lowest forms of vegetable life. It is the first dress the rocks wear, Daisy."

"But what does it live on?"

"Air and water, I suppose."

"I never knew that was a vegetable," said Daisy, musingly. "I thought it was the colour of the rock."

"That goes to prepare soil for the mosses, Daisy."

"Oh, how, Dr. Sandford?"

"In time the surface of the rock is crumbled a little by its action; then its own decay furnishes a very little addition to that. In favourable situations a stray oak leaf or two falls and lies there, and also decays, and by and by there is a little coating of soil or a little lodgment of it in a crevice or cavity, enough for the flying spores of some moss to take root and find home."

"And then the moss decays and makes soil for the ferns?"

"I suppose so."

Daisy stood looking with a countenance of delighted intelligence at the great boulder, which was now to her a representative and witness of natural processes she had had no knowledge of before. The mosses, the brakes, the lichen, had all gained new beauty and interest in her eyes. The doctor watched her, and then scrambled up to his feet and came to her side.

"Look here, Daisy," said he, stooping down at the foot of the rock, and showing her where tufts of a delicate little green plant clustered, bearing little umbrella-like heads on tiny shafts of handles.

"What is that, Dr. Sandford?"

"Something wonderful."

"Is it? It is pretty. What is it, sir?"

"It is a plant somewhere between the mosses and the lichens in its character it is one of the liverworts, and they are some of the first plants to go in advance of superior vegetation. This is called *Marchantia*."

"And is it wonderful, Dr. Sandford?"

"If I could show it to you, you would think so. Look here, Daisy on the surface of this leaf do you see little raised spots here and there?"

"Yes, I see them."

"Those are, when they are finished, little baskets."

"Baskets?" exclaimed Daisy, delightedly. "I can't see anything like a basket now."

"No, it is too small for you to see; you must take it on my word, who have seen it. They are baskets, and such baskets as you never dreamed of. The shape is elegant, and round the edge, Daisy, they are cut into a fringe of teeth, and each tooth is cut again into teeth, making a fringe around its tiny edge.

"I wish I could see it," said Daisy.

"Now if you were my little sister, and lived with me, I could show you these things in the evenings."

Daisy responded to this with a very grateful and somewhat wistful smile, but immediately went on with the business in hand.

"Do these little baskets hold anything, Dr. Sandford?"

"Yes. Baskets are always made to hold something."

"What do they hold?"

"They hold what are called *spores*; that is, little bits of things which, whenever they get a chance, begin to grow and make new plants."

"Seeds?" said Daisy.

"They answer the purpose of seeds."

"How do they get out of the basket? Do the winds blow them out?"

"Or the rain washes them out. If they lie long enough in the basket, they will take root there, and then there is a new plant seen growing out of the old one."

"How wonderful it is!" said Daisy.

"There is another wonder about it. It does not matter which way these little spores lie on the ground or in the basket; but the side that happens to be exposed to the light, after a time, prepares itself to expand into the surface of a frond, while the dark side sends down a tiny root."

"And it does not matter which side lies uppermost?"

"No, not in the beginning."

"What is a *frond*, Dr. Sandford?"

"This sort of seed-bearing leaf is called so."

"How pretty it is!" said Daisy. "What are these little things like umbrellas?"

"These carry the real seed vessels of the plant."

"Other seeds. Dr. Sandford, is *everything* wonderful?"

"What do you think about it?"

"I do not know but a very little," said Daisy; "but I never should have thought this little green moss or what did you say it was?"

"Liverwort. Its name is Marchantia."

"This liverwort; I never should have supposed it was anything but pretty, and of course good for something; but now I never heard anything so wonderful."

"More than the sun?" said Dr. Sandford, smiling.

"It is more surprising, I think," said Daisy.

"Pray, what makes you conclude so securely that this little Marchantia is *good for something*?"

Daisy gave him a quick look of wisdom and suspicion mingled. The doctor was getting a very good amusement himself, and quite entered into the matter. He waited for Daisy's answer. It came diplomatically.

"*Isn't* everything good for something, sir?"

"Pon my word, I don't know," said the doctor. "My enquiry was for the grounds of your opinion, Daisy."

"It was not an opinion. I do not think I am old enough to have an opinion."

"What was it, Daisy?"

The doctor was still crouching down by the side of the rock, examining carelessly whatever he found there. Daisy looked at him, and waited, and felt at last that good manners required her to speak.

"You said, sir, that baskets were made to hold something."

"So your remark was an inference from mine."

"No, sir."

"Go on, Daisy."

"I only said it, sir, because I knew it was true."

There was an odd contrast between the extreme modesty of Daisy's manner and the positiveness of her words.

"It is said to be a great philosophical truth, Daisy; but what I want to know is how you, not being a philosopher, have got such firm hold of it?"

He faced Daisy now, and she gave way as usual before the searching blue eyes. One soft look, and her eyes fell away.

"I only thought it, Dr. Sandford, because in the beginning when God had made everything the Bible says he saw that it was all good."

"Daisy, how came you to be such a lover of the Bible?"

Daisy did not speak at once, and when she did it was a departure from the subject.

"Dr. Sandford, I felt a drop of rain on my face!"

"And here is another," said the doctor, getting up. "This is what I have expected all day. Come, Daisy you must be off in your chaise-a-porteurs without delay."

"But Nora, and Ella, and the boys! they are away off on the lake."

"They will scuttle home now," said the doctor, "but I have nothing to do with them. You are my business, Daisy."

Accordingly he carried her back to the lunching-place, not indeed in his arms, but with a strong hand that made her progress over the stones and moss very rapid, and that gave her a great flying leap whenever occasion was, over any

obstacle that happened to be in the way. There was need enough for haste. The light veil of haze that had seemed to curtain off the sunlight so happily from the lake and the party, proved now to have been only the advancing soft border of an immense thick cloud coming up from the west. No light veil now; a deep, dark covering was over the face of the sky, without break or fold; the drop or two of rain that had been felt were merely the outriders of an approaching storm. Low, threatening, distant mutterings of thunder from behind the mountains, told the party what they might expect before long.

There was sudden confusion. Nobody wanted to be out in the storm, and to avoid it seemed a difficult problem. Hastily the ladies caught up their scarfs and bags, and set off upon a scattering flight through the woods to the shore, those who were nearest or first ready not stopping to wait for the others. Quickly the luncheon-ground was deserted; fast the blue and white flutter of muslins disappeared in the enveloping woods; hastily the remainder of the packing went on to get the hampers again in readiness to move. In the midst of all this, who was to carry Daisy's chair?

"You say there is a house somewhere on the way," said Mr. Randolph to the doctor. "If you will go forward with Daisy at once, I will stay to look after those children in the boat. They are coming now as fast as they can."

"Can you carry my gun?"

"Certainly. Doctor, I will take that office, if you will stay behind till the boat gets to land."

"Thank you it is better arranged the other way. The storm will be upon us before the ladies get to the shore, I fear."

"Then they had better take the other route."

Mr. Randolph in haste despatched one of the men to recall the fleeing members of the party, and bring them round by the other road to the house. But before that, the doctor had put Daisy in her chair, and with Logan at the other end of it, had set off to reach shelter. It grew very dark; and it was sultrily still in the woods. Not a leaf trembled on its stem. The steps of the two chair-bearers sounded ominously in the entire hush of everything. The gloom still deepened. The doctor and Logan with swift, steady strides carried the chair along at a goodly rate; not as it had come in the morning. In the midst of this, and after it had gone on some time in silence, Daisy twisted herself round to look at the doctor and give him a smile.

"You do not seem concerned, Daisy, in the view of getting wet?"

"Why, no," said Daisy, twisting round again, "it is nice. I am only sorry for the people who are so frightened."

"What is nice? getting wet?"

"Oh, no," said Daisy. "Maybe I shall not get wet you go so fast."

But at this moment there came a nearer growl of thunder, and the leaves in the tops of the trees rustled as if a breath had passed over them. Then were still.

"Can you mend your pace, Logan?" said the doctor.

"Ay, sir!" came in the deep, cheery utterance of Logan's Scotch voice.

"Hold fast, Daisy" said the doctor; and the two chair-bearers changed their pace for a swinging trot. It was needful to hold on now indeed, for this gait jolted the chair a good deal; but it got over the ground, and Daisy found it excessively amusing. They passed the thick-standing tree-stems in quick succession now; the rocks uprising from the side of the path were left behind one after another; they reached the sharp bend in the road; and, keeping up the swinging trot with a steadiness which showed good wind on the part of both the chair-bearers, at last the little house where Sam had been left hove in view. Time it was; full time. One and another sigh of the wind had bowed the tree-tops with a token of what was coming; one and another bright flash of lightning had illumined the woody wilderness; and now, just as the chair stopped, drops began to fall which seemed as large as cherry-stones, mingled with hail a good deal larger. Their patter sounded on the leaves a minute or two; then ceased.

"That will do, Logan," said the doctor. "Bring the chair in under shelter if you can; and come in yourself. This will be a shower." And he led Daisy into the house.

If ever you saw a dark-looking place, that was the room into which the house-door admitted them. Two little windows seemed at this instant to let in the darkness rather than the light; they were not very clean, besides being small a description which Daisy would have said applied to the whole room. She stood still in the middle of the floor, not seeing any place to sit down, that she could make up her mind to take. The doctor went to the window. Logan took a chair. Sam was sitting disconsolately in a corner. It was hard to say to what class of people the house belonged; poor people they were of course; and things looked as if they were simply living there because too poor to live anywhere else. A slatternly woman stared at the intruders; a dirty child crawled over the hearth. Daisy could not endure to touch anything, except with the soles of her shoes. So she stood upright in the middle of the floor; till the doctor turned round.

"Daisy! are you going to stand there till the shower is over?"

"Yes, sir," Daisy answered, patiently. A smile curled the doctor's lips. He opened the door and lifted in the chair with its long poles, which indeed half filled the little room; but Daisy sat down. The woman looked on in astonishment.

"Be she weakly, like?" she asked at length of the doctor.

"Has been " he answered.

"And what be that thing for?"

"It is for going up and down mountains."

"Have you come from the mountings!" she asked, in great surprise. The doctor was in for it. He was obliged to explain. Meanwhile the darkness continued, and the rain did not yet fall. A breath of wind now and then brushed heavily past the house, and sunk into silence. The minutes passed.

"It will be a happiness if they get here before it begins," said Dr. Sandford; "it will come when it comes!"

"Be there *more* comin'?" said the woman.

"A housefull. We are only the beginning."

She moved about now with somewhat of anxiety to get sundry things out of the way, which yet there seemed no other place for; a frying-pan was set up in a corner; a broom took position by the fire place; a pail of water was lifted on the table; and divers knives and forks and platters hustled into a chimney cupboard. Little room enough when all was done. At last the woman caught up the sprawling baby and sat down with it opposite the broom, on the other side the fire, in one of the three chairs the place contained. Sam had another. Logan was on a box. The woman's eyes said, "Now I am ready to see all that comes."

CHAPTER XXVI.

DAISY'S SUPPER.

It was some time first, and the rain still did not fall. It was very black, and flashes from distant lightning with mutterings of the thunder were frequent and threatening; still no rain unless a few ominous drops. At last voices and fluttering muslins came down the road; the flutter came near, and in poured a stream of gay people at the door of the poor little room. Gay as to their dress and attire, that is; for gaiety was not to be found at present in their words and behaviour. The woman in the chimney corner hugged up closer her dirty baby with the delight of so unwonted a feast to her eyes.

"Is there nothing better than *this* to be had?" said Mrs. Fish. And her tone was indescribable.

"How long have we got to remain here, doctor?" said a more cheery voice.

"Mrs. Stanfield, until the rain has come, and gone."

"It would be better to be out in it," whispered Theresa to her mother.

"My love, there is no other shelter on this side the river."

"There will not be standing room for us all presently " said
Eloise Gary.

Pretty nearly so; for when the second detachment of the party arrived, in a minute more, people looked at each other across a throng of heads. They got in; that was all. To sit down or to move much was out of the question.

"Daisy, you can't have this big chair of yours in here," said Ransom in an energetic whisper. "Don't you see there is no room for it?"

Daisy saw there was very little. She got up patiently and stood, though feeling very tired; while her chair was got out of the door with a good deal of difficulty.

"Are you tired, my darling?" said her father, bending down to the pale little face.

"A little, papa," said Daisy, sighing.

No more words, but Mr. Randolph lifted Daisy in his arms and gave her a resting place there. Daisy was afraid she was too heavy for him, but it was very comfortable to sit there, with her arm on his shoulder. Her face looked its content; the only face in which such an expression could be seen at present; though the gentlemen took the thing coolly, and Mr. Randolph and the two Sandfords looked as usual. But now the delayed storm drew near. The thunder notified with every burst the fact that it was coming speedily; the lightning became vivid and constant. A premonitory sweep of the wind and the clouds gave out their treasures of rain and hail with tremendous fury. The lightning was terrible now, and the darkness of the intervals between so great that the company could scarcely see each other's faces. This was more than some of the party had bargained for, and there was a degree of confusion. Screams from a few of the ladies and exclamations of terror from others were mixed now and then with words that sounded very like an oath to Daisy's ear, though they were not spoken in levity. She bent her head round to look in the face of the lady who had last used them, as if to assure herself what was meant; and then her head went down on Mr. Randolph's shoulder and her face was hidden.

"Daisy " whispered her father.

"Yes, papa."

"Are you afraid?"

"No, papa not for myself."

"What? Look up here, Daisy."

She lifted her face; it was wistful and troubled.

"Are you concerned about the storm, my darling?"

"No, papa; not myself."

"How then, Daisy?"

She shuddered. "Papa, I wish they would not scream so!"

"Why does that trouble *you*?" said Mr. Randolph, smiling.

But Daisy's face was unutterably grave, as a new brilliant band of forked lightning glittered outside the windows, and the burst of the thunderbolt sounded as if at their very feet, making a renewal of the same cries and exclamations.

"Why does it trouble you, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph, soothingly, feeling the quiver of the child's frame.

"Papa," said Daisy, with intense expression, "they do not love Jesus!" And her head went down again to be hid on her father's shoulder.

Mr. Randolph did nothing to bring it up again; and Daisy lay quite still, while the storm raged in full fury, and the screams and ejaculations of the ladies were joined now and then by a word of impatience from one of the gentlemen, or a "Hech, sirs!" in Logan's smothered Scotch brogue. Once Mr. Randolph felt Daisy's lips pressed against his face, and then her other arm came round his neck, and nestling there closely she was after that as still as a mouse. The storm

lasted a long time. The lightning and thunder at last removed their violence some distance off; then the wind and the rain did their part, which they had not fully done before. And all the while the poor party of pleasure sat or stood as thick as bees in a hive, in the miserable shelter of the cottage. Miserable, yet welcome. Very tired and impatient the people became as they grew less frightened. Daisy had long been fast asleep. The day waned and drew near its ending. When sunset was, nobody could tell by the light; but that night was at hand was at last evident from the darkness.

"Your arms must be weary, Mr. Randolph," said Dr. Sandford.

"Let me relieve you of your burden."

"I cannot let you do that."

"I will," said the doctor. "Daisy being my charge as well as yours, gives me a right." And the transfer was actually made before Daisy was aware of it. She waked up however, with a feeling of some change and a doubt upon her mind as to what custody she was in; but she was not sure, till the woman of the house lit a miserable dip candle, which threw a light that mocked the darkness over the weary company. Daisy did not like the arrangement at all.

"Dr. Sandford!" she exclaimed. "I shall tire you. Please put me on the floor and let me stand."

"No, you cannot," said the doctor, decidedly. "Be a good child, Daisy. Lay your head down and go to sleep again."

And greatly to Daisy's astonishment the doctor's moustache brushed her lip. Now Daisy had always thought to herself that she would never allow anybody that wore a moustache to kiss her; here it was done, without leave asked; and if the doctor was so independent of rules as that, she thought she had best not provoke him. Besides, she remembered that her father must be tired with carrying her so long; and moreover, if Dr. Sandford liked her well enough to kiss her, maybe he would not care for the trouble of holding her for a while. At any rate Daisy submitted peaceably to the necessity; put her arm over the doctor's shoulder to support herself, and laid her head down; though not to sleep. She watched everything that was going on now. What a roomful of weary and impatient people they were! packed like cattle in a pen, for closeness; and how the rain poured and beat outside the house! The shelter was something to be thankful for, and yet how unthankful everybody looked. Some of the gentlemen showed calm fortitude under their trials; but the poor ladies' chagrined faces said that days of pleasure were misnamed. Alexander Fish had gone to sleep; Ransom looked cross; Preston as usual gentlemanly, though bored. From one to another Daisy's eye roved. Nora and Ella were sitting on the table; in full confab. Other people were sitting there too; the table was full.

"The storm is slackening " Mr. Randolph remarked to the doctor.

"It will be over in a little while more."

"What do you think of it, Daisy?" said her father, noticing her look.

"Of what, papa?"

"Parties of pleasure in general."

"Papa, I have had a very nice time."

"You have had a nice sleep," said her father, laughing; "and that colours your views of things. The rest of us have not had that advantage."

"Daisy, I am surprised to hear you say what you do," the doctor remarked as Mr. Randolph turned away. He spoke softly.

"Why, sir?"

"I thought your day had not been *altogether* agreeable?"

"Do you think anything is apt to be *altogether* agreeable, Dr. Sandford?" Daisy said, with a demure waiving of the subject which was worthy of much older years. The quaintness of this remark was infinite.

"What has been the agreeableness to-day, for instance?"

"Oh, a great deal; my ride in the chair, that was nice! and all our walk, and what, you were telling me; and coming over the river " Daisy paused.

"And what do you think of being carried in the arms of gentlemen," said Mrs. Gary, who had overheard a few words, "while other little girls have to get along as they can? as tired as you are, I dare say."

"I cannot help it, aunt Gary," said Daisy. But the remark served to justify her view of things; for what had in truth been altogether agreeable up to that minute was so no longer. Daisy was uneasy.

"Dr. Sandford," she whispered after a few moments, "I am rested I can stand now. I am tiring you. Please set me down."

"No. Be quiet, Daisy," said her friend, peremptorily. And as the little head went down again obediently on his shoulder, he gave again a gentle kiss to her lips. Daisy did not mind Mrs. Gary after that.

The storm slackened off now rapidly. The patter of the rain lessened and grew still; a sweet reviving air blew in at the windows. Of course the road was drenched with wet and every tree dripping; nevertheless the journey must be made to the boats, and the poor ladies were even glad to set out to undertake it. But it would not be an easy journey either, on the whole. Some time before this the doctor had despatched Logan on an errand. He now declared he must wait for his return; and desired Mr. Randolph to go forward and help take care of the rest of the party and have no concern about Daisy; he would keep her in charge.

"Shall I do that, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph, fearing it might trouble her.

But Daisy said, "Yes, papa" with no hesitation; and the plan was acted upon. Gathering up their floating muslin dresses, tying handkerchiefs over their heads, with shrinking and yet eager steps, one by one they filed out at the door of the little hut. Just as the last one went, Logan came; he had been to the boats and brought thence the doctor's cloak, which, with more providence than the rest of the party who were less used to travelling, he had taken the precaution to bring. Now this, by the doctor's order, was spread over Daisy's chair, which having been pushed out of doors, had got wet; she was placed in it then, and the folds of the cloak brought well round and over her, so that nothing could be more secure than she was from the wet with which every leaf and bough was dripping overhead, and every foot of soil loaded underneath. Dr. Sandford took one end of the poles and Logan the other, and the last of the party they set forth. Why Dr. Sandford had made this arrangement, was best known to himself. Perhaps he preferred it to having Mrs. Fish on his arm, who was a very fine lady; perhaps he preferred it to the attentions he might have had to pay to the younger damsels of the party, who would all three have been on his hands at once, very likely. At all events he did prefer to be one of the chair-bearers, and Daisy was very glad of it.

The rest of the party were well in advance, out of sight and hearing. Tramp, tramp, the steady regular footfall of her bearers, and the light plashing of rain drops as they fell, and the stir of the wind in the leaves, were all the sounds that Daisy heard. No rain fell now; on the contrary the heaven was clear as a bell, and light enough came through the woods to show the way with comfortable certainty. Overhead, the stars were shining down with wonderful brilliancy, through the air which the storm had cleansed from all vapours; the moon was coming up somewhere, too. The smell of the trees and other green things was exceedingly sweet after the rain; and the delicious soft air was very delicious after the sultry day. Never in her life after did Daisy forget that night's work. This ride from the cottage to the shore was something she enjoyed with all her might. It was so wild and strange as well as sweet. Rocks and tree-trunks, and the turnings of the road had all such a mysterious new look, different from what daylight showed them; it was an endless pleasure. Till the walk ended. It came out at last upon the shore of the river and into the moonlight. High in the eastern sky the moon hung, shedding her broad light down all over the river, which crisped and sparkled under it; and there by the water's edge the members of the party of pleasure were huddled together preparing to embark. Over their heads the sails of Mr. Randolph's boat stood up in the moonlight. The doctor and Logan set down their burden and waited. The Fish's were getting on board their little vessel, which was moved by oars alone.

"Mrs. Stanfield, you had better come with us," Mr. Randolph said. "There is plenty of room. Your boat is too small. You would find it unpleasantly rough in mid-channel."

"Oh, is it rough?" exclaimed the lady.

"For your little row-boat I am afraid you would find it so. The wind has roughened the water considerably, and it has not had time to get quiet. Come with us, and we will all take supper together at Melbourne."

It was arranged so. The party were stowed away in the large sail-boat, which held them all well enough; the children being happy at finding themselves seated together.

"What are we waiting for?" said Mrs. Gary when all had been in their places some minutes, and conversation was the only thing moving. "What are we staying here for?"

"Sam."

"Where's Sam?"

"He is yonder in our late place of shelter. James and Michael have gone to fetch him with Daisy's chair."

"Sam! Why, he might have stayed there till to-morrow and no hurt. Have we got to wait till the men go there and bring him back? We shall be late at supper!"

"The river will be all the quieter, Mrs. Gary," said Mr. Randolph, mischievously.

"The river? You don't mean to say it is not quiet?"

"It was not quiet a while ago, I assure you."

"Well, I do think, if ever there was a misnamed thing, it is a party of pleasure," said the lady, disconsolately.

"They are very pleasant when they are over, sister Gary," said Mr. Randolph.

"Daisy," Nora whispered, "are you afraid?"

"No."

"Your father says it is rough."

"He knows how to manage the boat," said Daisy.

"It isn't rough, I don't believe," said Ella Stanfield. "It isn't rough now."

"I wish we were at the other side," said Nora.

"Oh, Nora, I think it is nice," said Daisy. "How bright the moonlight is! Look! all over the river there is a broad strip. I hope we shall sail along just in that strip. Isn't it wonderful, Nora?"

"No. What?" said Nora.

"That there should be something like a looking-glass up in the sky to catch the sunlight and reflect it down to us when we cannot see the sun itself."

"What looking-glass?"

"Well, the moon catches the sunlight just so, as a looking-glass would."

"How do you know, Daisy? *I* think it shines."

"I know because I have been told. It does not shine, any more than a looking-glass."

"Who told you?"

"Dr. Sandford," Daisy whispered.

"Did he! Then why don't we have the moon every night?"

"Because the looking-glass, if you can imagine that it is a looking-glass, does not always hang where it can catch the sun."

"Don't it? I don't like to think it is a looking-glass," said Nora. "I would a great deal rather think it is the moon."

"Well, so it is," said Daisy. "You can think so."

"Daisy, what should we do if it should be rough in the middle of the river?"

"I like it," said Ella Stanfield.

"Perhaps it will not be very rough," said Daisy.

"But suppose it should? And where the moon don't shine it is so dark!"

"Nora," said Daisy, very low, "don't you love Jesus?"

Nora at that flounced round, and turning her face from Daisy, and the moonlight, began to talk to Ella Stanfield on the other side of her. Daisy did not understand what it meant.

All this while, and a good while longer, the rest of the people were waiting with various degrees of patience and impatience for the coming of Sam and the men. It was pretty there by the shore, if they had not been impatient. The evening breeze was exceedingly fragrant and fresh; the light which streamed down from the moon was sparkling on all the surface of the water, and laid a broad band of illumination like a causeway across the river. In one or two places the light showed the sails of a sloop or schooner on her way up or down; and along the shore it grew daintily hazy and soft. But impatience was nevertheless the prominent feeling on board the sail-boat; and it had good time to display itself before Michael and James could go all the distance back to the house and bring Sam away from it.

"Here he is!" "There they are at last!" were the words of hail with which their appearance was greeted. "Now off" and with all haste the three were received on board and the vessel pushed out into the stream. Immediately her sail caught the breeze which came fair down the river, and careening a little as she took it, her head began to make good speed across the causeway of moonlight. But then the ladies began to scream; for in mid-channel the wind was fresh and the waters had not quite forgotten yet the tumult of the late storm, which had tossed them well. The sail-boat danced bravely, up and down, going across the waves. Among the frightened people was Nora, who, grasping Daisy's dress with one hand and some part of the boat with the other, kept uttering little cries of "Oh Daisy " "Oh! Daisy," with every fresh lurch of the vessel. Ella Stanfield had thrown herself down in her mother's lap. Daisy was very much tried.

"Nora," she said, "I wish you would not cry so!"

"But I am afraid!"

"I wish you would be comforted, and not cry out so," sighed Daisy. "Papa says there is no danger didn't you hear him?"

"But, oh, I am afraid!" re-echoed Nora.

Daisy folded her hands, and tried to bide patiently the time of smooth water. It came, partially at least, as they neared the opposite bank. The boat went steadily; spirits revived; and soon the passage was brought to an end and the sail-boat laid alongside the little jetty, on which the party, men, women and children, stepped out with as sincere a feeling of pleasure as had moved them all day. Carriages were in waiting; a few minutes brought the whole company to Melbourne House.

Here they were to stay supper; and the ladies and gentlemen dispersed to various dressing rooms to prepare for it. Soonest of all ready and in the drawing-room were the three children.

"I am so hungry!" said Nora.

"So am I!" said Ella Stanfield.

"We shall have supper presently," said Daisy.

"Oh, Daisy, weren't you afraid in the boat, when it went up and down so?"

"I do not think I was afraid," said Daisy, "if other people had not been so disturbed."

"I don't see how they could help being disturbed," said Ella Stanfield. "Why, the boat didn't sail straight at all."

"But *that* does not do any harm," said Daisy.

"How do you know?" said Nora. "I think it does harm; I do not think it is safe."

"But you know, Nora, when the disciples were in the boat, and thought it was not safe the wind blew so, you know they ought to have trusted Jesus, and not been afraid."

Nora and Ella both looked at Daisy for a minute after this speech, and then by some train of association Nora started another subject.

"Daisy, have you got my Egyptian spoon yet?"

Now was Daisy in a great difficulty. She flushed; the little face which had been pale enough before, became of a delicate pink hue all over. Not knowing what to say, she said nothing.

"Have you got it yet?" repeated Nora, curiously.

"No, Nora. I have not."

"You have not? What have you done with it?"

"Nothing."

"My Egyptian spoon! that Marmaduke gave me to give to you! You have not kept it! What did you do with it, Daisy?"

"I did nothing with it."

"Did you break it?"

"No."

"Did you give it away?"

"Oh, Nora, I loved it very much," said poor Daisy; "but I could not keep it. I could not!"

"Why couldn't you? I would not have given it to you, Daisy, if I had thought you would not have kept it."

"I wanted to keep it very much but I could not," said Daisy, with the tears in her eyes.

"Why 'could not'? why couldn't you? Did you give it away, Daisy? that spoon I gave you?"

"Nora, I could not help it! Somebody else wanted it very much, and I was obliged to let her have it. I could not help it."

"I shall tell Marmaduke that you did not care for it," said Nora in an offended tone. "I wish I had kept it myself. It was a beautiful spoon."

Daisy looked very much troubled.

"Who has got it?" Nora went on.

"It is no matter who has got it," said Daisy. "I couldn't keep it."

"She is right, Nora," said Preston, who came up just then, at the same time with the doctor. "She could not keep it, because it was taken away from her without any leave asked. I mean she shall have it back, too, one of these days. Don't you say another word to Daisy! she has behaved like a little angel about it."

Preston's manner made an impression, as well as his words.
Nora was checked.

"What is all that, Nora?" the doctor asked.

Now Nora had a great awe of him. She did not, dare not answer.

"It is about a spoon I gave Daisy, that she gave away."

"She did not, I tell you!" said Preston.

"A spoon?" said the doctor. "Silver?"

"Oh, no! A beautiful, old, very old, carved, queer old spoon, with a duck's bill, that came out of an old Egyptian tomb, and was put there ever so long ago."

"Did your brother give it to you?"

"Yes, to give to Daisy, and she gave it to somebody else."

"Nora, I did not give it as you think I did. I loved it very much. I would not have let anybody have it if I could have helped it."

"Who has got it, Daisy?" asked the doctor.

Daisy looked at him, looked perplexed, flushed a little, finally said with demure gentleness, "Dr. Sandford, I think I ought not to tell."

The doctor smiled, took Daisy's hand, and led her off to the supper room, whither they were now invited. So it happened that her seat at the table was again by his side. Daisy liked it. Just then she did not care about being with Nora.

The people gathered, bright and fresh, around the supper table, all seeming to have forgotten their fatigues and frights; and every face looked smiling or gracious. The day was over, the river was crossed; the people were hungry; and the most dainty and perfectly arranged supply of refreshments stood on the board. Coffee and tea steamed out their grateful announcements; ice cream stood in red and white pyramids of firmness; oysters and cold meats and lobster salad offered all that hungry people could desire; and everybody was in a peculiar state of gratified content and expectation.

Daisy was no exception. She had let slip her momentary trouble about the Egyptian spoon; and in her quiet corner, quite unnoticed as she thought, looked at the bright scene and enjoyed it. She liked being under the doctor's care too, and his care of her was very thoughtful and kind. He did not forget the little quiet mouse at his elbow; but after he had properly attended to the other people whose claims came first, he served her nicely with whatever was good for her. Was Daisy going to omit her usual giving of thanks? She thought of her mother's interference with a moment's flash of hesitancy; but resolved to go on just as usual. She did not think she would be noticed, everybody was so busy; and at any rate there was a burden of gladness in her little heart that must speak. While the talking and laughing and click of knives and forks was thick all around her, Daisy's little head bent in a moment's oblivion of it all behind her hand.

She had raised her head and just taken her fork in her fingers when she heard her own name. She looked up.

"Daisy " said her mother, quietly "come here."

Daisy left her seat, and went round to her mother's side.

"You may go up stairs," said Mrs. Randolph.

"Mamma?"

"Go and remain till I send for you."

Daisy slipped away quietly, before anybody could notice that she was gone or going. Then slowly went up the stairs and along the passages to her own room. It was empty and dark, except for the moonlight without; June had not expected her to be there, and had not made preparation. Daisy went, and kneeled down in her old place by her window; her eyes filled as full of tears as they could hold. She bent her little head to brush them away, but they came again. Daisy was faint and tired; she wanted her supper very much; and she had enjoyed the supper-table very much; it was a great mortification to exchange it for the gloom and silence of her moonlit room. She had not a bit of strength to keep her spirits up. Daisy felt weak. And what was the matter? Only that she had, against her mother's pleasure, repeated her acknowledgment of the hand that had given her all good things. How many good things that day! And was she not to make such acknowledgment any more? Ought she to please her mother in this? Had she really done wrong? Daisy could not tell; she thought not; she could not wish she had not done what she did; but at the same time it was very miserable to have Mrs. Randolph at odds with her on such a point as this.

Daisy shed some tears about it; yet not a great many, and without the least bitterness in them. But she felt faint and tired and disappointed. Here, however, at her own room-window, and alone, there was no bar to thanksgivings; and Daisy had them in her heart, as well as prayers for the people who had them not. She was too tired to pray at last; she only knelt at the window with her arms on the sill, Daisy was raised up on an ottoman and looked out at the moonlight, feeling as if she was going into a dream.

"Miss Daisy!" said the smothered voice of June behind her "are you there, Miss Daisy?"

June's accent was doubtful and startled. Daisy turned round.

"Miss Daisy! I thought you was in the supper-room"

"No, June I'm here."

"Will you go to bed, Miss Daisy?"

"I wish, June, you would get me something to eat, first," said Daisy, languidly.

"Didn't you get your supper, Miss Daisy?"

"No, and I'm hungry. I haven't had anything since the dinner at the lake. I wish you'd make haste, June."

June knew from Daisy's way of speaking, as well as from the facts of the case, that there was some trouble on foot. She went off to get supper, and as she went along the passages the mulatto woman's hand was clenched upon itself, though her face showed only its usual wrinkles.

Small delay was there before she was back again, and with her June had brought a supply of very nearly everything there had been on the supper-table. She set down her tray, prepared a table for Daisy, and placed a chair. The room was light now with two wax candles. Daisy sat down and took a review.

"What will you have now, Miss Daisy? Here's some hot oysters nice and hot. I'll get you some ice-cream when you're ready to eat it Hiram's got it in the freezer for you. Make haste, Miss Daisy these oysters is good."

But Daisy did not make haste. She looked at the supper tray thoughtfully.

"June," she said, with a very gentle pure glance of her eyes up at the mulatto woman's face "I am very much obliged to you but I don't think mamma means me to eat these things to-night Will you just get me some milk and some bread? I'll take some bread and milk!"

"Miss Daisy, these oysters is good for you," said June.

"I'll take some bread and milk to-night if you will please make haste. Thank you, June."

"Miss Daisy, then, maybe take a sandwich."

"No I will have nothing but bread and milk. Only quick, June."

June went off for the bread and milk, and then very unwillingly carried her supper-tray down stairs again. Going through one of the passages she was met by her master.

"Where is that coming from, June?" he asked her, in surprise.

"From Miss Daisy's room, sir."

"Has she been taking supper up there?"

"No, sir Miss Daisy wouldn't touch nothing."

"Is she unwell?" Mr. Randolph asked, in a startled tone.

"No, sir." June's tone was dry.

Mr. Randolph marched at once to the room in question, where Daisy was eating her bread and milk.

"What are you doing, Daisy?"

"Papa!" said the child, with a start; and then quietly, "I am taking my supper."

"Were you not at the table down stairs?"

"Yes, papa."

"How came you not to have your supper there?"

"I had to come away, papa."

"Are you not well, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph, tenderly, bending down over her chair.

"Yes, papa quite well."

"Then, why did you come away?"

Daisy's spoon lay still in her fingers and her eyes reddened.

"Mamma sent me."

If the child was to have any supper at all, Mr. Randolph saw, he must forbear his questioning. He rose up from leaning over her chair. "Go on, Daisy," he said; and he left her, but did not leave the room. He walked up and down the floor at a little distance, while Daisy finished her bread and milk. She was too much in want of it not to do that. When it was done she got out of her chair and stood on the floor looking at her father, as gentle as a young sparrow. He came and wheeled her chair round and sat down upon it.

"What is the matter, Daisy?"

"Mamma was displeased with me." The child dropped her eyes.

"What about?"

"Papa" said Daisy, slowly, trying for words and perhaps also for self-command "mamma was displeased with me because I "

"What?"

"Papa because I did what she did not like at dinner."

"At dinner? what was that?"

The child lifted her eyes now to her father's face, a little wistfully.

"Papa don't you know? I was only praying a minute."

Mr. Randolph stretched out his arm, drew Daisy up to him, placed her on his knee, and looked down into her face.

"Did you have no supper downstairs?"

"No, sir."

"Do you like bread and milk better than other things?"

"No, papa."

"I met June with a great tray of supper things, and she said you would not eat them. Why was that?"

"Papa," said Daisy, "I thought mamma did not mean me to have those things to-night."

"She did not forbid you?"

"No, papa."

Mr. Randolph's arm was round Daisy; now he wrapped both arms about her, bringing her up close to his breast, and putting down his lips to her face, he kissed her over and over, with a great tenderness.

"Have you had a pleasant day?"

"Papa, I have had a great many pleasant things," said Daisy, eagerly. Her voice had changed and a glad tone had come into it.

"Dr. Sandford took proper care of you?"

"Papa, he is *very* good!" said Daisy, strongly.

"I rather think he thinks you are."

"He is nice, papa."

"Nice " said Mr. Randolph. "He is pretty well. But now, Daisy, what do you think of going to bed and to sleep?"

"Yes, papa."

"And to-morrow, if you have got into any difficulty, you may come to me and talk about it."

Daisy returned a very earnest caress to her father's good- night kiss, and afterwards had no difficulty in doing as he had said. And so ended the day on Silver Lake.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RANSOM AND FIDO.

Daisy reflected the next morning as to what was her right course with respect to the action that had troubled her mother so much. Ought she to do it? In the abstract it was right to do it; but ought *she* in these circumstances? And how much of a Christian's ordinary duty might she be required to forego? and where must the stand be made? Daisy did not know; she had rather the mind of a soldier, and was much inclined to obey her orders, as such, come what might. That is, it seemed to her that so she would be in the sure and safe way; but Daisy had no appetite at all for the fighting that this course would ensure. One thing she knew by experience; that if she drew upon herself a direct command to do such a thing no more, the order would stand; there would be no dealing with it afterwards except in the way of submission. That command she had not in this case yet received, and she judged it prudent not to risk receiving it. She went down to breakfast as usual, but she did not bow her little head to give any thanks or make any prayers. She hoped the breakfast would pass off quietly. So it did as to that matter. But another subject came up.

"What became of you last night at supper, Daisy?" her aunt asked. "Dr. Sandford was enquiring for you. I think you received quite your share of attention, for so young a lady, for my part."

"Daisy had more than anybody else, yesterday," remarked Eloise.

"A sprained or a broken ankle is a very good thing occasionally," said Mr. Randolph.

"Yes," said Mrs. Gary "I think Daisy had quite the best time of anybody yesterday. A palanquin with gentlemen for her porters, and friendly arms to go to sleep in most devoted care!"

"Yes, I was one of her porters," said Ransom. "I think Dr. Sandford takes rather too much on himself."

"Did he take *you*?" said Mr. Randolph.

"Yes, sir, when there was no occasion."

"Why, Ransom," said Daisy, "there was no one else to carry my chair but Preston and you."

"Did Preston feel aggrieved?" asked his uncle.

"Certainly not, sir," replied the boy. "It was a pleasure."

"It was not Ransom's business," said Mrs. Randolph.

"I suppose it was not the doctor's business either," said Mr. Randolph "though he made it so afterwards."

"Oh, I dare say it was a pleasure to him, too," said Mrs. Gary. "Really, the doctor did not take care of anybody yesterday, that I saw, except Daisy. I thought he admired Frederica Fish I had heard so but there was nothing of it. Daisy was quite queen of the day."

Mr. Randolph smiled.

Ransom seemed to consider himself insulted. "I suppose that was the reason," he said, "that she called me worse than a dog, because I took a meringue from the dinner-spread."

"Did you do that, Daisy?" asked her mother.

"No, mamma," said Daisy, low. Her face had flushed with astonishment and sorrow.

"You did," said Ransom. "You said just that."

"Oh, no, Ransom you forget."

"What *did* you say, Daisy?" asked her mother.

"Mamma, I did not say *that*. I said something I did not mean it for anything like that."

"Tell me exactly what you did say and no more delay."

"Wait till after breakfast," said Mr. Randolph. "I wish to be present at the investigation of this subject, Felicia but I would rather take it by itself than with my coffee."

So there was a lull in the storm which seemed to be gathering. It gave Daisy time to think. She was in a great puzzle. How she could get through the matter without exposing all Ransom's behaviour, all at least which went before the blow given to herself, Daisy did not see; she was afraid that truth would force her to bring it all out. And she was very unwilling to do that, because in the first place she had established a full amnesty in her own heart for all that Ransom had done, and wished rather for an opportunity to please than to criminate him; and, in the second place, in her inward consciousness she knew that Mrs. Randolph was likely to be displeased with her, in any event. She would certainly, if Daisy were an occasion of bringing Ransom into disgrace; though the child doubted privately whether her word would have weight enough with her mother for that. Ransom also had time to think, and his brow grew gloomy. An investigation is never what a guilty party desires; and judging her by himself, Ransom had reason to dread the chance of retaliation which such a proceeding would give his little sister. So Daisy and Ransom wore thoughtful faces during the rest of breakfast-time; and the result of Ransom's reflections was that the investigation would go on most pleasantly without him. He made up his mind to slip away, if he had a chance, and be missing. He had the chance; for Mr. and Mrs. Randolph were engaged with a call of some neighbours immediately after breakfast; all thought of the children's affairs seemed to be departed. Ransom waited a safe time, and then departed too, with Preston, on an expedition which would last all the morning. Daisy alone bided the hour, a good deal disturbed in the view of what it might bring.

She was summoned at last to the library. Her father and mother were there alone; but just after Daisy came in she was followed by Dr. Sandford. The doctor came with a message. Mrs. Sandford, his sister, he said, sent by him to beg that Daisy might come to spend the day with Nora Dinwiddie, who much desired her presence. In the event of a favourable answer, the doctor said he would himself drive Daisy over, and would call for that purpose in another hour or two. He delivered his message, and Mrs. Randolph replied at once that Daisy could not go; she could not permit it.

Mr. Randolph saw the flush of hope and disappointment on Daisy's face and the witness of another kind in her eyes; though with her characteristic steady self-control she neither moved nor spoke, and suffered the tears to come no further. Dr. Sandford saw it too, but he said nothing. Mr. Randolph spoke.

"Is that decision on account of Daisy's supposed delinquency in that matter?"

"Of course " Mrs. Randolph answered, dryly.

"Can you explain it, Daisy?" her father asked, gravely, and kindly drawing her up to his side. Daisy struggled with some thought.

"Papa," she said, softly, "will mamma be satisfied to punish me and let it go so?"

"Let it go how?"

"Would she be satisfied with this punishment, I mean, and not make me say anything more about it?"

"I should not. I intend to know the whole. Can you explain it?"

"I think I can, papa," Daisy said, but with a troubled unwillingness, her father saw. He saw too that it was not the unwillingness of a troubled conscience.

"Dr. Sandford, if you are willing to take the trouble of stopping without the certainty of taking Daisy back with you, I have some hopes that the result may be satisfactory to all parties."

"*Au revoir*, then," said the doctor, and he strode off.

"Now, Daisy," said her father, still having his arms about her
"what is it?"

Mrs. Randolph stood by the table and looked coldly down at the group. Daisy was under great difficulty; that was plain.

"Papa I wish Ransom could tell you!"

"Where is the boy?"

Mrs. Randolph rang the bell.

"It is no use, mamma; he has gone off with Preston somewhere."

"That is a mere subterfuge, Daisy, to gain time."

Daisy certainly looked troubled enough, and timid also; though her meek look at her mother did not plead guilty to this accusation.

"Speak, Daisy; the telling whatever there is to tell must come upon you," her father said. "Your business is to explain the charge Ransom has brought against you."

All Daisy's meditations had not brought her to the point of knowing what to say in this conjuncture. She hesitated.

"Speak, Daisy!" her father said, peremptorily.

"Papa, they had put me Eloise and Theresa Stanfield they had put me to watch the things."

"What things?"

"The dinner the things that had been taken out of the hampers and were spread on the tablecloth, where we dined."

"Watch for fear the fishes would carry them off?"

"No, sir, but Fido; Ransom's dog; he was running about."

"Oh! Well? "

"I kept Fido off, but I could not keep Ransom " Daisy said, low. "He was taking things."

"And why should he not?" said Mrs. Randolph, coldly. "Why should not Ransom take a sandwich, or a peach, if he wanted one? or anything else, if he was hungry. There was enough provision for everybody."

Daisy looked up at her mother, with a quick refutation of this statement of the case in her mind, but something stayed her lips. Mr. Randolph saw and read the look. He put his arm round Daisy and drew her up to him, speaking with grave decision.

"Daisy, say all you have to say at once do you hear me? and spare neither for Ransom nor yourself. Tell all there is to be told, without any shuffling."

"Papa, I should not have objected to his having a sandwich or as many as he liked. I should have thought it was proper. But he took the meringues and so many that the dish was left very small; and then he carried off Joanna's lark pie, the whole of it; and he did not mind what I said; and then, I believe I suppose that is what Ransom meant I believe I told him he was worse than Fido."

"Was Ransom offended at that?"

"Yes, papa. He did not like my speaking to him at all."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Randolph. "Boys never like to be tutored by girls; and Daisy must expect her brother will not like it if she meddles with him; and especially if she addresses such language to him."

"I said only exactly that, mamma."

"Ransom put it differently."

A flush came up all over Daisy's face; she looked at her mother appealingly, but said nothing and the next moment her eyes fell.

"Did Ransom answer you at the time, Daisy?"

"Yes, sir," Daisy said, in a low voice.

"How?"

"Papa! " said Daisy, confounded.

"What did he say to you?"

"He did not say much " said Daisy.

"Tell me what his answer was?"

"Papa, he struck my ears," said Daisy. A great crimson glow came all over her face, and she hid it in her father's breast; like an injured thing running to shelter. Mr. Randolph was lying on a sofa; he folded his arm round Daisy, but spoke never a word. Mrs. Randolph moved impatiently.

"Boys will do such things," she said. "It is very absurd in Daisy to mind it. Boys will do such things she must learn that it is not her place or business to find fault with her brother. I think she deserved what she got. It will teach her a lesson."

"Boys shall not do such things in my house," said Mr. Randolph, in his usual quiet manner.

"As you please!" said the lady, in a very dissatisfied way; "but I think it is only what all boys do."

"Felicia, I wish to reverse your decision about this day's pleasure. Seeing Daisy has had her lesson, do you not think she might be indulged with the play after it?"

"As you please!" returned the lady, very dryly.

"Do you want to go, Daisy?"

"If you please, papa." Daisy spoke without showing her face.

"Is Mr. Dinwiddie at Mrs. Sandford's?" inquired Mrs. Randolph.

"Oh, no, mamma!" Daisy looked up. "He is not coming. He is gone a great way off. I do not suppose he is ever coming here again; and Nora is going away soon."

Mrs. Randolph moved off.

"Felicia" said her husband. The lady paused. "I intend that Ransom shall have a lesson, too. I shall take away the remaining week of his vacation. To-morrow he goes back to school. I tell you, that you may give the necessary orders."

"For this boy's freak, Mr. Randolph?"

"For what you please. He must learn that such behaviour is not permitted here."

Mrs. Randolph did not share the folly with which she charged Daisy; for she made no answer at all, and only with a slight toss of her haughty head resumed her walk out of the room. Daisy would fain have spoken, but she did not dare; and for some minutes after they were left alone her father and she were profoundly silent. Mr. Randolph revolving the behaviour of Daisy as he now understood it; her willing silence and enforced speech, and the gentleness manifested towards her brother, with the meek obedience rendered to her mother and himself. Perhaps his thoughts went deeper still. While Daisy reflected with sorrow on the state of mind sure to be produced now both in Ransom and Mrs. Randolph towards her. A matter which she could do nothing to help. She did not dare say one word to change her father's purpose about Ransom; she knew quite well it would be no use. She stood silent by his sofa, one little hand resting fondly on his shoulder, but profoundly quiet. Then she remembered that she had something else to talk about.

"Papa" she said, wheeling round a little to face him.

"Well, Daisy?"

"Do you feel like talking?"

"Hardly it is so hot," said Mr. Randolph. "Set open that sash-door a little more, Daisy. Now come here. What is it?"

"Shall I wait till another time, papa?"

"No."

He had passed an arm round her, and she stood as before with one hand resting on his shoulder.

"Papa it was about what last night you said I might talk to you about."

"I remember. Go on, Daisy."

"Papa," said the child, a little in doubt how to go on "I want to do what is right."

"There is generally little difficulty in doing that, Daisy."

Daisy thought otherwise!

"Papa, I think mamma does not like me to do what I think is right," she said, very low and humbly.

"Your mother is the best judge, Daisy. What are you talking about?"

"*That*, papa that you said I might talk to you about."

"What is it? Let us understand one another clearly."

"About it was only that I liked to pray and give thanks a minute at meal times." Daisy spoke very softly and as if she would fain not have spoken.

"That is a mere indifferent ceremony, Daisy, which some people perform. It is not binding on you, certainly, if your

mother has any objection to your doing it."

"But, papa," Daisy began eagerly, and then checked herself, and went on slowly "you would not like it if you were to give me anything, and I should not thank you?"

"Cases are not parallel, Daisy."

She wondered in her simplicity why they were not; but her questions had already ventured pretty far; she did not dare count too much upon her father's gentleness. She stood looking at him with unsatisfied eyes.

"In one sense we receive everything we have from the bounty of Heaven."

"Yes, papa."

"If your wish were carried out, we should be covering our faces all the time if that formality is needed in giving thanks."

Daisy had thoughts, but she was afraid to utter them. She looked at Mr. Randolph with the same unsatisfied eyes.

"Do you see, Daisy?"

"No, papa."

"Don't you!" said Mr. Randolph, smiling. "Difficulties still unsolved. Can you state them, Daisy?"

"Papa, you said I might show you in the Bible things do you remember?"

"Things? What things?"

"Papa, if I wanted to do things that I thought were right you promised that if you thought they were in the Bible, I might do as it said."

"Humph!" said Mr. Randolph, with a very doubtful sort of a grunt, between displeasure at his own word, and annoyance at the trouble it might bring upon him. Nevertheless, he remembered the promise. Daisy went on timidly.

"When you get up by and by, papa, may I show you what is in the Bible?"

"You need not wait till I get up show it to me now."

"I cannot lift that big Bible, papa."

Mr. Randolph rose up from the sofa, went to the shelves where it lay, and brought the great Bible to the library table. Then stood and watched Daisy, who kneeled in a chair by the table and busily turned over the large leaves, her little face very wise and intent, her little hands small to manage the big book before her. Had such a child and such a book anything to do with each other, Mr. Randolph thought. But Daisy presently found her place, and looking up at him drew a little back that her father might see it. He stooped over Daisy and read, "In everything give thanks."

"Do you see it, papa?"

"Yes."

"Then here is another place I know where to find it "

She turned over more leaves, stopped again, and Mr. Randolph stooped and read, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Randolph read, and went and threw himself on his sofa again. Daisy came beside him. A wistful earnestness in the one face; a careless sort of embarrassment on the other.

"You are led astray, little Daisy, by a common mistake of ignorant readers. You fancy that these words are to be taken literally whereas they mean simply that we should cultivate a thankful spirit. That, of course, I agree to."

"But, papa," said Daisy, "is a thankful spirit the same thing quite as giving thanks?"

"It is a much better thing, Daisy, in my opinion."

"But, papa, would not a thankful spirit like to *give* thanks?"

"I have no objection, Daisy."

The tears came into Daisy's eyes. Her mother *had*.

"Papa "

"Well? Let us get to the end of this difficulty if we can."

"I am afraid we cannot, papa. Because if you had told me to do a thing so, you would mean it just so, and I should do it."

Mr. Randolph wrapped his arms round Daisy and brought her close to his breast. "Look here, Daisy," said he "tell me. Do you really try to give thanks everywhere, and for all things, as the word says?"

"I do not *try*, papa I like to do it."

"Do you give thanks for *everything*?"

"I think I do, papa; for everything that gives me pleasure."

"For Mrs. Sandford's invitation to-day, for instance."

"Oh, yes, papa," said Daisy, smiling.

He brought the little head down within reach of his lips and kissed it a good many times.

"I wish my little Daisy would not think so much."

"I think only to know what is right to do, papa."

"It is right to mind mamma and me, and let us think for you."

"And the Bible, papa?"

"You are quite growing an old woman a good while before the time."

Daisy kissed him with good childlike kisses, laying her little head in his neck and clasping her arms around him; for all that, her heart was busy yet.

"Papa," she said, "what do you think is right for me to do?"

"Thinking exhausts me, Daisy. It is too hot to-day for such an exercise."

Daisy drew back and looked at him, with one hand resting on his shoulder. She did not dare urge any more in words; her look spoke her anxious, disappointed questioning of her father's meaning. Perhaps he did not care to meet such a gaze of inquiry, for he pulled her down again in his arms.

"I do not want you to be an old woman."

"But, papa that is not the thing."

"I will not have it, Daisy."

"Papa," she said with a small laugh, "what shall I do to help it? I do not know how I came to be an old woman?"

"Go off and play with Nora Dinwiddie. Are you ready to go?"

"Yes, papa except my hat and gloves."

"Do not think any more to-day. I will think for you by and by. But, Daisy, why should you and I set ourselves up to be

better than other people?"

"How, papa?"

"Do you know anybody else that lives up to your views on the subject of thanksgiving?"

"Oh, yes, papa."

"Who?"

Daisy softly said, "Juanita does, papa, I think."

"A poor ignorant woman, Daisy, and very likely full of superstitions. Her race often are."

"What is a superstition, papa?"

"A religious notion which has no foundation in truth."

"Then papa, can it be superstition to do just what God tells us to do?"

"You are too deep for me, Daisy," said Mr. Randolph, languidly. "Go and get ready for Dr. Sandford. He will be here presently."

So Daisy went, feeling very uncertain of the result of her talk, but doubtful and discouraged. Mr. Randolph had a book in hand when she returned to the library: she could not speak to him any more; and soon indeed the doctor came, helped her into his gig, and drove off with her.

Now it was pleasant. The fine gravelled roads in the grounds of Melbourne were in beautiful order after the rain; no dust rose yet, and all the trees and flowers were in a refreshed state of life and sweetness. Truly it was a very hot day, but Daisy found nothing amiss. Neither, apparently, did the doctor's good horse. He trotted along without seeming to mind the sun; and Daisy in a good deal of glee enjoyed everything. It was private glee in her own mind; she did not offer any conversation; and the doctor, of Mr. Randolph's mind, perhaps, that it was a warm day, threw himself back in his seat and watched her lazily. Daisy on the contrary sat up and looked busily out. They drove in the first place for a good distance through her own home grounds, coming out to the public road by the church where Mr. Pyne preached, and near which the wintergreens grew. It looked beautiful this morning, with its ivy all washed and fresh from the rain. Indeed all nature was in a sort of glittering condition. When they came out on the public way it was still beautiful; no dust, and fields and grass and trees all shining.

The road they travelled now was one scarce known to Daisy; the carriages from Melbourne never went that way; another was always chosen at the beginning of all their excursions whether of business or pleasure. No gentlemen's seats were to be seen; an occasional farmhouse stood in the midst of its crops and meadows; and more frequently a yet poorer sort of house stood close by the roadside. The road in this place was sometimes rough, and the doctor's good horse left his trot and picked his way slowly along, giving Daisy by this means an opportunity to inspect everything more closely. There was often little pleasure in the inspection. About half a mile from the church, Daisy's attention was drawn by one of these poor houses. It was very small, unpainted and dreary-looking, having a narrow court-yard between it and the road. As the gig was very slowly going past, Daisy uttered an exclamation, the first word she had uttered in a long while.

"Oh, Dr. Sandford! what is that? Something is the matter!"

"No," said the doctor coolly, "nothing is the matter more than usual."

"But a woman was on her hands and knees on the ground? Wasn't it a woman?"

"Yes. She cannot move about in any other way. She is a cripple."

"She cannot stand up?" said Daisy, looking distressed and horrified.

"No. She has no use of her lower limbs. She is accustomed to it, Daisy; she never had the use of them, or never for a very long while."

"Is she *old*?"

"Pretty old, I fancy. But she does not know her age herself, and nobody else knows it."

"Has she got nice people to take care of her?"

The doctor smiled at the earnest little face. "She has nobody."

"No one to take care of her?" said Daisy.

"No. She lives there alone."

"But, Dr. Sandford, how does she do how does she manage?"

"In some way that would be difficult for you and me to understand, I suppose like the ways of the beavers and wasps."

"I can understand those," said Daisy, "they were made to get along as they do; they have got all they want."

Daisy was silent, musing, for a little time; then she broke out again.

"Isn't she very miserable, Dr. Sandford?"

"She is a very crabbed old thing, so the inference is fair that she is miserable. In fact, I do not see how she can avoid it."

Daisy pondered perhaps this misery which she could so little imagine; however, she let the subject drop as to any more words about it. She was only what the doctor called "quaintly sober," all the rest of the way.

"Why, she looks child-like and bright enough now," said Mrs. Sandford, to whom he made the remark.

Daisy and Nora were exchanging mutual congratulations. The doctor looked at them.

"At the rate in which she is growing old," said he, "she will have the soul of Methuselah in a body of twenty years."

"I don't believe it," said Mrs. Sandford.

Nora and Daisy had a great day of it. Nothing broke the full flow of business and pleasure during all the long hours; the day was not hot to them, nor the shadows long in coming. Behind the house there was a deep grassy dell through which a brook ran. Over this brook in the dell a great black walnut tree cast its constant flickering shadow; flickering when the wind played in the leaves and branches, although to-day the air was still and sultry, and the leaves and the shadows were still too, and did not move. But there was life enough in the branches of the old walnut, for a large family of grey squirrels had established themselves there. Old and young, large and small; it was impossible to tell, by counting, how many there might be in the family; at least now, while they were going in and out and running all over; but Nora said Mrs. Sandford had counted fifteen of them at one time. That was in cold weather, when they had gathered on the piazza to get the nuts she threw to them. This kind of intercourse with society had made the squirrels comparatively tame, so that they had no particular objections to show themselves to the two children; and when Nora and Daisy kept quiet they had great entertainment in watching the gambols of the pretty grey creatures. One in particular, the mother of the family, Nora said, was bolder or more familiar than the rest; and came often and came pretty near, to look at the children with her bright little eyes, and let them see her beautiful feathery tail and graceful motions. It was a great delight to Daisy. Nora had seen them before, as she said, and did not care quite so much about the sight.

"I wonder what use squirrels are?" said Daisy.

"I guess they are not of any use," said Nora.

"Oh, I guess everything is of use."

"Why, no, it isn't," said Nora. "Grass is not of any use."

"Oh, Nora! Think what would the cows and horses do?"

"Well, then, stones are not of any use."

"Yes, they are to build houses don't you know?"

"Houses might be built of wood," said Nora.

"So they might. But then, Nora, wooden houses would not last so long as stone ones."

"Well people could build new ones."

"But houses might be wanted where there was not wood enough to build them."

"I never saw such a place," said Nora. "I never saw a place where there was not wood enough. And if there is such a place anywhere, people could not live in it, because they would have nothing to make fires with."

Daisy considered.

"But Nora, I think it cannot be so. I guess everything is made for some use. Dr. Sandford told me yesterday what the use is of those queer brown leaves that grow upon rocks you know and the use of little mosses, that I never thought before were good for anything. They are to begin to prepare a place on the rocks where things can grow."

"Why, they grow themselves," said Nora.

"Yes, but I mean other things ferns and flowers and other things."

"Well, what is the use of *them*?" said Nora.

"Oh, Nora just think how pretty they are."

"But prettiness isn't use."

"I think it is," said Daisy; "and I dare say they have other uses that we do not know. And I think, Nora, that God would not have taken such care to dress up the old rocks if the rocks were no good."

"Did He do it?" said Nora.

"Why, certainly. He did everything, you know."

"Of course; but I thought they just grew," said Nora.

The children were silent a little, watching the squirrels.
Daisy began again abruptly.

"Nora, did you ever see that crippled woman that lives on the mill road a little way from our church?"

"Old Molly Skelton, do you mean?"

"I do not know what her name is she cannot walk; she creeps about as if she had no legs."

"I've seen her. Isn't she horrid?"

"Did you ever see her near by?"

"No, I guess I haven't. I have heard Duke tell about her."

"What? do tell me."

"Oh, she's a horrid old thing that is all I know."

"How, horrid?"

"Why, she is wicked, and she don't know anything. She would hardly listen to Marmaduke when he wanted to talk to her."

"Has she got a Bible, I wonder?" said Daisy, in an awestruck voice.

"She? She can't read. She don't know anything; and she is as ugly and cross as she can be."

"Was she cross to Mr. Dinwiddie?"

"Yes, indeed. He said he never saw such a crabbed old thing. Oh, she's horrid. I don't like to ride by that way."

The children were called in to dinner, and kept in the house by Mrs. Sandford during the intensest heat of the day. But when the afternoon was cooling off, or at least growing less oppressive, the two children again sought the shade under the walnut tree, where the gurgle of the water over the stones, and the company of the squirrels in the tree, made the place pleasant. And there they sat down in a great state of mutual contentment. Nora's feet were swinging about for very jollity. But Daisy sat still. Perhaps she was tired. Nevertheless it could not be that which made her little face by and by take on it as profound an expression as if she had been looking over all Methuselah's years.

"Nora " said Daisy, and stopped.

"What?" said Nora, kicking her heels.

"You know that poor old crippled woman what did you call her?"

"Molly Skelton."

"Suppose you were in her place what do you think you would wish for,"

"In her place!" said Nora. "I should wish for everything."

"Yes, but I mean, things that you could have."

"I should wish some doctor would come and make me straight, the first thing; and then "

"No, Nora, but I mean, things that might be possible, you know. I do not mean things like a fairy tale."

"I don't know," said Nora. "I don't believe Molly Skelton wishes for anything."

"But what would you wish for, in her place?"

"I should want to be straight, and stand and go about like other people."

"Yes, Nora, but I say! I mean, what would you wish for that would not be impossible?"

"Why, Daisy, how funny! Let me see. I should wish that somebody would come and be good to me, I think."

"How?"

"Oh tell me stories and read to me, and take tea with me and I don't know what!"

"Do you suppose nobody ever does take tea with her?" said Daisy, upon whose fancy a new shadow of wretchedness darkened.

"I guess not," said Nora. "I don't believe anybody would. I guess nobody likes her well enough, she is so bad."

"Who gets her tea for her then?"

"Why, nobody. She does it herself."

"How can she?"

"I don't know. Marmaduke says she keeps her house clean too, though she only goes about on her hands and knees."

"Nora," said Daisy, "that isn't like the Bible."

"What isn't?"

"Don't you remember what the Bible says? that whatever we would like other people to do to us, we should do so to them."

"What do you mean, Daisy?"

"I mean just so."

"But what isn't like the Bible?"

"Why to let that poor old woman go without what we would like if we were in her place."

"Why, Daisy! Molly Skelton! The Bible does not mean that we ought to go and make visits to such horrid people as that."

"You said you would like it if you were in her place," observed Daisy, "and I know I should. I thought so when you told me."

"But, Daisy, she is wicked!"

"Well, Jesus loves wicked people," said Daisy, calmly. "Maybe she will wear a white robe in heaven, and have a crown of gold upon her head."

"Daisy! she is wicked," exclaimed Nora, indignantly. "Wicked people do not go to heaven."

"Yes, but if Jesus gives them His white robe, they do," said Daisy. "He came to save wicked people."

"I don't want to talk any more about Molly Skelton," said Nora. "Look, Daisy! there's the old mother squirrel peeping out of her hole. Do you see? Now she is coming out see her black eyes! now there's her beautiful feather tail!"

This subject was to the full as interesting to Daisy as it was to her friend; and in watching the grey family in the walnut tree, and trying to induce them to come near and get some almonds, the rest of the afternoon flew by. Only the "mother squirrel" could be tempted near; but she, older in experience and wisdom than her young ones, did venture into the neighbourhood of the children, attracted by the nuts they threw down; and getting pretty close to them, before she would venture quite so far as where the nuts lay, she sat down on her haunches to look and see whether all were safe; curling her thick, light plume of a tail up along her back, or whisking it about in various lines of beauty, while her bright little black eyes took all the observations they were equal to. It was unending amusement for the children; and then to see Mrs. Bunny finally seize an almond and spring away with it, was very charming. So the afternoon sped; nor ever brought one moment of weariness, until the summons came to bid the children into the house again to tea.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MRS. GARY'S PRESENT.

After tea the doctor took Daisy in his gig and drove her home. The drive was unmarked by a single thing; except that just as they were passing the cripple's house Daisy broke silence and asked, "Is that woman Molly Skelton is she very poor, Dr. Sandford?"

"If to live on charity be poor. I do not suppose the neighbours let her suffer."

"Is she cross to everybody, Dr. Sandford?"

"She has the name of it, I believe, Daisy. I really do not remember whether she was cross to me or not."

"Then you know her?"

"Yes. I know everybody."

The family at Melbourne were found just taking their late tea as the doctor and Daisy entered. They were met with complaints of the heat; though Daisy thought the drawing room was exceeding pleasant, the air came in at the long windows with such gentle freshness from the river.

The doctor took a cup of tea and declared the day was excellent if you only rode fifty miles through the heat of it. "Coolness is coolness, after that," he said.

Daisy sat in a corner and wondered at the people. Hot? and suffocating? she had no recollection of any such thing all day. How delicious it had been in that green dell under the walnut tree, with the grey squirrels!

"How has it been with you, Daisy?" said her aunt at last.

"Nice, aunt Gary."

Two or three people smiled; Daisy's favourite word came out with such a dulcet tone of a smooth and clear spirit. It was a syrup drop of sweetness in the midst of flat and acid qualities.

"It has been satisfactory, has it?" said her aunt, in a tone which did not share the character. "Come here, Daisy I have got something for you. You know I robbed you a little while ago, and promised to try to find something to make amends. Now come and see if I have done it. Preston, fetch that box here."

A neat wooden case of some size was brought by Preston and set at his mother's feet. Mrs. Gary unlocked it, and went on to take out of its enveloping coverings a very elegant French doll; a real empress Eugenie. The doll's face was even modelled into some likeness to the beauty she was named after; a diadem sat gracefully on her head, and her robes were a miniature imitation of royalty, but very exquisitely fashioned. Everybody exclaimed at the perfection of the beautiful toy, except Daisy herself who stood quite still and quiet looking at it. Mrs. Gary had not done yet. The empress had a wardrobe; and such variety and elegance and finish of attire of all sorts rarely falls to the lot of a doll. A very large wardrobe it was, and every article perfectly finished and well made as if meant for actual wear. Mrs. Gary displayed her present; Daisy looked on, standing by her father's knee and with one hand resting on it.

"Have you nothing to say to express your pleasure, Daisy?"

This was Mrs. Randolph's question.

Daisy at the word pronounced a sober "I thank you, aunt Gary." But it was so very sober and passionless that Mrs. Randolph grew impatient.

"I do not hear you express any pleasure, Daisy," she said, meaningly.

Daisy turned her face towards her mother with a doubtful look, and was silent.

"Speak!" said Mrs. Randolph.

"What, mamma?"

"Whatever you choose, to show your sense of your aunt's kindness."

"Do not concern yourself, my dear," said her sister. "I am sorry if I have failed in meeting Daisy's taste that is all."

"Daisy, speak, or leave the room" said Mrs. Randolph.

"Mamma," said Daisy, pushed into a corner, "I would speak, but I do not know what to say."

"Tell your aunt Gary she has given you a great deal of pleasure."

Daisy looked again mutely at her mother, somewhat distressed.

"Tell her so, Daisy!" Mrs. Randolph repeated, in a tone of command.

"I cannot, mamma " the child answered, sorrowfully.

"Do you mean to tell your aunt that her exquisite present gives you *no* pleasure?"

"I did not intend to tell her so," Daisy answered, in a low voice. Another storm rising! Storms seemed to get up very easily in these days.

"My dear," said Mrs. Gary, "do not concern yourself. It is not of the least consequence, as far as I am concerned. Preston, remove this box. If Daisy chooses to receive it, perhaps it will find more favour at another time."

Mrs. Gary got up and moved off.

"Mr. Randolph, I will trouble you to dismiss Daisy," said his wife. "If she cannot behave properly she cannot be in the room with me."

Daisy was still standing with her hand on her father's knee. The other little hand came for a moment across her brows and rested there; but she would not cry; her lip did not even tremble.

"First let me understand," said her father; and he lifted Daisy on his knee kindly. "Daisy, I never saw you uncivil before."

"Papa, I am very sorry " said the child.

"Can you explain it?"

"Papa, I would have been civil if I could; but I had nothing to say."

"That is the very place where a person of good manners shows himself different from a person who has no manners at all. Good manners finds something to say."

"But, papa, there was nothing *true*."

"The doll gave you no pleasure?"

"No, papa," said Daisy, low.

"And you felt no obligation for the thoughtfulness and kindness of your aunt in getting for you so elegant a present?"

Daisy hesitated and flushed.

"Daisy, answer," said her father, gravely.

"No, papa," Daisy said, low as before.

"Why not?"

"Papa," said Daisy, with a good deal of difficulty and hesitation "that is all passed I do not want to say anything more about it."

"About what?"

"About papa, I do not think mamma would like to have me talk about it."

"Go on, Daisy. About what?"

"All that trouble we had, papa."

"What I want to know is, why you did not feel grateful for your aunt's kindness just now, which she had been at some pains to show you."

"Papa," said Daisy, wistfully, "it was not kindness it was pay; and I did not want pay."

"Pay? For what?"

"For my Egyptian spoon, papa."

"I do not understand what you are talking of, Daisy."

"No, papa," said Daisy; so simply showing her wish that he should not, as well as her knowledge that he did not, that Mr. Randolph could not forbear smiling.

"But I mean to understand it," he said.

"It was my old Egyptian spoon, papa; the doll was meant to be pay for that."

A little explanation was necessary in order to bring to Mr. Randolph's mind the facts Daisy referred to, the spoon itself

and the time and occasion when it was bestowed on her.

"Did you give your Egyptian spoon to your aunt Gary?"

"I said she might have it, papa."

"Unwillingly?"

"No, papa willingly."

"In exchange for this doll?"

"Oh, no, papa not in exchange for anything. I did not want any exchange."

"If I remember, Daisy," said Mr. Randolph, "your aunt Gary desired to have that spoon the very day it was given to you; and I thought you did not wish she should have it?"

"No, papa so I didn't."

"Your mind changed afterward?"

"I do not think my mind changed," said Daisy, slowly "but I was willing she should have it."

"Daisy, this whole affair is a mystery to me yet. In this case, why was it not kind in your aunt to bestow this French doll upon you? It seems to me very kind."

"Yes papa you do not understand."

"Make me understand. Daisy, I command you to tell me all that you have not told me. You need not think of anything now, except my command."

Daisy did, perhaps; for now her lip quivered slightly; and for a moment she hid her face, in her father's bosom. Mr. Randolph wrapped his arms round her and stooped his head to hear the story which Daisy was obliged to give. She gave it fully, and he heard it quite through in silence. And he made no observation upon it when it was finished; he only asked her, "Was there no resentment in your refusal of thanks to your aunt just now?"

"No, papa" said Daisy; with too sweet and artless utterance for him to doubt her.

"But, then, Daisy, we come back to the cause of your mother's displeasure. Good breeding requires that people should not be rude, even by silence."

"Papa, I did not know how to be polite with truth."

"You could have said you were very much obliged to your aunt."

"But, I was *not*, papa."

"Not obliged to her?"

"No, sir."

"But, Daisy, that is a civil form of expression which it is usual to avail oneself of upon such occasions. It does not necessarily mean much."

"But, papa, would she not have thought I meant it, if I had said so?"

"Very likely. That is the polite advantage gained."

"But papa, *I* should have known that I did not mean it; and it would not have been true."

"This is getting to be too deep a question for you to discuss to-night it is time for you to go to bed. But I cannot have you rude."

Daisy kissed her father, who had been extremely gentle and tender with her, and went off to her room. Mr. Randolph's

brow looked moody.

"Have you brought Daisy's ideas into order?" asked his wife, who had been engaged in conversation with Dr. Sandford.

"She has rather brought confusion into mine," said the gentleman.

"What is the matter?"

"Truth and Daisy, *versus* civility and the world. And it is not so easy to make a child comprehend some of the fine distinctions we are accustomed to draw. White and black are *very* white and black, to such eyes, and no allowance is made for a painter's lights and shades."

"She must make allowance for what your eyes see," said Mrs. Randolph.

Mr. Randolph made no answer.

"Daisy is entirely changed," her mother went on, "and is become utterly obstinate and unmanageable. Perfectly self-important too she thinks there is no wisdom now but her own. I may thank you for it, Dr. Sandford."

"You do me too much honour," said the doctor.

"It is an honour you share with Mr. Dinwiddie."

"I did not know I shared anything with Mr. Dinwiddie."

"He has infected the child with a set of perfectly fanatical notions; and you persisted in keeping her under that creature's care, where they had time to grow strong."

"I will do all I can to repair mischief done," said the doctor. "Mrs. Benoit is a good nurse for the body, and you will bear me witness it was for repairs of *that* I was called in. What is the other damage referred to?"

"Fanaticism."

"Rather young for that disease to take deep root," said the doctor.

"Anything takes deep root in Daisy; whatever she takes up she holds to."

"I advise you to let her be fanatical then a little while longer," said the doctor, "till she has time to lay up some strength."

And the doctor took his departure.

"I am sure that is wise counsel, Felicia," Mr. Randolph said. But the lady made him no answer.

Ransom went off to school the next day, as his father had promised. Mrs. Randolph looked very gloomy; Mrs. Gary looked lot otherwise; and Daisy thought the mental and social horizon foreboded stormy weather. But very happily, as it seemed to her, before dinner there was an arrival of some expected visitors, coming to stay for a time in the house. They had been desired as well as expected; there was a famous lady and a learned gentleman among them; and every eye and ear were taken up with attending to their words or waiting upon their movements. Daisy and her concerns were, she thought, forgotten.

She enjoyed the feeling of this for a little while; and then ordered her pony chaise. And presently you might have seen a little figure in a white frock come out upon the front steps, with a large flat on her head, and driving gloves on her hands, and in one of them a little basket. Down the steps she came and took her place in the chaise and gathered up the reins. The black pony was ready, with another boy in place of Sam; nobody interfered with her; and off they went, the wheels of the little chaise rolling smoothly over the gravel, Loupe in a gentle waddling trot, and Daisy in a contented state of mind. It was very pleasant! Clear sunny air, yet not too hot, and the afternoon shadows beginning to make all things look lovely. Daisy took the way to the church, passed out upon the high road, and turned the pony's head in the direction which she had taken with Dr. Sandford the day before. She did not go quite so fast, however; so that it was a little time before she came in sight of the poor old house which she recognised as Molly Skelton's. Daisy drew the reins

then, and let Loupe walk slowly up a slight ascent in the road which led to it. But when the chaise was fairly opposite the house door, Daisy drew the reins still more and brought Loupe to a standstill. She peered forth then anxiously to see if the poor old inmate of the house were to be seen anywhere.

As she looked, the house door opened; and with a very straitened and touched heart Daisy watched the crippled old creature come from within, crawl down over the door step, and make her slow way into the little path before the house. A path of a few yards ran from the road to the house door, and it was bordered with a rough-looking array of flowers. Rough-looking, because they were set or had sprung up rather confusedly, and the path between had no care but was only worn by the feet of travellers and the hands and knees of the poor inhabitant of the place. Yet some sort of care was bestowed on the flowers themselves, for no weeds had been suffered to choke them; and even the encroaching grass had been removed from trespassing too nearly on their little occupation of ground. The flowers themselves shot up and grew as they had a mind. Prince's feather was conspicuous, and some ragged balsams. A few yellow marigolds made a forlorn attempt to look bright, and one tall sunflower raised its great head above all the rest; proclaiming the quality of the little kingdom where it reigned.

The poor cripple moved down a few steps from the house door, and began grubbing with her hands around the roots of a bunch of balsams. Daisy looked a minute or two, very still, and then bade the boy hold her pony; while, without troubling herself about his mystification, she got out of the chaise, and, basket in hand, opened the wicket, and softly went up the path. The neat little shoes and spotless white dress were close beside the poor creature grubbing there in the ground before she knew it, and there they stood still; Daisy was a good deal at a loss how to speak. She was not immediately perceived; the head of the cripple had a three-cornered handkerchief thrown over it to defend it from the sun, and she was earnestly grubbing at the roots of her balsam; the earth-stained fingers and the old brown stuff dress, which was of course dragged along in the dirt too, made a sad contrast with the spotless freshness of the little motionless figure that was at her side, almost touching her. Daisy concluded to wait till she should be seen, and then speak, though how to speak she did not very well know, and she rather dreaded the moment.

It came, when, in throwing her weeds aside, a glance of the cripple saw, instead of stones and grass, two very neat and black and well-shaped little shoes planted there almost within reach of her hand. She drew herself back from the balsam, and looked sideways up, to see what the shoes belonged to. Daisy saw her face then; it was a bad face; so disagreeable that she looked away from it instantly to the balsams.

"What are you doing to your flowers?" she asked, gently.

The gentle little child-voice seemed to astonish the woman, although after an instant she made surly answer, "Whose business is it?"

"Wouldn't it be easier," said Daisy, not looking at her, "if you had something to help you get the weeds up? Don't you want a fork, or a hoe, or something?"

"I've got forks," said the cripple, sullenly. "I use 'em to eat with."

"No, but I mean, something to help you with the weeds," said Daisy "that sort of fork, or a trowel."

The woman spread her brown fingers of both hands, like birds' claws, covered with the dirt in which she had been digging. "I've got forks enough," she said, savagely "there's what goes into my weeds. Now go 'long! "

The last words were uttered with a sudden jerk, and as she spoke them she plunged her hands into the dirt, and bringing up a double handful, cast it with a spiteful fling upon the neat little black shoes. Woe to white stockings, if they had been visible; but Daisy's shoes came up high and tight around her ankle, and the earth thrown upon them fell off easily again; except only that it lodged in the eyelet holes of the boot-lacing and sifted through a little there, and some had gone as high as the top of the boot and fell in. Quite enough to make Daisy uncomfortable, besides that the action half frightened her. She quitted the ground, went back to her pony chaise without even attempting to do anything with the contents of her basket. Daisy could go no further with her feet in this condition. She turned the pony's head, and drove back to Melbourne.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ROSE-BUSH.

"Will I take him to the stable, Miss Daisy?" inquired the boy, as Daisy got out at the back door.

"No. Just wait a little for me, Lewis."

Upstairs went Daisy; took off her boots and got rid of the soil they had brought home; that was the first thing. Then, in spotless order again, she went back to Lewis and inquired where Logan was at work. Thither she drove the pony chaise.

"Logan," said Daisy, coming up to him she had left Loupe in Lewis's care "what do you use to help you get up weeds?"

"Maybe a hoe, Miss Daisy; or whiles a weeding fork."

"Have you got one here?"

"No, Miss Daisy. Was it a fork you were wanting?"

"Yes, I want one, Logan."

"And will you be wanting it now?"

"Yes, I want it now, if you please."

"Bill, you go home and get Miss Daisy one o' them small hand forks out o' that new lot them's slenderer."

"And Logan, I want another thing. I want a little rose-bush and if you can, I want it with a rose open or a bud on it."

"A rose-bush!" said Logan. "Ye want it to be set some place, nae doute?"

"Yes, I do; but I want to set it out myself, Logan; so it must not be too big a bush, you know, for I couldn't manage it."

"Perhaps Miss Daisy had better let me manage it. It's dirty work, Miss Daisy."

"No; I only want the rose bush. I will take care of it, Logan. Have you got one that I can have?"

"Ou, ay, Miss Daisy! there's a forest of rose bushes ye can just please yourself."

"Where is it?"

Seeing his little mistress was greatly in earnest and must be presently satisfied, Logan cast a wistful glance or two at his own proper work in hand which he was abandoning, and walked away with Daisy. The flower garden and nursery were at some distance; but Daisy trudged along as patiently as he. Her little face was busy-looking now and eager, as well as wise; but no tinge of colour would yet own itself at home in those pale cheeks. Logan glanced at her now and then and was, as she said, "very good." He thought he was about the best business, after all, that could occupy him. He directed his steps to a great garden that yet was not the show garden, but hid away behind the plantations of trees and shrubbery. There were a vast number of plants and flowers here, too; but they were not in show order, and were in fact only the reserve stock, for supplying vacancies or preparing changes, or especially for furnishing cut flowers to the house; of which a large quantity must every day be sent in. There was a very nursery of rose trees, smaller and larger. Logan peered about, very particular in his own line as to how every thing should be done; at last he found and chose just the right thing for Daisy. A slender, thrifty young plant, with healthy strong leaves and shoots, and at the top a bud showing red, and a half opened sweet rose. Daisy was quite satisfied.

"Now where is it going, Miss Daisy?" Logan inquired.

"I am going to plant it out myself, Logan; it is going in a place where I want it."

"Surely! but does Miss Daisy know how to plant a rose tree?"

"Won't you tell me how, Logan?"

"Weel, Miss Daisy, there must be a hole dug for it, in the first place; you must take a trowel and make a hole for it But your dress will be the waur!" he exclaimed, glancing at his little mistress's spotless draperies.

"Never mind; only go on and tell me exactly how to manage, Logan."

"Does Miss Daisy intend to do it this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"Aweel, you must take a trowel and make a hole," said Logan, nipping off some useless buds and shoots from the plants in his neighbourhood as he was speaking "and be sure your hole is deep as it should be; and make the bottom soft with your trowel, or throw in a little earth, well broken, for the roots to rest on "

"How shall I know when my hole is deep enough?"

"Weel, Miss Daisy, it depends on the haighth of the roots ye must even try and see till ye get it deep enough; but whatever ye do, keep the crown of the plant above ground."

"And what is the crown of the plant, Logan?"

Logan stooped down, and put his fingers to the stem of a rose tree.

"It's just called the crown o' the plant, Miss Daisy, here where the roots goes one way and the stem springs up another. Miss Daisy sees, there's a kind o' shouter there."

"No, I don't see," said Daisy.

Logan put in his spade, and, with a turn or two, brought up the little rose bush he had chosen for her purpose; and holding the ball of earth in his hand, showed her the part of the plant he spoke of, just above the surface of the soil.

"It's the most tenderest pairt of the vegetable nature," he said; "and it must be kept out of the ground, where it can breathe, like; it won't answer to cover it up."

"I will not," said Daisy. "Then? "

"Then, when ye have gotten the place prepared, ye must set in this ball of earth, as hail as ye can keep it; but if it gets broken off, as it's like it will! then ye must set the roots kindly in on the soft earth, and let them lie just natural; and put in the soft earth over them; and when ye have got a little in press it clown a bit; and then more, after the same manner, until it's all filled up."

"Why must it be pressed down?"

"Weel, Miss Daisy, it must be dune; the roots is accustomed to have the soil tight round them, and they don't like it unless they have it so. It's a vara good way, to have a watering pot of water and make a puddle in the bottom of the hole, and set the roots in that, and throw in the soil; and then it settles itself all round them, and ye need not to coax it with your fingers. But if ye don't puddle the roots, the bush must be well watered and soaked when ye have dune."

"Very well, Logan thank you. Now please put it in a basket for me, with a trowel, and let me take a watering pot of water too; or Lewis can carry that, can't he?"

"He can take whatever ye have a mind," said Logan; "but where is it going?"

"I'll take the basket with the rose," said Daisy "it's going a little way you can set it just here, in my chaise, Logan."

The gardener deposited the basket safely in the chaise, and Daisy got in and shook the reins. Lewis, much wondering and a little disgustful, was accommodated with a watering pot full of water, by the grinning Logan.

"See ye ride steady now, boy," he said. "Ye won't want to show any graces of horsemanship, the day!"

Whatever Lewis might have wanted, the necessity upon him was pretty stringent. A watering pot full of water he found a very uncomfortable bundle to carry on horseback; he was bound to ride at the gentlest of paces, or inflict an involuntary cold bath upon himself every other step. Much marvelling at the arrangement which made a carriage and horses needful to move a rose-bush, Lewis followed, as gently as he could, the progress of his little mistress's pony-chaise; which was much swifter than he liked it; until his marvelling was increased by its turning out of Melbourne grounds and taking a course up the road again. Towards the same place! On went Daisy, much too fast for the watering

pot; till the cripple's cottage came in sight a second time. There, just at the foot of the little rise in the road which led up to the cottage gate, Loue suddenly fell to very slow going. The watering pot went easily enough for several yards; and then Loue stopped. What was the matter?

Something was the matter, yet Daisy did not summon Lewis. She sat quite still, looking before her up to the cottage, with a thoughtful, puzzled, troubled face. The matter was, that just there, and not before, the remembrance of her mother's command had flashed on her that she should have nothing to do with any stranger out of the house unless she had first got leave. Daisy was stopped short. Get leave? She would never get leave to speak again to that poor crabbed, crippled, forlorn creature; and who else would take up the endeavour to be kind to her? Who else would even try to win her to a knowledge of the Bible and Bible joys? and how would that poor ignorant mortal ever get out of the darkness into the light? Daisy did not know how to give her up; yet she could not go on. The sweet rose on the top of her little rose-tree mocked her, with kindness undone and good not attempted. Daisy sat still, confounded at this new barrier her mother's will had put in her way.

Wheels came rapidly coursing along the road in front of her, and in a moment Dr. Sandford's gig had whirled past the cottage and bore down the hill. But recognizing the pony chaise in the road, he too came to a stop as sudden as Daisy's had been. The two were close beside each other.

"Where away, Daisy?"

"I do not understand, Dr. Sandford."

"Where are you going? or rather, why are you standing still here?"

"Because I was in doubt what to do."

"Did the doubt take you here, in the middle of the road?"

"Yes, Dr. Sandford."

"What is it, Daisy? To whom are you carrying a rose-bush?"

"I am afraid nobody."

"What is the matter or the doubt?"

"It is a question of duty, Dr. Sandford."

"Then I will decide it for you. Go on and do what you wish to do. That will be right."

"Oh, no, sir," said Daisy, smiling at her adviser that is just what would be wrong. I cannot."

"Cannot what?"

"Do that, sir; do what I wish to do." And Daisy sighed withal.

"What do you wish to do?"

The doctor was quite serious, and as usual a little imperative in his questions, and Daisy knew him to be trusted.

"I wanted to take this little rose-bush and set it out in the garden up there."

"*There?* do you mean the garden of that cottage?" said the doctor, pointing with his whip.

"Yes, sir."

"Are you bound thither now?"

"No, sir I am going home."

"Rose-bush and all? Daisy, let Lewis get Loue home, and you come here and ride with me. Come! I want you."

Truly Daisy wanted nothing else. She left rose-bush and watering pot, chaise and pony, to Lewis's management, and

gladly let the doctor take her up beside him. She liked to drive with him; he had a fine horse and went fast; and there were other reasons.

Now they drove off in fine style; fast, over the good roads; whisked by Melbourne, sped away along south, catching glimpses of the river from time to time, with the hills on the further side hazily blue and indistinct with the September haze of sunbeams. Near hand the green of plantations and woodland was varied with brown grainfields, where grain had been, and with ripening Indian corn and buckwheat; but more especially with here and there a stately roof-tree or gable of some fine new or old country house. The light was mellow, the air was good; in the excitement of her drive Daisy half forgot her perplexity and discomfiture. Till the doctor said, suddenly looking round at her with a smile, "Now I should like to know the history of that rose-bush."

"Oh, there is no history about it," said Daisy, quite taken by surprise.

"Everything has a beginning, a middle, and an end," said the doctor. "What was the beginning of this?"

"Only, Dr. Sandford," said Daisy, doubtfully, "I was sorry for that poor woman, after what you told me about her."

"Molly Skelton?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you thought to comfort her with rose-bushes?"

"No sir, but I wanted to get on good terms with her."

"Are you on any other terms?"

"She does not know me, you know, sir," said Daisy, lifting to her friend a face that was beyond his comprehension, "and I do not think she was very well pleased to see me in her garden a little while ago."

"You have been in her garden, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Daisy, will you excuse me for asking, why you should be on any terms whatever with Molly Skelton?"

"She is so unhappy, Dr. Sandford," Daisy said, looking up again.

"And do you think you can do anything to make her less unhappy?"

"I thought" Daisy did not look up now, but the doctor watching her saw a witnessing tinge that he knew coming about her eyelids, and a softened line of lip, that made him listen the closer, "I thought I might teach her something that would make her happy, if I could."

"What would you teach her, Daisy?"

"I would teach her to read perhaps I thought; if she would like me and let me."

"Is reading a specific for happiness?"

"No sir but the Bible!" Daisy said, with a sudden glance. And so clear and sure the speech of her childish eye was, that the doctor, though believing nothing of it, would not breathe a question of that which she believed.

"Oh, that is it!" he said. "Well, Daisy, this is the beginning; but though I came in upon the middle of the subject I do not understand it yet. Why did not the rose-tree get to its destination!"

"Because I remembered, just when I had got to the bottom of the hill, that mamma would not let me."

Daisy's tone of voice told more than she knew of her subdued state of disappointment.

"Mrs. Randolph had forbidden you to go to Molly's cottage?"

"No sir; but she had forbidden me to speak to anybody without having her leave. I had forgotten it till just that

minute."

"Ask her leave, and then go. What is the difficulty in that, Daisy?"

"She will not give me leave, Dr. Sandford. Mamma does not like me to do such things."

"Do you care much about it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Present your request to Mrs. Randolph to-morrow, Daisy that is my advice to you."

"It would be no use, Dr. Sandford."

"Perhaps not; but I advise you to take my advice; and lay the rose-bush by the heels till to-morrow afternoon."

"By the heels, sir."

"Yes. Logan will tell you what that means."

Daisy looked with such a gaze of steadfast inquiry up in the doctor's face, that he had hard work to command his countenance. She could not make out anything from his face, except that somehow she got a little encouragement from it; and then they whirled in at the gate of Melbourne, and in another minute were at home. Daisy went off to see after her rose-bush, find Logan, and have it laid by the heels. The doctor marched in through the hall, into the library, and then catching sight of Mr. Randolph on the piazza, he went out there. Mr. Randolph was enjoying the September sunlight, and seemed to be doing nothing else.

"Good afternoon!" said the doctor.

"How do you do?" said Mr. Randolph. "Can you, possibly have business on hand, doctor, in this weather?"

"Very good weather for business," said the doctor.

"Too good. It is enough to look and breathe."

All Mr. Randolph was doing, apparently. He was lounging on a settee, with a satisfied expression of countenance. The doctor put himself in a great cane chair and followed the direction of his host's eyes, to the opposite river and mountains; over which there was a glory of light and atmosphere. Came back to Mr. Randolph's face with an air of the disparaged business.

"It is not bad, driving."

"No, I suppose not!"

"Your little daughter likes business better than you do."

A smile came over Mr. Randolph's face, a smile of much meaning.

"She likes it too well, doctor. I wish I could infuse some degree of nonchalant carelessness into Daisy's little wise head."

"We must deal with things as we find them," said the doctor. "I met her this afternoon in the road, with a carriage-load of business on hand; but what was very bad for her, it was arrested business."

"How do you mean?"

The doctor rose here to give his chair to Mrs. Randolph, who stepped out through the library window. He fetched another for himself, and went on.

"She was in the middle of the road, her chaise loaded with baskets and greenhouse plants, and with a general distribution of garden tools between herself and her outrider. All in the middle of the road at a stand-still chaise and pony and all, and Daisy herself in particular. I found it was an interrupted expedition, and invited Daisy to take a ride

with me; which she did, and I got at the rationale of the affair. And I come now to make the request, as her physician, not as her friend, that her expeditions may be as little interfered with as possible. Let her energies work. The very best thing for her is that they should find something to work upon, and receive no interruption."

"What interrupted her this afternoon."

"Conscience as I understand it."

"There is no dealing with Daisy's conscience, doctor," said Mr. Randolph, with a smile. "What *that* says, Daisy feels herself bound to do."

"Do not burden her conscience then," said the doctor. "Not just now till she gets stronger."

"Where was she going this afternoon?" Mrs. Randolph asked in her calm voice.

"On an errand of the most Utopian benevolence "

"Having what for its object?"

"A miserable old crippled creature, who lives in a poor cottage about half a mile from your gate."

"What was Daisy desiring to do, doctor?"

"Carry some comfort to this forlorn thing, I believe; whom nobody else thinks of comforting."

"Do you know what shape the comfort was to take?"

"I think," said the doctor, "I am not quite sure, but I think, it was a rose-bush."

Mr. Randolph looked at his wife and straightened himself up to a sitting posture.

"And what hindered her, Dr. Sandford?"

"I think, some understanding that she had not liberty to go on."

"Very proper in Daisy," said Mrs. Randolph.

"That is your child who is wanting in docility," remarked Mr. Randolph.

"She might have remembered my orders before she got so far," said the lady.

"I wish you would change the orders," said Dr. Sandford, boldly.

"Not even to oblige you, doctor," said Mrs. Randolph. "Daisy has an idea that the companions who are not fit for her are precisely the ones whom she should cultivate."

"I think Daisy would state the question differently, however," Mr. Randolph remarked.

"She has a tinge of the wildest fanaticism," Mrs. Randolph went on, dropping her work, and facing the doctor.

"Wherever there are rags and dirt, there, by force of contrast, Daisy thinks it is her business to go. This is a miserable place, I suppose, that she was aiming for this afternoon is it not?"

"Very miserable. But the point is, to visit it would have made Daisy happy."

"It is sheer fanaticism!" said Mrs. Randolph. "I cannot let her encourage it. If I did, she would not be fit for anything by and by. She is fit for very little now."

"You will of course judge as you please about it," said the doctor; "but it is my duty to tell you that the danger in that line is far more than compensated by the advantage to be gained. For Daisy's health, she should be checked in nothing; let her go where she will and do what she will; the more business on hand the better, that carries her out of

doors and out of herself. With a strong body and secure health, you will find it far easier to manage fanaticism."

"I am sure Dr. Sandford is right, Felicia," said Mr. Randolph.

"I know Daisy " said the lady.

"I think I know fanaticism," said the doctor; "and if I do, the best thing you can do with it is to give it plenty of sun and air."

"Is it quite safe for Daisy to go to this cottage you speak of?" Mr. Randolph asked.

"Quite safe."

"I cannot think of letting Daisy go there, Mr. Randolph!" said his wife.

"What danger do you apprehend, Felicia?"

It was not quite so easy to say. The lady handled her netting-pins, which were in her fingers, for a moment or two in silence; then let them fall, and raised her handsome head.

"Daisy must be withdrawn entirely from the associations which have taken possession of her if it is possible. The very best thing for her in my opinion would be to send her to a boarding-school. Unless you wish your daughter to grow up a confirmed *religieuse*, Mr. Randolph. Do you wish that?"

"I have not considered it. What do you suppose Daisy will do to harm herself at this place Dr. Sandford speaks of?"

"Some absurdity, that just cherishes the temper she is in."

"Quite as likely" to wear it out, Mr. Randolph was going to say; but some remembrance of Daisy came up and stopped him.

"Good evening!" said the doctor, rising to his feet.

"Are you going, Dr. Sandford?"

"Yes."

"Then you recommend that we let Daisy go to this place, and alone?"

"In my capacity of physician I *should* order it," said the doctor, with a smile; "only, I do not like to give orders and have them dishonoured."

Off he went.

"Felicia," said Mr. Randolph, "I believe he is right."

"I am sure he knows nothing about it," said the lady.

"Do you? Daisy is very delicate."

"She will never die of want of resolution."

"Felicia, I mean to enquire into Daisy's wishes and purposes about this matter; and if I find them unobjectionable, I shall give her leave to go on with it."

"You do not know what you are about, Mr. Randolph."

"I shall find out, then," said the gentleman. "I would rather she would be a *religieuse* than a shadow."

CHAPTER XXX.

MOLLY'S GARDEN.

Daisy pondered over the doctor's counsel. It was friendly; but she hardly thought well advised. He did not know her father and mother so well as she did. Yet she went to find out Logan that afternoon on her return from the drive, and saw the rose-bush laid by the heels; with perhaps just a shadow of hope in her heart that her friend the doctor might mean to put in a plea for her somewhere. The hope faded when she got back to the house, and the doctor was gone, and Mrs. Randolph's handsome face looked its usual calm impassiveness. What use to ask her such a thing as leave to go to the cripple's cottage? No use at all, Daisy knew. The request alone would probably move displeasure. Every look at her mother's face settled this conviction more and more deeply in Daisy's mind; and she ended by giving up the subject. There was no hope. She could do nothing for any poor person, she was sure, under her mother's permission, beyond carrying soup and jelly in her pony-chaise, and maybe going in to give it. And that was not much; and there were very few poor people around Melbourne that wanted just that sort of attention.

So Daisy gave up her scheme. Nevertheless next morning it gave her a twinge of heart to see her rose-bush laid by the heels, exactly like her hopes. Daisy stood and looked at it. The sweet half-blown rose at the top of the little tree hung ingloriously over the soil, and yet looked so lovely and smelt so sweet; and Daisy had hoped it might win poor Molly Skelton's favour, or at least begin to open a way for it to come in due time.

"So ye didn't get your bush planted " said Logan, coming up.

"No."

"Your hands were not strong enough to make the hole deep for it, Miss Daisy?"

"Yes, I think they could; but I met with an interruption yesterday, Logan."

"Weel it'll just bide here till ye want it."

Daisy wished it was back in its old place again; but she did not like to say so, and she went slowly back to the house. As she mounted the piazza steps she heard her father's voice. He was there before the library windows.

"Come here, Daisy. What are you about?" he said, drawing her up in his arms.

"Nothing, papa."

"How do you like doing nothing?"

"Papa, I think it is not at all agreeable."

"You do! So I supposed. What were you about yesterday afternoon?"

"I went to ride with Dr. Sandford."

"Did that occupy the whole afternoon?"

"Oh, no, papa."

"Were you doing nothing the rest of the time?"

"No sir, not *nothing*."

"Daisy, I wish you would be a little more frank. Have you any objection to tell me what you were doing?"

"No, papa; but I did not think it would give you any pleasure. I was only trying to do something."

"It would give me pleasure to have you tell about it."

"I must tell you more then, papa." And standing with her arm on her father's shoulder, looking over to the blue mountains on the other side of the river, Daisy went on.

"There is a poor woman living half a mile from here, papa, that I saw one day when I was riding with Dr. Sandford. She is a cripple. Papa, her legs and feet are all bent up under her, so that she cannot walk at all; her way of moving is by dragging herself along over the ground on her hands and knees; her hands and her gown all clown in the dirt."

"That is your idea of extreme misery, is it not, Daisy?"

"Papa, do you not think it is it must be very uncomfortable?"

"Very, I should think."

"But that is not her worst misery. Papa, she is all alone; the neighbours bring her food, but nobody stops to eat it with her. She is all alone by night and by day; and she is disagreeable in her temper, I believe, and she has nobody to love her and she loves nobody."

"Which of those two things is the worst, Daisy?"

"What two things, papa?"

"To love nobody, or to have nobody to love her?"

"Papa I do not know." Then, remembering Juanita, Daisy suddenly added, "Papa, I should think it must be the worst to love nobody."

"Do you? Pray why?"

"It would not make her happy, I think, to have people love her if she did not love them."

"And you think loving others would be better, without anybody to give love back?"

"I should think it would be very hard!" said Daisy, with a most profound expression of thoughtfulness.

"Well this poor cripple, I understand, lacks both these conditions of happiness?"

"Yes, papa."

"What then? You were going to tell me something about her."

"Not much about *her*," said Daisy, "but only about myself."

"A much more interesting subject to me, Daisy."

You could only see the faintest expression of pleasure in the line of Daisy's lips; she was looking very sober and a trifle anxious.

"I only thought, papa, I would try if I could not do something to make that poor woman happier."

"What did you try?"

"The first thing was to get her to know me and like me, you know, papa; because she is rather cross, and does not like people generally, I believe."

"So you went to see her?"

"I have never spoken much to her, papa. But I went inside of her gate one day, and saw her trying to take care of some poor flowers; so then I thought, maybe, if I took her a nice little rose-bush, she might like it."

"And then like you? Well you tried the experiment?"

"No, papa. I did get a rose-bush from Logan, and he told me how to plant it; and I was on my way to the cottage, and had almost got there; and then I recollected mamma had said I must not speak to anybody without her leave."

"So you came home?"

"Yes, papa. No, papa, I went to ride with Dr. Sandford."

"Have you asked leave of your mother?"

"No, papa," said Daisy, in a tone of voice which sufficiently expressed that she did not intend it.

"So, my dear little Daisy," said her father, drawing his arm round her a little more closely "you think a rose-bush would

serve instead of friends to make this poor creature happy?"

"Oh, no, papa!"

"What was the purpose of it, then?"

"Only to get her to like me, papa."

"What were *you* going to do to make her happy?"

"Papa, if you lived in such a place, in such a way, wouldn't you like to have a friend come and see you sometimes?"

"Certainly! if you were the friend."

"I thought by and by she might learn to like it," Daisy said, in the most sedately meek way possible.

Her father could not forbear a smile.

"But, Daisy, from what you tell me, I am at a loss to understand the part that all this could have had in your happiness."

"Oh, papa she is so miserable!" was Daisy's answer.

Mr. Randolph drew her close and kissed her.

"*You* are not miserable?"

"No, papa but "

"But what?"

"I would like to give her a little bit of comfort."

There was much earnestness, and a little sorrow, in Daisy's eyes.

"I am not sure that it is right for you to go to such places."

"Papa, may I show you something?" said the child, with sudden life.

"Anything, Daisy."

She rushed away; was gone a full five minutes; then came softly to Mr. Randolph's shoulder with an open book in her hand. It was Joanna's Bible, for Daisy did not dare bring her own; and it was open at these words

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

"What does this mean, Daisy? It seems very plain; but what do I want with it?"

"Only, papa, that is what makes me think it is right."

"What is right?"

"To do this, papa."

"Well, but, are you in want of somebody to come and make you happy?"

"Oh, no, papa but if I were in her place, then I should be."

"Do you suppose this commands us to do in every case what we would like ourselves in the circumstances?"

"Papa I suppose so if it wouldn't be something wrong."

"At that rate, I should have to let you go with your rose-bush," said Mr. Randolph.

"Oh, papa!" said Daisy, "do you think, if you asked her, mamma would perhaps say I might?"

"Can't tell, Daisy I think I shall try my powers of persuasion."

For answer to which, Daisy clasped her arms round his neck and gave him some very earnest caresses, comprised in one great kiss and a clinging of her little head in his neck for the space of half a minute. It meant a great deal; so much that Mr. Randolph was unable for the rest of the day to get rid of a sort of lingering echo of Daisy's Bible words; they haunted him, and haunted him with a strange sense of the house being at cross purposes, and Daisy's line of life lying quite athwart and contrary to all the rest. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you;" who else at Melboume considered that for one moment?

However, Mr. Randolph had a fresh talk with his wife; the end of which was that he gave Daisy leave to do what she liked in the matter of Molly Skelton; and was rewarded on the spot by seeing the pink tinge which instantly started into the pale cheeks.

No lack of energy had Daisy for the rest of that day. She went off first to see what was the condition of her rose-bush; pretty fair; lying by the heels seemed to agree with it quite well. Then the pony chaise was ordered, and a watering-pot of water again; much to the boy's disgust who was to carry it; and Daisy took her dinner with quiet satisfaction. So soon as the afternoon had become pleasantly cool, Daisy's driving gloves and hat went on, the chaise was summoned, and rose-bush and all she set forth on her expedition. Mr. Randolph watched her off; acknowledging that certainly for the present the doctor was right; whether in the future Mrs. Randolph would prove to have been right also, he was disagreeably uncertain. Still, he was not quite sure that he wished Daisy anything other than she was.

Troubled by no fears or prognostications, meanwhile, the pony-chaise and its mistress went on their way. No, Daisy had no fears. She did doubt what Molly's immediate reception of her advances might be; her first experience bade her doubt; but the spirit of love in her little heart was overcoming; it poured over Molly a flood of sunny affections and purposes, in the warmth and glow of which the poor cripple's crabbedness and sourness of manner and temper were quite swallowed up and lost. Daisy drove on, very happy and thankful, till the little hill was gained, and slowly walking up it Loupe stopped, nothing loth, before the gate of Molly Skelton's courtyard.

A little bit of hesitation came over Daisy now, not about what was to be done, but how to do it. The cripple was in her flowery bit of ground, grubbing around her balsams as usual. The clear afternoon sunbeams shone all over what seemed to Daisy all distressing together. The ragged balsams the coarse bloom of prince's feather and cockscomb some straggling tufts of ribband grass and four-o'clocks and marigolds and the great sunflower nodding its head on high over all; while weeds were only kept away from the very growth of the flowers and started up everywhere else, and grass grew irregularly where grass should not; and in the midst of it all the poor cripple on her hands and knees in the dirt, more uncared-for, more unseemly and unlovely than her little plot of weeds and flowers. Daisy looked at her, with a new tide of tenderness flowing up in her heart, along with the doubt how her mission should be executed or how it would be received; then she gave up her reins, took the rose-tree in her hands, and softly opened the little wicket gate. She went up the path and stood beside the cripple, who hearing the gate shut had risen from her grubbing in the earth and sat back looking at who was coming. Daisy went on without hesitation now. She had prayed out all her prayer about it before setting out from home.

"I have brought you a rose-bush," she said simply. "Do you like roses? this is very sweet. I thought maybe you would like a rose. Where would you like to have it go?"

The answer was a very strange sort of questioning grunt inarticulate nevertheless expressive of rude wonder and incredulity, as far as it expressed anything. And Molly stared.

"Where shall I put this rose-tree?" said Daisy. "Where would it look prettiest? May I put it here, by these balsams?"

No answer in words; but instead of a sign of assent, the cripple after looking a moment longer at Daisy and the rose-tree, put her hand beyond the balsams and grubbed up a tuft of what the country people call "creepin' Charley;" and then sitting back as before, signified to Daisy by a movement of her hand that the rose-bush might go in that place. That was all Daisy wanted. She fell to work with her trowel, glad enough to be permitted, and dug a hole, with great pains and some trouble; for the soil was hard as soon as she got a little below the surface. But with great diligence Daisy worked and scooped, till by repeated trials she found she had the hole deep enough and large enough; and then she tenderly set the roots of the rose-tree in the prepared place and shook fine soil over them, as Logan had told her; pressing it down from time to time, until the job was finished and the little tree stood securely planted. A great feat accomplished. Daisy stayed not, but ran off to the road for the watering-pot, and bringing it with some difficulty to the spot without soiling herself, she gave the rose-bush a thorough watering; watered it till she was sure the refreshment

had penetrated down to the very roots. All the while the cripple sat back gazing at her; gazing alternately at the rose-bush and the planting, and at the white delicate frock the child wore and the daintily neat shoes and stockings, and the handsome flat hat with its costly ribband. I think the view of these latter things must in some degree have neutralised the effect of the sweet rose looking at her from the top of the little bush; because Molly on the whole was not gracious.

Daisy had finished her work and set down her empty watering pot, and was looking with great satisfaction at the little rose-bush; which was somewhat closely neighboured by a ragged bunch of four-o'clocks on one side and the overgrown balsams on the other; when Molly said suddenly and gruffly, "Now go 'long!"

Daisy was startled, and turned to the creature who had spoken to see if she had heard and understood aright. No doubt of it. Molly was not looking at her, but her face was ungenial; and as Daisy hesitated she made a little gesture of dismissal with her hands. Daisy moved a step or two off, afraid of another shower of gravel upon her feet.

"I will come to-morrow and see how it looks" she said gently.

Molly did not reply yes or no, but she repeated her gesture of dismissal, and Daisy thought it best and wisest to obey. She bid her a sweet "good-bye," to which she got no answer, and mounted into her chaise again. There was a little disappointment in her heart; yet when she had time to think it all over she was encouraged too. The rose-tree was fairly planted; that would keep on speaking to Molly without the fear of a rebuff; and somehow Daisy's heart was warm towards the gruff old creature. How forlorn she had looked, sitting in the dirt, with her grum face!

"But perhaps she will wear a white robe in heaven!" thought Daisy.

Seeing that the rose-tree had evidently won favour, Daisy judged she could not do better than attack Molly again on her weak side, which seemed to be the love of the beautiful! in one line at least. But Daisy was not an impatient child; and she thought it good to see first what sort of treatment the rose-bush got, and not to press Molly too hard. So the next day she carried nothing with her; only went to pay a visit to the garden. Nothing was to be seen but the garden; Molly did not show herself; and Daisy went in and looked at the rose. Much to her satisfaction, she saw that Molly had quite discarded the great bunch of four-o'clocks which had given the little rose tree no room on one side; they were actually pulled up and gone; and the rose looked out in fair space and sunshine, where its coarse-growing neighbour had threatened to be very much in its way. An excellent sign. Molly clearly approved of the rose. Daisy saw with great pleasure that another bud was getting ready to open and already showing red between the leaves of its green calyx; and she went home happy.

Next morning she went among the flower-beds, and took a very careful survey of all the beauties there to see what best she might take for her next attack upon Molly. The beauties in flower were so very many, and so very various, and so delicious all to Daisy's eye, that she was a good deal puzzled. Red and purple, and blue and white and yellow, the beds were gay and glorious. But Daisy reflected that anything which wanted skill in its culture or shelter from severities of season would disappoint Molly, because it would not get from her what would be necessary to its thriving. Some of the flowers in bloom, too, would not bear transplanting. Daisy did not know what to do. She took Logan into her confidence, so far as she could without mentioning names or circumstances.

"Weel, Miss Daisy," said the gardener, "if ye're bent on being a Lady Flora to the poor creature, I'll tell ye what ye'll do ye'll just take her a scarlet geranium."

"A geranium?" said Daisy.

"Ay. Just that."

"But it would want to be in the greenhouse when winter comes."

"Any place where it wouldn't freeze," said Logan. "You see, it'll be in a pot e'en now, Miss Daisy and you'll keep it in the pot; and the pot you'll sink in the ground till frost comes; and when the frost comes, it'll just come up as it is and go intil the poor body's house, and make a spot of summer for her in her house till summer comes again."

"Oh, Logan, that is an excellent thought!"

"Ay, Miss Daisy I'm glad ye approve it."

"And then she would have the flowers all winter."

"Ay if she served it justly."

The only thing now was to choose the geranium. Daisy was some time about it, there were so many to choose from. At last she suited herself with a very splendid new kind called the "Jewess" a compact little plant with a store of rich purple-red blossoms. Logan murmured as he took up the pot in which it was planted "Less than the best will never serve ye, Miss Daisy" but he did not grumble about it after all, and Daisy was content.

She was very content when she had got it in her pony-chaise and was driving off, with the magnificent purple-red blossoms at her feet. How exquisitely those delicate petals were painted, and marked with dashes of red and purple deeper than the general colour. What rich clusters of blossoms. Daisy gave only half an eye to her driving; and it was not till she had almost reached Melbourne gate that she discovered her trowel had been forgotten. She sent her attendant back for it and waited.

Loupe was always willing to stand, lazy little fat fellow that he was; and Daisy was giving her undivided attention to the purple "Jewess," with a sort of soft prayer going on all the while in her heart that her errand might be blessed; when she was suddenly interrupted.

"Why, where are you going, Daisy?"

"Where have you been, Preston?" said Daisy, as suddenly drawing up.

"Little Yankee!" said Preston. "Answer one question by another in that fashion? You mustn't do it, Daisy. What are you doing?"

"Nothing. I am waiting."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"I am going to drive."

"Do you usually carry a pot of geraniums for company?"

"No, not usually," said Daisy, smiling at him.

"Well, set out the pot of geraniums, and we will have a glorious ride, Daisy. I am going to the Fish's, to see some of Alexander's traps; and you shall go with me."

"Oh, Preston I am sorry; I cannot."

"Why?"

"I cannot this afternoon."

"Yes, you can, my dear little Daisy. In fact you *must*. Consider I shall be going away before very long, and then we cannot take rides together. Won't you come?"

"Not now I cannot, Preston! I have got something to do first."

"What?"

"Something which will take me an hour or two. After that I could go."

"Scarcely, this afternoon. Daisy, it is a long drive to the Fish's. And they have beautiful things there, which you would like to see, I know you would. Come! go with me that's my own little Daisy."

Preston was on horseback, and looked very much in earnest. He looked very gay and handsome too, for he was well mounted, and knew how to manage himself and his horse. He wanted to manage Daisy too; and that was difficult. Daisy would have been tempted, and would have gone with him at the first asking; but the thought of Molly and her forlornness, and the words warm at her heart, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you" and a further sense that her visitations of Molly were an extraordinary thing and very likely to be hindered on short notice, kept her firm as a rock. She had an opportunity now in hand; she would not throw it away; not for any self-gratification. And to tell the truth, no sort of self-gratification could balance for a moment in Daisy's mind the thought of Molly's wearing a crown of gold in heaven.. That crown of gold was before Daisy's eyes; nothing else was worth a thought in comparison.

"Are you going to see that wretched old being?" said Preston, at last.

"Yes."

"Daisy dear Daisy I do not know what to do with you. Do you like, is it possible that you can like, dirt and vulgarity?"

"I don't think I do," Daisy said, gently; "but, Preston, I like the poor people."

"You do!" said Preston. "Then it is manifest that you cannot like me." And he dashed spurs into his horse and sprung away, with a grace and life that kept Daisy looking after him in admiration, and a plain mood of displeasure which cast its shadow all over her spirit.

"Here is the trowel, Miss Daisy."

Her messenger had come back, and Daisy, recalled to the business in hand, took up her reins again and drove on; but she felt deeply grieved. Now and then her gauntleted hand even went up to her face to brush away a tear that had gathered. It was not exactly a new thing, nor was Daisy entirely surprised at the attempt to divert her from her purpose. She was wise enough to guess that Preston's object had been more than the pleasure of her company; and she knew that all at home, unless possibly her father might be excepted, neither liked nor favoured her kindness to Molly, and would rejoice to interrupt the tokens of it. All were against her; and Daisy's hand went up again and again. "It is good I am weak and not very well," she thought; "as soon as I grow strong mamma will not let me do this any more. I must do all I can now."

So she came to the cripple's gate; and by that time the tears were all gone.

Nobody was in the little courtyard; Daisy went in first to see how the rose looked. It was all safe and doing well. While she stood there before it, the cottage door opened and the poor inmate came out. She crawled down the walk on hands and knees till she got near Daisy, and then sat back to look at her.

"What do you want?" she said, in a most uninviting and ungracious tone of voice.

"I came to see you," said Daisy, venturing to let her eyes rest for the first time on those poor, restless, unloving eyes opposite her "and I wanted to see the rose, and I have brought you another flower if you will let me bring it in."

Her words were sweet as honey. The woman looked at her, and answered again with the unintelligible grunt, of unbelieving wonder, which Daisy had heard once before. Daisy thought on the whole the safest way was not to talk, but to fetch her beautiful "Jewess" flowers to speak for themselves. So she ran off and brought the pot, and set it on the ground before Molly. It was a great attraction; Daisy could see that at once. The cripple sat back gazing at it. Daisy prudently waited till her eyes came round again from the flowers and rested on her little visitor's face.

"Where shall I put it?" said Daisy. "Where would you like to have it go?"

Molly's eyes presently followed hers, roaming over the little flower plot in search of room for the geranium, which did not appear; prince's feather and marigolds so choked up the ground where balsams did not straggle over it. Molly looked as Daisy did at the possibilities of the case, looked again at the strange sweet little face which was so busy in her garden; and then made a sudden movement. With two or three motions of hands and knees she drew herself a few steps back to one of the exclusive bunches of balsams, and began with her two hands to root it up. Actually she was grubbing, might and main, at the ungainly stalks of the balsams, pulling them up as fast as she could and flinging them aside, careless where. Daisy came to help with her trowel, and together they worked, amicably enough but without a word, till the task was done. A great space was left clear, and Molly threw herself back in her wonted position for taking observations. Daisy wasted no time. In hopeful delight she went on to make a hole in the ground in which to sink the pot of geraniums. It was more of a job than she thought, and she dug away stoutly with her trowel for a good while before she had an excavation sufficient to hold the pot. Daisy got it in at last; smoothed the surface nicely all round it; disposed of the loose soil till the bed was trim and neat, as far as that was concerned; and then stood up and spoke. Warm, how warm she was! her face was all one pink flush, but she did not feel it, she was so eager.

"There," she said, "that will stand there nicely; and when the cold weather comes, you can take the pot up and take it into the house, just as it is; and if you do not let it freeze, it will have flowers for you in the winter."

"Cold?" said Molly.

"Yes by and by, when the cold weather comes, this must be taken up. The cold would kill it, if it was cold enough to

freeze. It would have to go in the house. The rose can stay out all winter if you like; but this must be kept warm. This is a geranium. And it will give you flowers in the winter."

"Janium?" said Molly.

"Yes. This is called the 'Jewess' there are so many kinds that they have to be named. This is the 'Jewess' geranium."

"Water?" said Molly.

"Water? No, this does not need water, because the roots are in a pot, you know, and have not been disturbed. It will want water if rain don't come, by and by."

"What's you?" was Molly's next question, given with more directness.

"Me? I am Daisy Randolph. And I love flowers; and you love flowers. May I come and see you sometimes? Will you let me?"

Molly's grunt this time was not unintelligible. It was queer, but there was certainly a tone of assent in it. She sat looking now at the "Jewess" blossoms and now at Daisy.

"And I love Jesus," the child went on. "Do you love Him?"

The grunt was of pure question, in answer to this speech. Molly did not understand. Daisy stooped down to face her on more equal terms.

"There is a great King up in heaven, who loves you, Molly. He loves you so well that He died for you. And if you love Him, He will take you there when you die and give you a white robe and a crown of gold, and make you blessed."

It is impossible to describe the simple earnestness of this speech. Daisy said it, not as a philosopher nor as even a preacher would have done; she said it as a child. As she had received, she gave. The utter certainty and sweetness of her faith and love went right from one pair of eyes to the other. Nevertheless, Molly's answer was only a most ignorant and blank, "What?" but it told of interest.

"Yes," said Daisy. "Jesus loved us so well that He came and died for us He shed His blood that we might be forgiven our sins. And now He is a Great King up in heaven; and He knows all we do and all we think; and if we love Him He will make us good and take us to be with Him, and give us white robes and crowns of gold up there. He can do anything, for He raised up dead people to life, when He was in the world."

That was a master-stroke of Daisy's. Molly's answer was again a grunt of curiosity; and Daisy, crouching opposite to her, took up her speech, and told her at length and in detail the whole story of Lazarus. And if Daisy was engaged with her subject, so certainly was Molly. She did not stir hand or foot; she sat listening movelessly to the story, which came with such loving truthfulness from the lips of her childish teacher. A teacher exactly fitted, however, to the scholar; Molly's poor closed-up mind could best receive any truth in the way a child's mind would offer it; but in this truth, the undoubting utterance of Daisy's love and belief won entrance for her words where another utterance might not. Faith is always catching.

So Daisy told the wonderful story, and displayed the power and love and tenderness of the Lord with the affection of one who knew Him *her* Lord, and almost with the zeal of an eye-witness of his work. It was almost to Daisy so; it seemed to her that she had beheld and heard the things she was telling over; for faith is the substance of things not seen; and the grief of the sisters, and their joy, and the love and tenderness of the Lord Jesus, were all to her not less real than they were to the actors in that far distant drama. Molly heard her throughout, with open mouth and marvelling eyes.

Neither of them had changed her position, and indeed Daisy had scarce finished talking, when she heard herself hailed from the road. She started. Preston was there on horseback, calling to her. Daisy got up and took up her trowel.

"Good-bye," she said, with a little sigh for the lost vision which Preston's voice had interrupted "I'll come again, I hope." And she ran out at the gate.

"It is time for you to go home, Daisy. I thought you did not know how late it is."

Daisy mounted into her pony-chaise silently.

"Have I interrupted something very agreeable?"

"You would not have thought it so," said Daisy, diplomatically.

"What were you doing, down there in the dirt?"

"Preston, if you please, I cannot talk to you nicely while you are so high and I am so low."

Preston was certainly at some height above Daisy, being mounted up in his saddle on a pretty high horse, while the pony-chaise was hung very near the ground. He had been beside her; but at her last words he laughed and set off at a good pace in advance, leaving the chaise to come along in Loupe's manner. Daisy drove contentedly home through the afternoon sunlight, which laid bands of brightness across her road all the way home. They seemed bands of joy to Daisy.

Preston had galloped ahead, and was at the door ready to meet her. "What kept you so long at that dismal place?" he asked, as he handed her out of the chaise.

"You were back very soon from the Fish place, I think," said Daisy.

"Yes Alexander was not at home; there was no use in my staying. But what were you doing all that while, Daisy?"

"It was not so very long," said Daisy. "I did not think it was a long time. You must have deceived yourself."

"But do you not mean to tell me what you were about? What *could* you do, at such a place?"

Daisy stood on the piazza, in all the light of the afternoon sunbeams, looking and feeling puzzled. How much was it worth while to try to tell Preston of her thoughts and wishes?

"What was the attraction, Daisy? only tell me that. Dirt and ignorance and rudeness and disorder and you contented to be in the midst of it! Down in the dirt! What was the attraction?"

"She is very unhappy, Preston."

"I don't believe it. Nonsense! All that is not misery to such people, unless you make it so by showing them something different. Marble tables are not the thing for them, Daisy."

"Marble tables!" echoed Daisy.

"Nor fuchsias and geraniums either. That old thing's old flowers do just as well."

Daisy was silent. She could have answered this. Preston went on.

"She won't be any better with her garden full of roses and myrtles, than she is with her sunflowers now. What do you expect to do, little Daisy?"

"I know what I would like if I were in her place," said Daisy.

"*You*, but she is not you. She has not your tastes. Do you mean to carry her a silver cup and fork, Daisy? You would certainly like that, if you were in her place. Dear little Daisy, don't you be a mad philosopher."

But Daisy had not been thinking of silver cups and forks, and she was not misled by this argument.

"Daisy, do you see you have been under a mistake?"

"No, Preston," she said, looking up at him.

"Daisy, do you think it is *right* for you to go into houses and among people where my uncle and aunt do not wish you to go? You know they do not wish it, though they have given consent, perhaps because you were so set upon it."

Daisy glanced behind her at the windows of the library; for they were at the back entrance of the house; and then seizing Preston's hand, and saying, "Come with me," she drew him down the steps and over the grass till she reached one of the garden seats under the trees, out of hearing of any one. There they sat down; Preston curious, Daisy

serious and even doubtful.

"Preston" she began with all her seriousness upon her, "I wish I had the book here, but I will tell you. When the Lord Jesus comes again in glory, and all the angels with Him, He will have all the people before Him, and He will separate them into two sets. One will be on the right and one on the left. One set will be the people that belong to Him, and the other set will be the people that do not belong to Him. Then He will welcome the first set, and bless them, because they have done things to the poor and miserable such as they would have liked to have done to themselves. And He will say 'Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.'" Daisy's eyes were full of water by this time.

"So you are working to gain heaven, Daisy?" said Preston, who did not know how to answer her.

"Oh, no!" said the child. "I don't mean that."

"Yes, you do."

"No, that would be doing it for oneself, not for the Lord Jesus" said Daisy, gravely looking at Preston.

"Then I don't see what you mean by your story."

"I mean only, that Jesus likes to have us do to other people what we would want in their place."

"Suppose you were in my aunt and uncle's place do you not think you would like to have a little daughter regard their wishes?"

Daisy looked distressed.

"I think it is time to go in and get ready for dinner, Preston," she said.

If she was distressed, Preston was displeased. They went in without any more words. But Daisy was not perplexed at all. She had not told Preston her innermost thought and hope that Molly Skelton might learn the truth and be one of that blessed throng on the right hand in the Great Day; but the thought and hope were glowing at her heart; and she thought she must carry her Master's message, if not positively forbidden, to all whom she could carry it to. Preston's meditations were different.

"I have tried my best," he said that evening, when Daisy was gone to bed, "and I have failed utterly. I tried my best and all I got was a rebuke and a sermon."

"A sermon!" said Mrs. Randolph.

"An excellent one, aunt Felicia. It was orderly, serious, and pointed."

"And she went to that place?"

"Yes, ma'am. The sermon was afterwards."

"What do you mean, Preston! Speak intelligibly."

"Daisy did, ma'am. I am speaking sober truth, aunt Felicia."

"What is her motive in going to that horrid place? can you understand?"

"Its disagreeableness, ma'am so far as I can make out."

"It is very singular," said Mrs. Gary.

"It is very deplorable," said Mrs. Randolph. "So at least it seems to me. There will be nothing in common soon between Daisy and her family."

"Only that this kind of thing is apt to wear out, my dear. You have that comfort."

"No comfort at all. You do not know Daisy. She is a persistent child. She has taken a dose of fanaticism enough to last her for years."

"I am sure nevertheless that Dr. Sandford is right in his advice," said Mr. Randolph; "both as a physician and as a philosopher. By far the best way is not to oppose Daisy, and take as little notice as possible of her new notions. They will fade out."

"I do not believe it," said the lady "I do not believe it in the least. If she had not your support, I would have an end of this folly in a month."

"Indirect ways" said Mrs. Gary "indirect ways, my dear; those are your best chance. Draw off Daisy's attention with other things. That is what I would do."

And then the ladies put their heads together and concerted a scheme; Preston joining eagerly in the discussion, and becoming the manager-in-chief intrusted with its execution. Mr. Randolph heard, but he gave no help and made no suggestion. He let the ladies alone.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PICTURES.

Daisy came down to breakfast the next morning, looking so very bright and innocent and fresh, that perhaps Mr. Randolph thought his wife and sister were taking unnecessary trouble upon themselves. At least Mrs. Randolph so interpreted his manner, as she saw him put his arm round Daisy and bend down his head to hers. The gay visitors were still at Melbourne, but they had not come down yet to breakfast that morning.

"Did you go to see your old woman yesterday?" Mr. Randolph said.

"Yes, papa."

"Did you enjoy your visit?"

"Very much, papa."

Mrs. Randolph's head made a motion of impatience, which however those two did not see.

"How was that, Daisy? I do not comprehend in this instance the sources of pleasure."

"Papa" said Daisy, hesitating "I think I gave pleasure."

She could not explain to him much more, but Mr. Randolph at least understood that. He gave Daisy another kiss, which was not disapproving, the child felt. So her breakfast was extremely happy.

She had a new plan in her head now about Molly. She wanted to get established on the footing of a friend in that poor little house; and she thought she had better perhaps not confine her line of advance to the garden. After breakfast she sought the housekeeper's room, and let Joanna know that she was in want of a nice little cake of some sort to carry to a poor creature who could make nor buy none. Daisy was a great favourite with Miss Underwood, especially ever since the night when she had been summoned in her night dress to tell the child about the words of the minister that day. Joanna never said "no" to Daisy if it was possible to say "yes;" nor considered anything a trouble that Daisy required. On this occasion she promised that exactly what Daisy wanted should be in readiness by the afternoon; and having thus secured her arrangements Daisy went with a perfectly light heart to see what the morning was to bring forth.

"Daisy!" shouted Preston, as she was going down the piazza steps, "Daisy! where are you bound?"

"Out " said Daisy, who was vaguely seeking the September sunshine.

"Well, 'out' is as good as anywhere. Wait till I get my hat. Come, Daisy! we have business on hand."

"What business?" said Daisy, as she was led along through the trees.

"Great business," said Preston, "only I shall want help, Daisy I want a great deal of help. I cannot manage it alone. Wait till we get to a real good place for a talk. Here, this will do. Now sit down."

"How pretty it is to-day!" said Daisy.

For indeed the river opposite them looked a bright sheet of glass; and the hills were blue in the morning light, and the sunshine everywhere was delightful. The beautiful trees of Melbourne waved overhead; American elms hung their branches towards the ground; lindens stood in masses of luxuriance; oaks and chestnuts spotted the rolling ground with their round heads; and English elms stood up great towers of green. The September sun on all this and on the well kept greensward; no wonder Daisy said it was pretty. But Preston was too full of his business.

"Now, Daisy, we have got a great deal to do!"

"Have we?" said Daisy.

"It is this. Aunt Felicia has determined that she will give a party in two or three weeks."

"A party! But I never have anything to do with parties mamma's parties Preston."

"No. But with this one I think you have."

"How can I?" said Daisy. She was very pleasantly unconcerned as yet, and only enjoying the morning and Preston and the trees and the sunshine.

"Why, little Daisy, I have got to furnish part of the entertainment; and I can't do it without you."

Daisy looked now.

"Aunt Felicia wants me to get up some tableaux."

"Some what?" said Daisy.

"Tableaux. Tableaux vivants. Pictures, Daisy; made with living people."

"What do you mean, Preston?"

"Why, we will choose some pictures, some of the prettiest pictures we can find; and then we will dress up people to represent all the figures, and place them just as the figures are grouped in the engraving; and then they look like a most beautiful large painted picture."

"But pictures do not move?"

"No more do the people. They hold still and do not stir, any more than if they were not real."

"I should think they would look like people though, and not like a picture," said Daisy. "No matter how still you were to keep, I should never fancy you were painted."

"No," said Preston, laughing; "but you do not understand. The room where the spectators are is darkened, and the lights for the picture are all set on one side, just as the light comes in the picture, and then it all looks just right. And the picture is seen behind a frame, too, of the folding doors or something."

Daisy sat looking at Preston, a little curious but not at all excited.

"So I shall want your help, Daisy."

"About what?"

"First, to choose what pictures we will have. We must look over all the books of engravings in the house, and see what would do. Shall we go at it?"

Daisy consented. They repaired to the library and took position by a large portfolio of engravings.

"Fortitude! Capital!" cried Preston, as he turned over the first sheet in the portfolio. "Capital; Daisy! That's for you. You would make an excellent 'Fortitude.'"

"I!" said Daisy.

"Capital couldn't be better. This is Sir Joshua Reynolds' 'Fortitude' and you will do for it wonderfully well. You have half the look of it now. Only you must be a little more stern."

"Why must Fortitude look stern?" said Daisy.

"Oh, because she has hard work to do, I suppose."

"What is Fortitude, Preston?"

"Oh, Daisy, Daisy! are you going through life like that? Why you'll turn all your play into work."

"Why? But what *is* it?"

"Fortitude? Why, it is, let me see, it is the power of endurance."

"The power of bearing pain, Daisy," said Mr. Randolph, who was walking through the room.

"I do not think Fortitude ought to look stern."

"The old gentleman thought so. I suppose he knew. You must, anyhow, like the picture."

"But, Preston, how could I look like that? My dresses are not made so."

"I hope not!" said Preston, laughing. "But, Daisy, we'll get some of aunt Felicia's riggings and feathers, and set you out in style."

"But you can't put feathers on my head like those," said Daisy. "They wouldn't stay on. And I don't see why Fortitude should be dressed in feathers."

"Why, it is the crest of her helmet, Daisy! Fortitude must have something strong about her, somewhere, and I suppose her head is as good a place as any. We'll make a helmet for you. And I will make Dolce lie down at your feet for the lion."

"You couldn't, Preston."

"I could make him do anything." Dolce was Preston's dog; a great shaggy St. Bernard.

"Well!" said Daisy, with a half-sigh.

"I think you'll make a beautiful Fortitude. Now let us see what next. That is for one."

"How many pictures do you want?" said Daisy.

"Oh, a good many. Plenty, or it wouldn't be worth taking all the trouble, and shutting the people up in a dark room. 'Alfred in the neat-herd's cottage' getting a scolding for his burnt cakes. How splendid that would be if we could get Dr. Sandford to be Alfred!"

"Who would be that scolding old woman?"

"No matter, because we can't get Dr. Sandford. We are not to have grown folks at all. It is a pity Ransom is not here. We shall have to get Alexander Fish or Hamilton! Hamilton will do. He's a good-looking fellow."

"You would do a great deal better," said Daisy. "And Alexander would not do at all. He has not a bit the look of a king about him."

"I must be that old man with the bundle of sticks on his head," said Preston, who was, however, immensely flattered.

"But his beard?" said Daisy.

"Oh, I'll put that on. A false beard is easy. You won't know me, Daisy. That will be an excellent picture. See that girl blowing the burnt cakes and making her face into a full moon!"

"Will you have her in the picture?"

"Certainly! Most assuredly."

"But, who will you get to do that, Preston?"

"Nora Dinwiddie, I reckon."

"Will *she* come?"

"We shall want all we can get. All Mrs. Stanfield's young ones, and Mrs. Fish's and Linwood's and everybody. Now, Daisy, here you are! This is the very thing."

"For what?" said Daisy.

"Don't you see? For you. This is Queen Esther before Ahasuerus you know the story?"

"Oh, yes! when he stretched out the golden sceptre to her. She is fainting, isn't she?"

"Exactly. You can do that glorious, because you have always a pair of pale cheeks on hand."

"I?" said Daisy, again. "Do you want me to be two things?"

"A dozen things, perhaps. You must be Queen Esther at any rate. Nobody but you."

"And who will be Ahasuerus?"

"I don't know. Hamilton Rush, I reckon; he's a nice fellow."

"Oh, Preston, why don't you be Ahasuerus?"

"I am manager, you know, Daisy; it won't do for the manager to take the best pieces for himself. Ahasuerus is one of the best. See how handsome the dress is and the attitude, and everything."

"I don't see where you will find the dresses," said Daisy. "All those are robes of silk and velvet and fur; and then the jewels, Preston!"

"Nonsense, Daisy. Aunt Felicia will let us take all her stores of satins and velvets and feathers, and jewellery too. It won't hurt them to be looked at."

"I think," said Daisy, slowly, "I think I will not be Queen Esther."

"Why not? don't you like her looks?"

"Oh, yes. *That's* no matter; but I would rather somebody else would be it."

"Why, little Daisy? You are the one; nobody can be Esther but you."

"I think I will not," said Daisy, thoughtfully.

"What's the matter, Daisy? You *must*. I want you for Esther and nobody else. What is the objection?"

"I would rather not," said Daisy. "I don't know Hamilton Rush much."

This was said with extreme demureness, and Preston bit his lips almost till the blood came to prevent the smile which would have startled Daisy.

"You won't know him at all when he is dressed and with his crown on. It's all a play. You can imagine he is the real old

Persian king, who looked so fiercely on the beautiful Jewess when she ventured unsummoned into his presence."

"I could not stand like that," said Daisy.

"Yes, you could. That's easy. You are fainting in the arms of your attendants."

"Who will the attendants be?"

"I don't know. Who do you think?"

"I think I would rather not be in this picture," said Daisy.

"Yes, you will. I want you. It is too good to be given to somebody else. It is one of the prettiest pictures we shall have, I reckon."

"Then you must be the king."

"Well we will see," said Preston. "What comes next? 'Canute and his courtiers.' That won't do, because we could not have the sea in."

"Nor the horse," said Daisy.

"Not very well. What a stupid collection of portraits!
Nothing but portraits."

"There are fortune-tellers."

"That won't do not interest enough. There! here's one.
'Little Red Riding-hood.' That will be beautiful for you,
Daisy."

"But, Preston, I mustn't be everything."

"Plenty more things coming. You don't like Red Riding-hood?
Then we will give it to Nora or Ella."

"Oh, I like it," said Daisy. "I like it much better than
Esther unless you will play Ahasuerus."

"Well, I will put you down for both of 'em."

"But who's to be anything else?"

"Lots. Here. Splendid! 'Marie Antoinette going from the revolutionary tribunal' that will be capital."

"Who will take that?" said Daisy.

"Let me see. I think I think, Daisy, it must be Theresa Stanfield. She is a clever girl, and it must be a clever girl to do this."

"But she will not look as old as she ought."

"Yes, she will, when she is dressed. I know who will be our dresser, too; Mrs. Sandford."

"Will she?" said Daisy.

"Yes. She knows how, I know. You and I must go and give invitations, Daisy."

"Mamma will send the invitations."

"Yes, of course, to the party; but we have got to beat up recruits and get contributions for the tableaux. You and I must do that. I engaged to take all the trouble of the thing from aunt Felicia."

"Contributions, Preston?"

"Of people, Daisy. People for the tableaux, We must have all we can muster."

"I can't see how you will make Theresa Stanfield look like that."

"I cannot," said Preston, laughing, "but Mrs. Sandford will do part, and Theresa herself will do the other part. She will bring her face round, you will see. The thing is, who will be that ugly old woman who is looking at the queen with such eyes of coarse fury I think I shall have to be that old woman."

"You, Preston!" And Daisy went off into a fit of amusement.

"Can you make your eyes look with coarse fury?"

"You shall see. That's a good part. I should not like to trust it to anybody else. Alexander and Hamilton Rush will have to be the Queen's guards how we want Ransom! Charley Linwood is too small. There's George, though."

"What does that woman look at the queen so for?"

"Wants to see her head come down which it did soon after."

"Her head come down?"

"It had come down pretty well then, when the proud, beautiful queen was exposed to the looks and insults of the rabble. But they wanted to see it come down on the scaffold."

"What had she been doing, to make them hate her?"

"She had been a queen; and they had made up their minds that nobody ought to be queen, or anything else but rabble; so her head must come off. A great many other heads came off; for the same reason."

"Preston, I don't think the poor would hate that kind of thing so, if the rich people behaved right."

"How do you think rich people ought to behave." said Preston, gravely, turning over the engravings.

Daisy's old puzzle came back on her; she was silent.

"Common people always hate the uncommon, Daisy. Now what next? Ah! here is what will do. This is beautiful."

"What is it?"

"Portia and Bassanio. He has just got that letter, you know."

"What letter?"

"Why, Antonio's letter. Oh, don't you know the story? Bassanio was Antonio's friend, and Oh, dear, it is a long story, Daisy. You must read it."

"But what is the picture about?"

"This: Bassanio has just this minute been married to Portia, the loveliest lady in all the world; that he knew of; and now comes a letter, just that minute, telling him that his dear friend Antonio is in great danger of being cut to pieces through the wickedness of a fellow that he had borrowed money from. And the money had been borrowed for Bassanio, to set him up for his courtship so no wonder he feels rather bad."

"Does she know?"

"No; she is just asking what is the matter. That will be a capital picture."

"But you couldn't stand and look like that," said Daisy.

"I shall not," said Preston, "but Hamilton Rush will. I shall give it to him. And let me see for Portia that Fish girl cannot do it, she is not clever enough. It will have to be Theresa Stanfield."

"I should like to see anybody look like *that*," said Daisy.

"Well, you will. We shall have to go to another book of engravings. Hollo! here you are again, Daisy. This will do for you exactly. Exactly!"

"What is it?"

"Why, Daisy, these are two old Puritans; young ones, I mean, of course; and they are very fond of each other, you know, but somehow they don't know it. Or one of them don't, and he has been goose enough to come to ask Priscilla if she will be his friend's wife. Of course she is astonished at him."

"She does not look astonished."

"No, that is because she is a Puritan. She takes it all quietly, only she says she has an objection to be this other man's wife. And then John finds what a fool he is. That's capital. You shall be Priscilla; you will do it and look it beautifully."

"I do not think I want to be Priscilla," said Daisy, slowly.

"Yes, you do. You will. It will make such a beautiful picture. I reckon Alexander Fish will make a good John Alden he has nice curly hair."

"So have you," said Daisy; "and longer than Alexander's, and more like the picture."

"I am manager, Daisy. That wouldn't do."

"I shall not be in that picture if Alexander is the other one," said Daisy.

"Well we will see. But Daisy, it is only playing pictures, you know. It will not be Daisy and Alexander Fish not at all it will be Priscilla and John Alden."

"I should think it was Alexander Fish," said Daisy.

Preston laughed.

"But Preston, what is that word you said just now? what is a Puritan?"

"I don't know. I think you are one. I do not know another."

"You said these were Puritans?"

"Yes, so they were. They were very good people, Daisy, that liked wearing plain dresses. We shall have to have a stuff dress made for you I reckon you have not one of anything like a Puritan cut."

"Then, how am I a Puritan, Preston?"

"Sure enough. I mean that you would be one, if you got a chance. How many pictures have we chosen out? Six? That is not half enough."

The search went on, through other books and portfolios. There was good store of them in Mr. Randolph's library, and Daisy and Preston were very busy the whole morning till luncheon-time. After Daisy's dinner, however, her mind took up its former subject of interest. She went to Joanna, and was furnished with a nice little sponge-cake and a basket of sickle pears for Molly Skelton. Daisy forgot all about tableaux. This was something better. She ordered the pony-chaise and got ready for driving.

"Hollo, Daisy!" said Preston, as she came out upon the piazza; "what now?"

"I am going out."

"With me."

"No, I have business, Preston."

"So have I; a business that cannot wait, either. We must go and drum up our people for the tableaux, Daisy. We haven't much time to prepare, and lots of things to do."

"What?"

"First, arrange about the parts everybody is to take; and then the dresses, and then practising."

"Practising what, Preston?"

"Why, the pictures! We cannot do them at a dash, all right; we must drill, until every one knows exactly how to stand and how to look, and can do it well."

"And must the people come here to practise?"

"Of course. Where the pictures and the dresses are, you know. Aunt Felicia is to give us her sewing woman for as much time as we want her; and Mrs. Sandford must be here to see about all that; and we must know immediately whom we can have, and get them to come. We must go this afternoon, Daisy."

"Must I?"

"Certainly. You know or you would know if you were not a Puritan, little Daisy, that I cannot do the business alone. You are Miss Randolph."

"Did the Puritans not know much?" inquired Daisy.

"Nothing about the ways of the world."

Daisy looked at the pony-chaise, at the blue hills, at her basket of pears; and yielding to what seemed necessity, gave up Molly for that day. She went with Preston, he on horseback, she in her pony-chaise, and a very long afternoon's work they made of it. And they did not get through the work, either. But by dint of hearing the thing talked over, and seeing the great interest excited among the young folks, Daisy's mind grew pretty full of the pictures before the day was ended. It was so incomprehensible, how Theresa Stanfield could ever bring her merry, arch face, into the grave proud endurance of the deposed French queen; it was so puzzling to imagine Hamilton Rush, a fine, good-humoured fellow, something older than Preston, transformed into the grand and awful figure of Ahasuerus; and Nora was so eager to know what part she could take; and Mrs. Sandford entered into the scheme with such utter good-nature and evident competence to manage it. Ella Stanfield's eyes grew very wide open; and Mrs. Fish was full of curiosity, and the Linwoods were tumultuous.

"We shall have to tame those fellows down," Preston remarked as he and Daisy rode away from this last place, "or they will upset everything. Why cannot people teach people to take things quietly!"

"How much that little one wanted to be Red Riding-hood," said Daisy.

"Yes. Little Malapert!"

"You will let her, won't you?"

"I reckon I won't. You are to be Red Riding-hood unless, I don't know; perhaps that would be a good one to give Nora Dinwiddie. I shall see."

That day was gone. The next day there was a great overhauling, by Preston and his mother and Daisy, of the stores of finery which Mrs. Randolph put at their disposal. Mrs. Randolph herself would have nothing to do with the arrangements; she held aloof from the bustle attending them; but facilities and materials she gave with unsparing hand. Daisy was very much amused. Mrs. Gary and Preston had a good deal of consultation over the finery, having at the same time the engravings spread out before them. Such stores of satin and lace robes, and velvet mantles, and fur wrappings and garnishings, and silken scarfs, and varieties of adornment, old and new, were gathered into one room and displayed, that it almost tired Daisy to look at them. Nevertheless, she was amused. And she was amused still more, when later in the day, after luncheon, Mrs. Sandford arrived, and was taken up into the tiring room, as Preston called it. Here she examined the pictures, and made a careful survey of the articles with which she must work to produce the desired effects. Some of the work was easy. There was an old cardinal, of beautiful red cloth, which doubtless would make up Red Riding-hood with very little trouble. There were beautiful plumes for Fortitude's head; and Daisy began to wonder how she would look with their stately grace waving over her. Mrs. Sandford tried it. She arranged the plume on Daisy's head; and with a turn or two of a dark cashmere scarf imitated beautifully the classic folds of the

drapery in the picture. Then she put Daisy in the attitude of the figure; and by that time Daisy felt so strange that her face was stern and grave enough to need no admonishing. Preston clapped his hands.

"If you will only look like that, Daisy, in the tableau!"

"Look how?" said Daisy.

"Mrs. Sandford, did you ever see anything so perfect?"

"It is excellent," said that lady.

"If they will all do as well, we shall be encored. But there is no dress here for Bassanio, Mrs. Sandford."

"You would hardly expect your mother's or your aunt's wardrobe to furnish that."

"Hardly. But I am sure uncle Randolph's wardrobe would not do any better. It will have to be made."

"I think I have something at home that will do something that was used once for a kindred purpose. I think I can dress Bassanio as far as the slashings are concerned. The cap and plume we can manage here and I dare say your uncle has some of those old-fashioned long silk hose."

"Did papa ever wear such things?" said Daisy.

"Portia will be easy," said Preston, looking round the room.

"Who is to be Portia?"

"Theresa Stanfield, I believe."

"That will do very well, I should think. She is fair suppose we dress her in this purple brocade."

"Was Portia married in purple?" said Preston.

Mrs. Sandford laughed a good deal. "Well" she said "white if you like; but Theresa will look most like Portia if she wears this brocade. I do not believe white is *de rigueur* in her case. You know, she went from the casket scene to the altar. If she was like me, she did not venture to anticipate good fortune by putting on a bridal dress till she knew she would want it."

"Perhaps that is correct," said Preston.

"How come you to know so much about the dresses?" said the lady. "That is commonly supposed to be woman's function."

"I am general manager, Mrs. Sandford, and obliged to act out of character."

"You seem to understand yourself very well. Priscilla! we have no dress for her."

"It will have to be made."

"Yes. Who is there to make it?"

The seamstress was now summoned, and the orders were given for Priscilla's dress, to be made to fit Daisy. It was very amusing, the strait-cut brown gown, the plain broad vandyke of white muslin, and etceteras that Mrs. Sandford insisted on.

"She will look the part extremely well. But are you going to give her nothing but Fortitude and Prudence, Preston? is Daisy to do nothing gayer."

"Yes ma'am she is to be the queen of the Persian king here what is his name? Ahasuerus! She is Esther."

Daisy opened her lips to say no, but Preston got her into his arms, and softly put his hand upon her mouth before she could speak the word. The action was so coaxing and affectionate, that Daisy stood still, silent, with his arms round her.

"Queen Esther!" said Mrs. Sandford. "That will tax the utmost of our resources. Mrs. Randolph will lend us some jewels, I hope, or we cannot represent that old Eastern court."

"Mrs. Randolph will lend us anything and everything," said Preston.

"Then we can make a beautiful tableau. I think Esther must be in white."

"Yes ma'am it will add to the fainting effect."

"And we must make her brilliant with jewels; and dress her attendants in colours, so as to set her off; but Esther must be a spot of brilliancy. Ahasuerus rich and heavy. This will be your finest tableau, if it is done well."

"Alfred will not be bad," said Preston.

"In another line. Your part will be easy, Daisy you must have a pair of strong-armed handmaidens. What do you want Nora for, Preston?"

"Could she be one of them, Mrs. Sandford?"

"Yes, if she can be impressed with the seriousness of the occasion; but the maids of the queen ought to be wholly in distress for their mistress, you know. She could be one of the princes in the tower, very nicely."

"Yes, capitally," said Preston. "And Mrs. Sandford wouldn't she make a good John Alden?"

"Daisy for Priscilla! Excellent!" said Mrs. Sandford. "If the two could keep their gravity, which I very much doubt."

"Daisy can keep anything," said Preston. "I will tutor Nora."

"Well, I will help you as much as I can," said the lady. "But, my boy, this business takes time! I had no notion I had been here so long. I must run."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE BASKET OF SPONGE-CAKE.

As she made her escape one way, so did Daisy by another. When Preston came back from attending Mrs. Sandford to her carriage he could find nothing of his little co-worker. Daisy was gone.

In all haste, and with a little self-reproach for having forgotten it, she had ordered her pony-chaise; and then examined into the condition of her stores. The sponge-cake was somewhat dry; the sickle pears wanted looking over. Part of them were past ripe. Indeed so many of them, that Daisy found her basket was no longer properly full, when these were culled out. She went to Joanna. Miss Underwood soon made that all right with some nice late peaches; and Daisy thought with herself that sponge-cake was very good a little dry, and would probably not find severe criticism at Molly's house. She got away without encountering her cousin, much to her satisfaction.

Molly was not in her garden. That had happened before. Daisy went in, looked at the flowers, and waited. The rose-tree was flourishing; the geranium was looking splendid; with nothing around either of them that in the least suited their neighbourhood. So Daisy thought. If all the other plants the ragged balsams and "creeping Charley" and the rest could have been rooted up, then the geranium and the rose would have shown well together. However, Molly did not doubtless feel this want of suitability; to her the tall sunflower was, no question, a treasure and a beautiful plant. Would Molly come out?

It seemed as if she would not. No stir, and the closed house door looking forbidding and unhelpful. Daisy waited, and waited, and walked up and down the bit of a path, from the gate quite to the house door; in hopes that the sound of her feet upon the walk might be heard within. Daisy's feet did not make much noise; but however that were, there was no stir of a sound anywhere else. Daisy was patient; not the less the afternoon was passing away, and pretty far gone already, and it was the first of October now. The light did not last as long as it did a few months ago. Daisy was late. She must go soon, if she did not see Molly; and to go without seeing her was no part of Daisy's plan. Perhaps Molly was sick. At any rate, the child's footsteps paused at the door of the poor little house, and her fingers knocked. She

had never been inside of it yet, and what she saw of the outside was not in the least inviting. The little windows, lined with paper curtains to keep out sunlight and curious eyes, looked dismal; the weatherboards were unpainted; the little porch broken. Daisy did not like such things. But she knocked without a bit of fear or hesitation, notwithstanding all this. She was charged with work to do; so she felt; it was no matter what she might meet in the discharge of it. She had her message to carry, and she was full of compassionate love to the creature whose lot in life was so unlike her own. Daisy went straight on in her business.

Her knock got no answer, and still got none though it was repeated and made more noticeable. Not a sign of an answer. Daisy softly tried the door then to see if it would open. There was no difficulty in that; she pushed it gently, and gently stepped in.

It looked just like what she expected, though Daisy had not got accustomed yet to the conditions of such rooms. Just now, she hardly saw anything but Molly. Her eyes wandering over the strange place, were presently caught by the cripple, sitting crouching in a corner of the room. It was all miserably desolate. The paper shields kept out the light of the sunbeams; and though the place was tolerably clean, it had a close, musty, disagreeable, shut-up smell. But all Daisy thought of at first was the cripple. She went a little towards her.

"How do you do, Molly?" her little soft voice said. Molly looked glum, and spoke never a word.

"I have been waiting to see you," Daisy said, advancing a step nearer "and you did not come out. I was afraid you were sick."

One of Molly's grunts came here. Daisy could not tell what it meant.

"Are you sick, Molly?"

"It's me and not you" said the cripple, morosely.

"Oh, I am sorry!" said Daisy, tenderly. "I want to bring in something for you "

She ran away for her basket. Coming back, she left the door open to let in the sweet air and sun.

"What is the matter with you, Molly?"

The cripple made no answer, not even a grunt; her eyes were fastened on the basket. Daisy lifted the cover and brought out her cake, wrapped in paper. As she unwrapped it and came up to Molly, she saw what she had never seen before that minute, a smile on the cripple's grum face. It was not grum now; it was lighted up with a smile, as her eyes dilated over the cake.

"I'll have some tea!" she said.

Daisy put the cake on the table and delivered a peach into Molly's hand. But she lifted her hand to the table and laid the peach there.

"I'll have some tea."

"Are you sick, Molly?" said Daisy again; for in spite of this declaration, and in spite of her evident pleasure, Molly did not move.

"I'm aching all through."

"What is the matter?"

"Aching's the matter rheumatiz. I'll have some tea."

"It's nice and warm out in the sun," Daisy suggested.

"Can't get there," said Molly. "Can't stir. I'm all aches all over."

"How can you get tea, then, Molly? Your fire is quite out."

"Ache and get it " said the cripple, grumly.

Daisy could not stand that. She at first thought of calling her groom to make a fire; but reflected that would be a hazardous proceeding. Molly perhaps, and most probably, would not allow it. If she would allow her, it would be a great step gained. Daisy's heart was so full of compassion she could not but try. There was a little bit of an iron stove in the room, and a tea-kettle, small to match, stood upon it; both cold of course.

"Where is there some wood, Molly?" said Daisy, over the stove; "some wood and kindling? I'll try if I can make the fire for you, if you will let me, please."

"In there " said the cripple, pointing.

Daisy looked, and saw nothing but an inner door. Not liking to multiply questions, for fear of Molly's patience, she ventured to open the door. There was a sort of shed-room, where Daisy found stores of everything she wanted. Evidently the neighbours provided so far for the poor creature, who could not provide for herself. Kindling was there in plenty, and small wood stacked. Daisy got her arms full and came back to the stove. By using her eyes carefully she found the matches without asking anything, and made the fire, slowly but nicely; Molly meanwhile having reached up for her despised peach was making her teeth meet in it with no evidence of disapprobation. The fire snapped and kindled and began immediately to warm up the little stove. Daisy took the kettle and went into the same lumber shed to look for water. But though an empty tin pail stood there, the water in it was no more than a spoonful. Nothing else held any. Daisy looked out. A worn path in the grass showed the way to the place where Molly filled her water-pail a little basin of a spring at some distance from the house. Daisy followed the path to the spring, filled her pail and then her kettle, wondering much how Molly ever could crawl to the place in rainy weather; and then she came in triumphant and set the tea-kettle on the stove.

"I am very sorry you are sick, Molly," said Daisy, anew.

Molly only grunted; but she had finished her peach, and sat there licking her finger.

"Would you like to see Dr. Sandford? I could tell him."

"No!" said the poor thing, decidedly.

"I'll pray to the Lord Jesus to make you well."

"Humph?" said Molly, questioning.

"You know, He can do everything. He can make you well; and I hope He will."

"He won't make me well " said Molly.

"He will make you happy, if you will pray to Him."

"Happy!" said Molly; as if it were a yet more impossible thing.

"Oh, yes. Jesus makes everybody happy that loves Him. He makes them good too, Molly; He forgives all their sins that they have done; and in heaven He will give them white robes to wear, and they will not do wrong things nor have any pain any more."

One of Molly's grunts came now; she did not understand this, or could not believe. Daisy looked on, pitiful and very much perplexed.

"Molly, you have a great Friend in heaven," said the child; "don't you know it? Jesus loves you."

"Hn?" said Molly again.

"Don't you know what He did, for you and me and everybody!"

Molly's head gave sign of ignorance. So Daisy sat down and told her. She told her the story at length; she painted the love of the few disciples, the enmity of the world, the things that infinite tenderness had done and borne for those who hated goodness and would not obey God. Molly listened, and Daisy talked; how, she did not know, nor Molly neither; but the good news was told in that poor little house; the unspeakable gift was made known. Seeing Molly's fixed eyes and rapt attention, Daisy went on at length and told all. The cripple's gaze never stirred all the while, nor stirred when the story came to an end. She still stared at Daisy. Well she might!

"Now, Molly," said the child, "I have got a message for you."

"Hn?" said Molly, more softly.

"It is from the Lord Jesus. It is in His book. It is a message. The message is, that if you will believe in Him and be His child, He will forgive you and love you; and then you will go to be with Him in heaven."

"Me?" said Molly.

"Yes," said Daisy, nodding her little head with her eyes full of tears. "Yes, you will. Jesus will take you there, and you will wear a white robe and a crown of gold, and be with Him."

Daisy paused, and Molly looked at her. How much of the truth got fair entrance into her mind, Daisy could not tell. But after a few minutes of pause, seeing that Daisy's lips did not open, Molly opened hers, and bade her "Go on."

"I am afraid I haven't time to-day," said Daisy. "I'll bring my book next time and read you the words. Can you read, Molly?"

"Read? no!"

Whether Molly knew what reading was, may be questioned.

"Molly," said Daisy, lowering her tone in her eagerness, "would you like to learn to read yourself? Then, when I am not here, you could see it all in the book. Wouldn't you like it?"

"Where's books?" said the cripple.

"I will bring the book. And now I must go."

For Daisy knew that a good while had passed; she did not know how long it was. Before going, however, she went to see about the fire in the stove. It was burnt down to a few coals; and the kettle was boiling. Daisy could not leave it so. She fetched more wood and put in, with a little more kindling; and then, leaving it all right, she was going to bid Molly good-bye, when she saw that the poor cripple's head had sunk down on her arms. She looked in that position so forlorn, so lonely and miserable, that Daisy's heart misgave her. She drew near.

"Molly " said her sweet little voice, "would you like your tea now? the water is boiling."

Molly signified that she would.

"Would you like to have me make it?" said Daisy, doubtfully, quite afraid of venturing too far or too fast. But she need not have been afraid. Molly only pointed with her finger to a wall cupboard, and said as before, "In there."

The way was clear for Daisy, time or no time. She went to the cupboard. It was not hard to find the few things which Molly had in constant use. The tea-pot was there, and a paper of tea. Daisy made the tea, with a good deal of pleasure and wonder; set it to draw, and brought out Molly's cup and saucer and plate and knife and spoon. A little sugar she found too; not much. She put these things on the low table which was made to fit Molly's condition. She could have it before her as she sat on the floor.

"I don't see any milk for your tea, Molly."

"Milk? no. It's all gone," said Molly.

"I am sorry. You'll have to take your tea without milk then.
Here it is. I hope it is good."

Daisy poured out a cup, set the sugar beside it, and cut slices of sponge-cake. She was greatly pleased at being allowed to do it. Molly took it as a very natural thing, and Daisy sat down to enjoy the occasion a few minutes longer, and also to give such attentions as she could.

"Won't you have some?" said Molly.

"No, I thank you. Mamma does not let me drink tea, except when I am sick."

Molly had discharged her conscience, and gave herself now to her own enjoyment. One cup of tea was a mere circumstance; Daisy filled and refilled it; Molly swallowed the tea as if cupfuls had been mouthfuls. It was a subject of question to Daisy whether the poor creature had had any other meal that day; so eager she was, and so difficult to satisfy with the sponge-cake. Slice after slice; and Daisy cut more, and put a tiny fresh pinch of tea into the teapot, and waited upon her with inexpressible tenderness and zeal. Molly exhausted the tea-pot and left but a small remnant of the cake. Daisy was struck with a sudden fear that she might have been neglected and really want things to eat. How could she find out?

"Where shall I put this, Molly?" she said, taking the plate with the morsel of cake. "Where does it go?"

"In there " said Molly.

"Here? or here?" touching the two doors of the cupboard.

" 'Tother one."

So Daisy opened the other door of the cupboard, just what she wanted to do. And there she saw indeed some remnants of food, but nothing more than remnants; a piece of dry bread and a cold muffin, with a small bit of boiled pork. Daisy took but a glance, and came away. The plate and cup and saucer she set in their place; bid good-bye to Molly, and ran out.

Time indeed! The sun was sending long slant bright beams against the cottage windows and over the pony-chaise, and the groom had got the pony's head turned for home, evidently under the impression that Daisy was staying a long time. A little fearful of consequences if she got home after sundown, Daisy gathered up her reins and signified to Loupe that he was expected to move with some spirit.

But Daisy was very happy. She was thoroughly at home now with Molly; she was fairly admitted within the house and welcome there; and already she had given comfort. She had almost done as Nora said; as near as possible she had taken tea with Molly. Besides, Daisy had found out what more to do for her. She thought of that poor cupboard with mixed feelings; not pity only; for next day she would bring supplies that were really needed. Some nice bread and butter Daisy had seen no sign of butter, and some meat. Molly needed a friend to look after her wants, and Daisy now had the freedom of the house and could do it; and joyfully she resolved that she would do it, so long as her own stay at Melbourne should be prolonged. What if her getting home late should bring on a command that would put a stop to all this!

But nobody was on the piazza or in the library when she got home. Daisy went safely to her own room. There was June all ready to dress her; and making good speed, that business was finished and Daisy ready to go down to the dinner-table at the usual time.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SATIN AND FEATHERS.

She was a little afraid of questions at the dinner-table; but it happened that the older people were interested about some matter of their own and she was not noticed at all. Except in a quiet way by Mr. Randolph, who picked out nuts for her; and Daisy took them and thought joyfully of carrying a Testament to Molly's cottage and teaching her to read it. If she could do but that Daisy thought she would be happy.

The evening was spent by her and Preston over engravings again. Some new ones were added to the stock already chosen for tableaux; and Preston debated with her very eagerly the various questions of characters and dresses. Daisy did not care how he arranged them, provided she only was not called upon to be Priscilla to Alexander Fish, or Esther to Hamilton Rush. "I will not, Preston " she insisted quietly; and Preston was in difficulty; for as he truly said, it would not do to give himself all the best pieces.

The next day, after luncheon, a general conclave assembled, of all the young people, to determine the respective parts and hold a little rehearsal by way of beginning. Mrs. Sandford was there too, but no other grown person was admitted. Preston had certainly a troublesome and delicate office in his capacity of manager.

"What are you going to give me, Preston?" said Mrs. Stanfield's lively daughter, Theresa.

"You must be Portia."

"Portia? let me see Oh, that's lovely! How will you dress me, Mrs. Sandford? I must be very splendid I have just been married, and I am worth any amount of splendour. Who's to be Bassanio? "

"George Linwood, I think. He must have dark hair, you know."

"What are wigs good for?" said Theresa. "But he has nothing to do but to hold the letter and throw himself backward he's surprised, you know, and people don't stand straight when they are surprised. Only that, and to look at Portia. I guess he can do it. Once fix him and he'll stay that's one thing. How will you dress Portia, Mrs. Sandford? Ah, let me dress her!"

"Not at all; you must be amenable to authority, Miss Stanfield, like everybody else."

"But what will you put on her, Mrs. Sandford? The dress is Portia."

"No, by no means; you must look with a very delicate expression, Miss Theresa. Your face will be the picture."

"My face will depend on my dress, I know. What will it be, Mrs. Sandford?"

"I will give you a very heavy and rich purple brocade."

"Jewels?"

"Of course. Mrs. Randolph lets us have whatever we want."

"That will do!" said Theresa, clapping her hands softly. "I am made up. What are you going to do with Frederica?"

"She has a great part. She must be Marie Antoinette going from the revolutionary tribunal."

"De la Roche's picture!" said Theresa.

"She's not dressed at all," remarked Frederica, coldly looking at the engraving.

"Marie Antoinette needed no dress, you know," Theresa answered.

"But she isn't handsome there."

"You will be standing for her," said Mrs. Sandford. "The attitude is very striking, in its proud, indignant impassiveness. You will do that well. I must dress your hair carefully, but you have just the right hair and plenty of it."

"Don't she flatter her!" whispered Theresa to Preston; then aloud, "How will you make up the rest of the tableau, Preston?"

"I am going to be that old cross-eyed woman Alexander will be one of the guards George Linwood another, I think. Hamilton Rush must shake his fist at the queen over my head; and Theresa, you must be this nice little French girl, looking at her unfortunate sovereign with weeping eyes. Can you get a tear on your cheek?"

"Might take an uncommon strong spoonful of mustard " said Theresa "I suppose that would do it. But you are not going to let the spectators come so near as to see drops of tears, I hope?"

"No matter your eyes and whole expression would be affected by the mustard; it would tell, even at a distance."

When they got through laughing, some one asked, "What is Daisy to be?"

"Oh, she is to be Priscilla here I thought nobody but Daisy would care about being a Puritan; but it is her chosen character."

"It'll be a pretty tableau," said Theresa.

"And what am I to be, Preston?" said Nora.

"You are to be several things. You and Ella must be the two young princes in the tower."

"What tower?" said Nora.

There was another general laugh, and then Daisy, who was well at home in English history, pulled her little friend aside to whisper to her the story and show her the picture.

"What are those men going to do?" said Nora.

"They are going to kill the little princes. They have got a feather-bed or something there, and they are going to smother them while they are asleep."

"But I don't want the feather-bed on top of me!" said Nora.

"No, no, it is not to come down on you; but that is the picture; they will hold it just so; it will not come down."

"But suppose they should let it fall?"

"They will not let it fall. The picture is to have it held just so, as if they were going to smother the poor little princes the next minute."

"I think it is a horrid picture!" said Nora.

"But it will only last a little while. All you will have to do will be to make believe you are asleep."

"I don't want to make believe I am asleep. I would rather have my eyes open. What else am I going to be, Daisy?"

"Preston will tell. I believe you are to be one of Queen Esther's women, to hold her up when she fainted, you know."

"Let me see. Where is it?"

Daisy obtained the picture. Nora examined it critically.

"I would like to be the king, he is so handsome. Who will be the queen?"

"I don't know yet," said Daisy.

"Are you going to have any part where you will be dressed up?"

"We shall have to be dressed for them all. We cannot wear our own dresses, you know; it would not be a picture."

"But, I mean, are you going to be dressed up with nice things? not like this."

"This will be dressed up," said Daisy; "she will be very nicely dressed to be one of the queen's ladies, you know."

"Daisy! Daisy!" was now called from the larger group of counsel-takers, Daisy and Nora having separated themselves for their private discourse. "Daisy! look here come here! see what you are to be. You are to be an angel."

"You are to be an angel, Daisy," Theresa repeated, "with wonderful wings made of gauze on a light frame of whalebone."

Daisy came near, looking very attentive; if she felt any more she did not show it in her face.

"Daisy, you will do it delightfully," said Mrs. Sandford.

"Come and look. It is this beautiful picture of the Game of Life."

"What is it, ma'am?" said Daisy.

"These two figures, you see, are playing a game of chess. The stake they are playing for, is this young man's soul; he is one of the players, and this other player is the evil one. The arch-fiend thinks he has got a good move; the young man

is very serious but perplexed; and there stands his guardian angel watching how the game will go."

Daisy looked at the picture in silence of astonishment. It seemed to her impossible that anybody could play at such a subject as that.

"Whom will you have for the fiend, Preston?" the lady went on.

"I will do it myself, ma'am, I think."

Daisy's "Oh, no, Preston!" brought down such a shower of laughter on all sides, that she retreated into herself a little further than ever. They pursued the subject for a while, discussing the parts and the making of the angels wings; deciding that Daisy would do excellently well for the angel and would look the part remarkably.

"She has a good deal that sort of expression in ordinary times," said Mrs. Sandford "without the sadness; and that she can assume, I day say."

"I would rather not do it " Daisy was heard to say, very gently but very soberly. There was another laugh.

"Do what, Daisy? assume a look of sadness?" said Preston.

"I would rather not be the angel."

"Nobody else could do it so well," said Mrs. Sandford. "You are the very one to do it. It will be admirable."

"I should like to be the angel " murmured Nora, low enough to have no one's attention but Daisy's. The rest were agreeing that the picture would be excellent and had just the right performers assigned to it. Daisy was puzzled. It seemed to her that Nora had a general desire for everything.

"Ella will be one of the princes in the tower," Preston went on. "Nora will be Red Riding-Hood."

"I won't be Red Riding-Hood " said Nora.

"Why not? Hoity, toity!"

"It isn't pretty. And it has no pretty dress."

"Why, it is beautiful," said Mrs. Sandford; "and the dress is to be made with an exquisite red cashmere cardinal of Mrs. Randolph's. You will make the best Red Riding-Hood here. Though Daisy would be more like the lamb the wolf was after," continued the lady, appealing to the manager; "and you might change. Who is to be queen Esther? Nora would do that well with her black eyes and hair she is more of a Jewess than any other of them."

"Esther is fainting," said Preston. "Daisy's paleness will suit that best. Nora could not look faint."

"Yes, I could," said that damsel, promptly.

"You shall blow the cakes that Alfred has let burn," said Preston. "Capital! Look here, Nora. You shall be that girl taking up the burnt cakes and blowing to cool them; and you may look as fierce as you like. You will get great applause if you do that part well. Eloise is going to be the scolding old woman. She and I divide the old women between us."

"Too bad, Preston!" said Mrs. Sandford, laughing. "What else are you going to be?"

"I am going to be one of those fellows coming to murder the little princes."

"Who is Bassanio?"

"Hamilton says he will undertake that. George declines."

"Suppose we do some work, instead of so much talking," said the former person; who had hitherto been a very quiet spectator and listener. "Let us have a little practice. We shall want a good deal before we get through."

All agreed; agreed also that something in the shape of artistic draperies was needed for the practice. "It helps," as Hamilton Rush remarked. So Daisy went to desire the attendance of June with all the scarfs, mantles and shawls which could be gathered together. As Daisy went, she thought that she did not wish Nora to be queen Esther; she was glad

Preston was firm about that.

The practising of Bassanio and Portia was so very amusing that she fairly forgot herself in laughter. So did everybody else; except Mrs. Sandford, who was intent upon draperies, and Preston whose hands held a burden of responsibility. Hamilton was a quiet fellow enough in ordinary; but now nobody was more ready for all the life of the play. He threw himself back into an attitude of irresolution and perplexity, with the letter in his hand which had brought the fatal news; that is, it was the make-believe letter, though it was in reality only the New York *Evening Post*. And Daisy thought his attitude was very absurd; but they all declared it was admirable and exactly copied from the engraving. He threw himself into all this in a moment, and was Bassanio at once; but Theresa was much too well disposed to laugh to imitate his example. And then they all laughed at Theresa, who instead of looking grave and inquiring, as Portia should, at her lord's unusual action and appearance, flung herself into position and out of position with a mirthfulness of behaviour wholly inconsistent with the character she was to personify. How they all laughed!

"What is it, Daisy?" whispered Nora.

"Why, he has got a letter," said Daisy.

"Is that newspaper the letter?"

"Make believe it is," said Daisy.

"But what are they doing?"

"Why, this man, Bassanio, has just got a letter that says his dearest friend is going to be killed, because he owes money that he cannot pay; and as the money was borrowed for his own sake, of course he feels very badly about it."

"But people are not killed because they cannot pay money," said Nora. "I have seen people come to papa for money, and they didn't do anything to him because he hadn't it."

"No, but those were different times," said Daisy, "and Bassanio lived in a different country. His friend owed money to a dreadful man, who was going to cut out two pounds of his flesh to pay for it. So of course that would kill him."

"Oh, look at Theresa now!" said Nora.

The young lady had brought her muscles into order; and being clever enough in her merry way, she had taken the look of the character and was giving it admirably. It was hardly Theresa; her moveable face was composed to such an expression of simple inquiry and interest and affectionate concern. The spectators applauded eagerly; but Nora whispered, "What does she *look* like that, for?"

"Why, it's the picture," said Daisy.

"But what does she *look* so for?"

"She is Bassanio's wife they have just got married; and she looks so because he looks so, I suppose. She does not know what is in the letter."

"Is he going to tell her?"

"Not in the picture " said Daisy, feeling a little amused at Nora's simplicity. "He did tell her in the story."

"But why don't we have all the story?" insisted Nora.

"Oh, these are only pictures, you know; that is all; people dressed up to look like pictures."

"They don't look like pictures a bit, *I* think," said Nora; "they look just like people."

Daisy thought so too, but had some faith in Preston's and Mrs. Sandford's powers of transforming and mystifying the present very natural appearance of the performers.]However, she was beginning to be of the opinion that it was good fun even now.

"Now, Daisy, come, we must practise putting *you* in position," said Mrs. Sandford. "We will take something easy first what shall it be? Come! we will try Priscilla's courtship. Where is your John Alden, Preston?"

Preston quietly moved forward Alexander Fish and seated him. Daisy began to grow warm with trepidation.

"You must let your hair grow, Sandie and comb out your long curls into your neck; so, do you see? And you will have to have a dress as much as Priscilla. This tableau will be all in the dress, Mrs. Sandford."

"We will have it. That is easy."

"Now, Alexander, look here, at the picture. Take that attitude as nearly as you can, and I will stroke you into order. That is pretty well, lean over a little more with that elbow on your knee, you must be very much in earnest."

"What am I doing?" said Alexander, breaking from his prescribed attitude to turn round and face the company.

"You are making love to Priscilla; but the joke is, you have been persuaded to do it for somebody else, when all the time you would like to do it for yourself."

"I wouldn't be such a gumph as that!" muttered Alexander, as he fell back into position. "Who am I, to begin with?"

"A highly respectable old Puritan. The lady was surprised at him and he came to his senses, but that is not in the picture. Now Daisy take that chair a little nearer you are to have your hand on your spinning wheel, you know; I have got a dear little old spinning wheel at home for you, that was used by my grandmother. You must look at Alexander a little severely, for he is doing what you did not expect of him, and you think he ought to know better. That attitude is very good. But you must look at him, Daisy! Don't let your eyes go down."

There was a decided disposition to laugh among the company looking on, which might have been fatal to the Puritan picture had not Preston and Mrs. Sandford energetically crushed it. Happily Daisy was too much occupied with the difficulty of her own immediate situation to discover how the bystanders were affected; she did not know what was the effect of her pink little cheeks and very demure downcast eyes. In fact Daisy had gone to take her place in the picture with something scarcely less than horror; only induced to do it, by her greater horror of making a fuss and so showing the feeling which she knew would be laughed at if shown. She showed it now, poor child; how could she help it? she showed it by her unusually tinged cheeks and by her persistent down-looking eyes. It was very difficult indeed to help it; for if she ventured to look at Alexander she caught impertinent little winks, most unlike John Alden or any Puritan, which he could execute with impunity because his face was mostly turned from the audience; but which Daisy took in full.

"Lift your eyes, Daisy! your eyes! Priscilla was too much astonished not to look at her lover. You may be even a little indignant, if you choose. I am certain she was."

Poor Daisy it was a piece of the fortitude that belonged to her thus urged, did raise her eyes and bent upon her winking coadjutor a look so severe in its childish distaste and disapproval that there was a unanimous shout of applause. "Capital, Daisy! capital!" cried Preston. "If you only look it like that, we shall do admirably. It will be a tableau indeed. There, get up you shall not practise any more just now."

"It will be very fine," said Mrs. Sandford.

"Daisy, I did not think you were such an actress," said Theresa. "It would have upset *me*, if I had been John Alden " remarked Hamilton Rush.

Daisy withdrew into the background as fast as possible, and as far as possible from Alexander.

"Do you like to do it, Daisy?" whispered Nora.

"No."

"Are you going to have a handsome dress for that?"

"No."

"What sort, then?"

"Like the picture."

"Well what is that?"

"Brown, with a white vandyke."

"Vandyke? what is a vandyke?"

"Hush," said Daisy; "let us look."

Frederica Fish was to personify Lady Jane Grey, at the moment when the nobles of her family and party knelt before her to offer her the crown. As Frederica was a, fair, handsome girl, without much animation, this part suited her; she had only to be dressed and sit still. Mrs. Sandford threw some rich draperies round her figure, and twisted a silk scarf about the back of her head; and the children exclaimed at the effect produced. That was to be a rich picture, for of course the kneeling nobles were to be in costly and picturesque attire; and a crown was to be borne on a cushion before them. A book did duty for it just now, on a couch pillow.

"That is what I should like " said Nora. "I want to be dressed and look so."

"You will be dressed to be one of the queen's women in Esther and Ahasuerus, you know."

"But the queen will be dressed more won't she?"

"Yes, I suppose she will."

"I should like to be the queen; that is what I should like to be."

Daisy made no answer. She thought she would rather Nora should not be the queen.

"Doesn't she look beautiful?" Nora went on, referring again to Frederica.

Which Frederica did. The tableau was quite pretty, even partially dressed and in this off-hand way as it was.

Next Mrs. Sandford insisted on dressing Daisy as Fortitude. She had seen, perhaps, a little of the child's discomposure, and wished to make her forget it. In this tableau Daisy would be quite alone; so she was not displeased to let the lady do what she chose with her. She stood patiently, while Mrs. Sandford wound a long shawl skilfully around her, bringing it into beautiful folds like those in Sir Joshua Reynolds' painting; then she put a boy's cap, turned the wrong way, on her head, to do duty for a helmet, and fixed a nodding plume of feathers in it. Daisy then was placed in the attitude of the picture, and the whole little assembly shouted with delight.

"It will do, Mrs. Sandford," said Preston.

"Isn't it pretty?" said the lady.

"And Daisy does it admirably," said Theresa. "You are a fairy at dressing, Mrs. Sandford; your fingers are better than a fairy's wand. I wish you were my godmother; I shouldn't despair to ride yet in a coach and six. There are plenty of pumpkins in a field near our house, and plenty of rats in the house itself. Oh, Mrs. Sandford! let us have Cinderella!"

"What, for a tableau?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You must ask the manager. I do not know anything about that."

Preston and Theresa and Hamilton and Alexander now went into an eager discussion of this question, and before it was settled the party discovered that it was time to break up.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHARITY AND VANITY.

"Well, Daisy," said Mr. Randolph that evening, "how do you like your new play that you are all so busy about?"

"I like it pretty well, papa."

"Only pretty well! Is that the most you can say of it? I understood that it was supposed to be an amusement of a much more positive character."

"Papa, it is amusing but it has its disagreeablenesses."

"Has it? What can they be? Or has everything pleasant its dark side?"

"I don't know, papa."

"What makes the shadows in this instance?"

It seemed not just easy for Daisy to tell, for her father saw that she looked puzzled how to answer.

"Papa, I think it is because people do not behave perfectly well."

It was quite impossible for Mr. Randolph to help bursting into a laugh at this; but he put his arms round Daisy and kissed her very affectionately at the same time.

"How does their ill behaviour affect your pleasure, Daisy?"

"Papa you know I have to play with them."

"Yes, I understand that. What do they do?"

"It isn't *they*, papa. It is only Alexander Fish or at least it is he most."

"What does *he* do?"

"Papa we are in a tableau together."

"Yes. You and he?"

"Yes, papa. And it is very disagreeable."

"Pray how, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph, commanding his features with some difficulty. "What is the tableau?"

"Papa, you know the story of Priscilla?"

"I do not think I do. What Priscilla?"

"Priscilla and John Alden. It is in a book of engravings."

"Oh! the courtship of Miles Standish?"

"Miles Standish was his friend, papa."

"Yes, I know now. And are you Priscilla?"

"Yes, papa."

"And who is Miles Standish?"

"Oh, nobody; he is not in the picture; it is John Alden."

"I think I remember. Who is John Alden, then?"

"Papa, they have put Alexander Fish in, because he has long curling hair; but I think Preston's hair would do a great deal better."

"Preston is under some obligation to the others, I suppose, because he is manager. But how does Alexander Fish abuse his privileges?"

"Papa," said Daisy, unwillingly, "his face is turned away from the other people, so that nobody can see it but me; and he winks."

Daisy brought out the last word with an accession of gravity impossible fully to describe. Mr. Randolph's mouth twitched; he bent his head down upon Daisy's, that she might not see it.

"That is very rude of him, Daisy," he said.

"Papa," said Daisy, who did not relish the subject, and chose a departure, "what is a *Puritan*?"

"A Puritan!"

"Yes, papa. What is it? Priscilla was a Puritan."

"That was a name given to a class of people in England a long time ago."

"What did it mean?"

"They were a stiff set of people, Daisy; good enough people in their way, no doubt, but very absurd in it also."

"What did they do, papa?"

"Concluded to do without whatever is graceful and beautiful and pleasant, in dress or arts or manners. The more disagreeable they made life, they thought it was the better."

"Why were they called that name? Were they purer than other people?"

"I believe they thought themselves so."

"I think they look nice in the picture," said Daisy, meditatively. "Are there any Puritans now, papa?"

"There are people that are called Puritans. It is a term apt to be applied to people that are stiff in their religion."

"Papa," said Daisy when an interval of five minutes had passed, "I do not see how people can be stiff in their religion."

"Don't you. Why not?"

"Papa, I do not see how it can be *stiff*, to love God and do what He says."

"No " said Mr. Randolph; "but people can be stiff in ways of their own devising."

"Ways that are not in the Bible, papa?"

"Well yes."

"But papa, it cannot be *stiff* to do what God says we must do?"

"No, of course not," said Mr. Randolph, getting up.

He left her, and Daisy sat meditating; then with a glad heart ran off and ordered her pony-chaise. If tableaux were to be the order of the day every afternoon, she must go to see Molly in the morning. This time she had a good deal to carry and to get ready. Molly was in want of bread. A nice little loaf, fresh baked, was supplied by Joanna, along with some cold rolls.

"She will like those, I dare say," said Daisy. "I dare say she never saw rolls in her life before. Now she wants some meat, Joanna. There was nothing but a little end of cold pork on the dish in her cupboard."

"Why, I wonder who cooks for the poor wretch?" said Joanna.

"I think she cooks for herself, because she has a stove, and I saw iron things and pots to cook with. But she can't do much, Joanna, and I don't believe she knows how."

"Sick, is she too?" said Joanna.

"Sick with rheumatism, so that she did not like to stir."

"I guess I must go take a look at her; but maybe she mightn't let me. Well, Miss Daisy, the way will be for you to tell me

what she wants, if you can find out. She must have neighbours, though, that take care of her."

"We are her neighbours," said Daisy.

Joanna looked, a look of great complacency and some wonder, at the child; and packed forthwith into Daisy's basket the half of a cold chicken and a broken peach-pie. A bottle of milk Daisy particularly desired, and a little butter; and she set off at last, happier than a queen Esther or any other to go to Molly with her supplies.

She found not much improvement in the state of affairs. Molly was gathered up on her hearth near the stove, in which she had made a fire; but it did not appear, for all that Daisy could see, that anything else had been done, or any breakfast eaten that morning. The cripple seemed to be in a down-hearted and hopeless state of mind; and no great wonder.

"Molly, would you like another cup of tea?" said her little friend.

"Yes, it's in there. You fix it," said the poor woman, pointing as before to the cupboard, and evidently comforted by Daisy's presence and proposal. Daisy could hear it in the tone of her voice. So, greatly pleased herself, Daisy went to work in Molly's house just as if she was at home. She fetched water in the kettle again and made up the fire. While that was getting ready, she set the table for breakfast. The only table that Molly could use was a piece of board nailed on a chair. On this Daisy put her plate and cup and saucer, and with secret glee arranged the cold chicken and loaf of bread. For the cupboard, as she saw, was as empty as she had found it two days before. What Molly had lived on in the mean time was simply a mystery to Daisy. To be sure, the end of cold pork was gone, the remains of the cake had disappeared, and nothing was left of the peaches but the stones. The tea-kettle did not boil for a time; and Daisy looked uneasily at Molly's cup and saucer and plate meanwhile. They had not been washed, Daisy could not guess for how long; certainly no water had touched them since the tea of two nights ago, for the cake crumbs and peach stones told the tale. Daisy looked at them with a great feeling of discomfort. She could not bear to see them so; they ought to be washed; but Daisy disliked the idea of touching them for that purpose more than I can make you understand. In all matters of nicety and cleanliness Daisy was notional; nothing suited her but the most fastidious particularity. It had been a trial to her to bring those unwashed things from the cupboard. Now she sat and looked at them; uneasily debating what she should do. It was not comfortable, that Molly should take her breakfast off them as they were; and Molly was miserable herself, and would do nothing to mend matters. And then "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you," As soon as that came fairly into Daisy's head, she knew what she ought to be about. Not without an inward sigh, she gathered up the pieces again.

"What you going to do?" said Molly.

"I'll bring them back," said Daisy. "I will be ready directly. The water is not boiling yet."

For she saw that Molly was jealously eager for the hoped-for cup of tea. She carried the things out into the shed, and there looked in vain for any dish or vessel to wash them in. How could it be that Molly managed? Daisy was fain to fetch a little bowl of water and wash the crockery with her fingers, and then fetch another bowl of water to rinse it. There was no napkin to be seen. She left the things to drain as they could, and went to the spring to wash her own fingers; rejoicing in the purifying properties of the sweet element. All this took some time, but Daisy carried in her clean dishes with a satisfied heart.

"It's bi'lin', " said Molly, as soon as she entered.

So the little kettle was. Daisy made tea, and prepared Molly's table with a little piece of butter and the bottle of milk. And no little girl making an entertainment for herself with tiny china cups and tea-set, ever had such satisfaction in it. Twenty dinners at home could not have given Daisy so much pleasure, as she had now to see the poor cripple look at her unwonted luxuries, and then to see her taste them. Yet Molly said almost nothing; but the grunt of new expression with which she set down the bottle of milk the first time, went all through and through Daisy's heart with delight. Molly drank tea and spread her bread with butter, and Daisy noticed her turning over her slice of bread to examine the texture of it; and a quieter, soothed, less miserable look, spread itself over her wrinkled features. They were not wrinkled with age; yet it was a lined and seamed face generally, from the working of unhappy and morose feelings.

"Ain't it good! " was Molly's single word of comment as she finished her meal. Then she sat back and watched Daisy putting all the things nicely away. She looked hard at her.

"What you fetch them things here for?" she broke out suddenly.

"H n?"

The grunt with which her question concluded was so earnest in its demand of an answer, that Daisy stopped.

"Why, I like to do it, Molly," she said. Then seeing the intent eyes with which the poor creature was examining her, Daisy added, "I like to do it; because Jesus loves you."

"H n?" said Molly, very much at a loss what this might mean, and very eager to know. Daisy stood still, with the bread in her hands.

"Don't you know, Molly?" she said. "He does. It is. Jesus, that I told you about. He loves you, and He came and died for you, that He might make you good and save you from your sins; and He loves you now, up in heaven."

"What's that?" said Molly.

"Heaven? that is where God lives, and the angels, and good people."

"There ain't none," said Molly.

"What?"

"There ain't no good people."

"Oh, yes, there are. When they are washed in Jesus' blood, then they are good. He will take away all their sins."

Molly was silent for a moment, and Daisy resumed her work of putting things away; but as she took the peach pie in her hands, Molly burst out again.

"What you bring them things here for?"

Daisy stopped again.

"I think it is because Jesus is my King," she said, "and I love Him. And I love what He loves, and so I love you, Molly."

Daisy looked very childish and very wise, as she said this; but over Molly's face there came a great softening change. The wrinkles seemed to disappear; she gazed at Daisy steadily, as if trying to find out what it all meant: and when the eyes presently were cast down, Daisy almost thought there was a little moisture about them. She had no further interruption in her work. The dishes were all put away, and then she brought her book. Daisy had her Bible with her this time, that she might give Molly more than her own words. And Molly she found as ready to listen as could be desired. And she was persistent in desiring to hear only of that incredible Friend of whom Daisy had told her. That name she wanted; wherever that name came in, Molly sat silent and attentive; if the narrative lost it, she immediately quickened Daisy's memory to the knowledge of the fact that nothing else would do. At last Daisy proposed that Molly herself should learn to read. Molly stared very hopelessly at first; but after getting more accustomed to the idea, and hearing from Daisy that it was by no means an impossible thing, and further that, if she could learn to read, the Bible would be forthcoming for her own use, she took up the notion with an eagerness far exceeding all that Daisy had hoped for. She said very little about it; nevertheless it was plain that a root of hope had struck down into the creature's heart. Daisy taught her two letters, A and B, and then was obliged to go home.

It was quite time, for little Daisy was tired. She was not accustomed to making fires and boiling kettles, neither to setting tables and washing dishes. Yet it was not merely, nor so much, the bodily exertion she had made, as the mind work. The excitement both of pleasure and responsibility and eager desire. Altogether, Daisy was tired; and sat back in her chaise, letting the reins hang languidly in her hands and Loupe go how he would. But Loupe judged it was best to get home and have some refreshment, so he bestirred himself. Daisy had time to lie down a little while before her dinner; nevertheless she was languid and pale, and disposed to take all the rest of the day very quietly.

The rest of the day was of course devoted to the tableaux. The little company had got warmed to the subject pretty well at the first meeting; they all came together this fine afternoon with spirits in tone for business. And Daisy, though she was tired, presently found her own interest drawn in. She was not called upon immediately to take any active part; she perched herself in the corner of a couch, and looked on and listened. Thither came Nora Dinwiddie, too much excited to sit down, and stood by Daisy's elbow. They had been practising "Alfred in the neatherd's cottage;" Nora had been called upon to be the girl blowing the burnt cakes; she had done it, and everybody had laughed, but the little lady was not pleased.

"I know I look horrid!" she said to Daisy, "puffing out my cheeks till they are like a pair of soapbubbles!"

"But soapbubbles are not that colour," said Daisy. "Your cheeks didn't look like soapbubbles."

"Yes, they did. They looked horrid, I know."

"But the picture is so," urged Daisy, quietly. "You want to be like the picture."

"No, I don't. Not that picture. I would like to be something handsome. I don't like that picture."

Daisy was silent, and Nora pouted.

"What are you going to be, Daisy?" said Ella Stanfield.

"I am going to be Priscilla. No, I don't know whether I am or not; but I am going to be Fortitude, I believe."

"That's pretty," said Ella. "What else? Oh, you are going to be the angel, aren't you? I wonder if that will be pretty. It will be queer. Nora, shall you like to be one of the little princes in the Tower? with that feather-bed coming over us? But we shall not see it, I suppose, because our eyes have got to be shut; but I shall be afraid every minute they will let it fall on us."

"My eyes won't be shut," said Nora.

"Oh, they must. You know, the little princes were asleep, when the men came to kill them. Your eyes must be shut and you must be asleep. Oh, what are they doing to Theresa?"

"Dressing her " said Daisy.

"What is she going to be?"

"Portia " said Daisy.

"Isn't that beautiful! " said Nora, with a deep breath. "Oh, what a splendid dress! How rich-looking it is. What a lovely purple. Oh, how beautiful Theresa is in it. Oh! Isn't that splen did?"

A very prolonged, though low, breath of admiring wonder testified to the impressive power, upon the children at least, of Theresa's new habiliments. The purple brocade was upon her; its full draperies swept the ground in gorgeous colouring; a necklace of cameos was bound with great effect upon her hair; and on the arms, which were half bare, Mrs. Sandford was clasping gold and glittering jewels. Theresa threw herself slightly back in her prescribed attitude, laid her arms lightly across each other, and turned her head with a very saucy air towards the companion figure, supposed to be Bassanio. All the others laughed and clapped her.

"Not that, Theresa, not that; you have got the wrong picture. You are going with the Prince of Arragon now, to the caskets; and you ought to be anxiously asking Bassanio about his letter."

Theresa changed attitude and expression on the instant; bent slightly forward, lost her sauciness, and laid her hand upon Bassanio's arm with a grave, tender look of inquiry. They all shouted again.

"Bravo, Theresa! capital!" said Preston.

"Hamilton, can you act up to that?" said Mrs. Sandford.

"Wait till I get my robes on, ma'am. I can make believe a great deal easier when I am under the persuasion that it is not me Hamilton Rush."

"I'd like to see Frederica do as well as that," said Alexander Fish, in a fit of brotherly concern.

"Let us try her " said good-natured Mrs. Sandford. Mrs. Sandford certainly was good-natured, for she had all the dressing to do. She did it well, and very patiently.

"There," said Nora, when Ella had left the couch to go to her sister, "that is what I like. Didn't she look beautiful, Daisy?"

"Her dress looked beautiful " said Daisy.

"Well, of course; and that made *her* look beautiful. Daisy, I wish I could have a nice part. I would like to be the queen in that fainting picture."

"You are going to be in that picture."

"But, I mean, I would like to be the queen. She will have the best dress, won't she?"

"I suppose she will be the most dressed," said Daisy.

"I don't want to be one of the women I want to be the queen. Hamilton Rush said I would be the best one for it, because she was a Jewess; and I am the only one that has got black eyes and hair."

"But her eyes will not be seen," said Daisy. "She is fainting. When people faint, they keep their eyes shut."

"Yes, but I am the only one that has got black hair. That will show. Her hair ought to be black."

"Why, will not other hair do just as well?" said Daisy.

"Why, because she was a Jewess."

"Do Jewesses always have black hair?"

"Of course they *ought* to have black hair," said Nora; "or Hamilton Rush would not have said that. And my hair is black."

Daisy was silent. She said nothing to this proposition. The children were both silenced for a little while the practising for "Marie Antoinette" was going on. The principal part in this was taken by Frederica, who was the beauty of the company. A few touches of Mrs. Sandford's skilful hands transformed her appearance wonderfully. She put on an old-fashioned straight gown, which hung in limp folds around her; and Mrs. Sandford arranged a white handkerchief over her breast, tying it in the very same careless loose knot represented in the picture; but her management of Frederica's hair was the best thing. Its soft fair luxuriance was, no one could tell how, made to assume the half-dressed, half-undressed air of the head in Delaroche's picture; and Frederica looked the part well.

"She should throw her head a little more back," whispered Hamilton Rush to the manager; "her head or her shoulders. She is not quite indignant enough."

"That handkerchief in her hand is not right " said Preston, in a responding whisper. "You see to it while I get into disguise.

"That handkerchief, Mrs. Sandford " Hamilton said, softly.

"Yes. Frederica, your hand with the pocket-handkerchief, it is not quite the thing."

"Why not?"

"You hold it like a New York lady."

"How *should* I hold it?"

"Like a French queen, whose Austrian fingers may hold anything any way." This was Hamilton's dictum.

"But how *do* I hold it?"

"You have picked it up in the middle, and show all the flower work in the corners."

"You hold it too daintily, Frederica," said Theresa. "You must grasp it grasp it loosely but as the distinguished critic who has last spoken has observed."

Frederica dropped her handkerchief, and picked it up again exactly as she had it before.

"Try again " said Mrs. Sandford. "Grasp it, as Theresa says. Never mind how you are taking it up."

"Must I throw it down again?"

"If you please."

"Take it up any way but in the middle," said Hamilton.

Down went the handkerchief on a chair, and then Frederica's fingers took it up, delicately, and with a little shake displayed as before what Hamilton called the flowers in the corners. It was the same thing. They all smiled.

"She can't hold a handkerchief any but the one way I don't believe," said her brother Alexander.

"Isn't it right?" said Frederica.

"Perfect, I presume, for Madison Square or Fifth Avenue but not exactly for a revolutionary tribunal," said Hamilton.

"What is the difference?"

"Ah, that is exactly what it is so hard to get at. Hollo! Preston is it Preston? Can't be better, Preston. Admirable! admirable!"

"Well, Preston, I do not know you!" said Mrs. Sandford.

Was it Preston? Daisy could hardly believe her ears. Her eyes certainly told her another story. Was it Preston? in the guise and with the face of an extremely ugly old woman vicious and malignant, who? taking post near the deposed queen, peered into her face with spiteful curiosity and exultation. Not a trace of likeness to Preston could Daisy see. She half rose up to look at him in her astonishment. But the voice soon declared that it was no other than her cousin.

"Come," said he, while they were all shouting, "fall in. You, Hamilton, and Theresa, come and take your positions."

Hamilton, with a glance at the picture, went behind Preston; and putting on a savage expression, thrust his clenched fist out threateningly towards the dignified figure of Frederica; while Theresa, stealing up into the group, put her hands upon a chair-back to steady herself and bent towards the queen a look of mournful sympathy and reverence, that in the veritable scene and time represented would undoubtedly have cost the young lady her life. The performers were good; the picture was admirable. There was hardly anybody left to look when George Linwood and Alexander had taken post as the queen's guards; and to say truth they did not in their present state of undisguised individuality add much to the effect; but Mrs. Sandford declared the tableau was very fine, and could be made perfect.

The question of Cinderella came up then; and there was a good deal of talk. Finally it was decided that little Ella should be Cinderella, and Eloise the fairy godmother, and Jane Linwood and Nora the wicked sisters. A little practising was tried, to get them in order. Then Esther was called for. Daisy submitted.

Hamilton Rush was made magnificent and kingly by a superb velvet mantle and turbaned crown the latter not perfect, but improvised for the occasion. For a sceptre he held out a long wooden ruler this time; but Preston promised a better one should be provided. The wooden ruler was certainly not quite in keeping with the king's state, or the queen's. Daisy was robed in a white satin dress of her mother's; much too long, of course, but that added to the rich effect; it lay in folds upon the floor. Her head was covered with a rose-coloured silken scarf wound artistically round it, and the ends floating away; and upon this drapery diamonds were bound, that sparkled very regally over Daisy's forehead. But this was only the beginning. A zone of brilliants at her waist made the white satin dazzling, and gathered its folds together; bracelets of every colour and of great beauty loaded Daisy's little arms; till she was, what Mrs. Sandford had said Esther must be, a spot of brilliancy. Her two maids, Nora and Jane Linwood, at this time were not robed in any other than their ordinary attire; perhaps that was one reason why their maintenance of their characters was not quite so perfect as that of the principal two. Hamilton stretched forward his wooden sceptre to the queen with benignant haste and dignity. Daisy, only too glad to shrink away, closed her eyes and lay back in the arms of her attendants in a manner that was really very satisfactory. But the attendants themselves were not in order.

"Jane, you must not laugh " said her brother.

"I ain't laughing!"

"Yes, but you were."

"The queen is fainting, you know," said Mrs. Sandford. "You are one of her maids, and you are very much distressed about it."

"I am not distressed a bit. I don't care."

"Nora, do not forget that you are another attendant. Your business is with your mistress. You must be looking into her face, to see if she is really faint, or if you can perceive signs of mending. You must look very anxious."

But Nora looked very cross; and as Jane persisted in giggling, the success of that picture was not quite excellent this time.

"Nora is the most like a Jewess " Theresa remarked.

"Oh, Nora will make a very good maid of honour by and by," Mrs. Sandford replied.

But Nora had her own thoughts.

"Daisy, how shall I be dressed?" she inquired, when Daisy was disrobed of her magnificence and at leisure to talk.

"I don't know. Oh, in some nice way," said Daisy, getting into her corner of the couch again.

"Yes, but shall I shall Jane and I have bracelets, and a girdle, and something on our heads too?"

"No, I suppose not. The queen, of course, is most dressed, Nora; you know she must be."

"I should like to have *one* dress," said Nora. "I am not anything at all. All the fun is in the dress. You are to have four dresses."

"Well, so are you to have four."

"No, I am not. What four?"

"This one, you know; and Red Riding-hood and the Princes in the Tower and Cinderella."

"I am to be only one of the ugly sisters in Cinderella I don't believe aunt Frances will give her much of a dress; and I hate Red Riding-hood; and the Princes in the Tower are not to be dressed at all. They are covered up with the bed-clothes."

"Nora," said Daisy, softly, "would you like to be dressed as John Alden?"

"As *what*?" said Nora, in no very accommodating tone of voice.

"John Alden that Puritan picture, you know, with the spinning-wheel. I am to be Priscilla."

"A boy! Do you think I would be dressed like a boy?" cried Nora, in dudgeon. And Daisy thought *she* would not, if the question were asked her; and had nothing more to answer.

So the practising went on, with good success on the whole. The little company met every other day; and dresses were making, and postures were studied, and costumes were considered and re-considered. Portia and Bassanio got to be perfect. So did Alfred in the neatherd's cottage very nearly. Nora, however she grumbled, blew her cakes energetically; Preston and Eloise made a capital old man and woman, she with a mutch cap and he with a bundle of sticks on his head; while Alexander Fish, with his long hair and rather handsome face, sat very well at the table hearing his rebuke for letting the cakes burn. Alexander was to have a six-foot bow in hand, which he and Hamilton were getting ready; and meanwhile practised with an umbrella. But the tableau was very good. Most of the others went very well. Still Daisy was greatly tried by John Alden's behaviour, and continued to look so severe in the picture as to draw out shouts of approving laughter from the company, who did not know that; Alexander Fish was to be thanked for it. And Nora was difficult to train in Queen Esther. She wore obstinately a look of displeased concern for herself, and no concern at all for her fainting mistress. Which, on the whole, rather impaired the unity of the action, and the harmony of

the general effect.

"How is your task proceeding?" Mrs. Randolph asked one evening, when Mrs. Sandford was staying to tea.

"Excellently well. We shall make a good thing, I confidently expect."

"Hamilton is a good actor," said Preston.

"And Master Gary also," said Mrs. Sandford. "Your old French wife is perfect, Preston."

"Much obliged, ma'am."

"Not to me. My dressing has nothing to do with that. But Preston, what shall we do with Frederica's handkerchief? She can *not* hold it right."

"Like a queen " said Preston. "I do not know unless we could scare her out of her propriety. A good fright would do it, I think. But then the expression would not suit. How is the Game, Mrs. Sandford?"

"Perfect! admirable! You and Hamilton do it excellently and Daisy is a veritable angel."

"How does *she* like it all?" Mrs. Randolph inquired.

"Aunt Felicia, she is as much engaged as anybody."

"And plays as well," added Mrs. Sandford.

"She has found out to-day, aunt Felicia," Preston went on, speaking rather low, "that she ought to have a string of red stones round her head instead of white ones."

Mrs. Randolph smiled.

"She was quite right," said Mrs. Sandford. "It was a matter of colour, and she was quite right. She was dressed for Queen Esther, and I made her look at herself to take the effect; and she suggested, very modestly, that stones of some colour would do better than diamonds round her head. So I substituted some very magnificent rubies of yours, Mrs. Randolph; quite to Daisy's justification."

"Doesn't she make a magnificent little 'Fortitude,' though!" said Eloise.

"The angel will be the best," said Mrs. Sandford. "She looks so naturally troubled. But we have got a good band of workers. Theresa Stanfield is very clever."

"It will do Daisy a world of good," said Mrs. Gary.

CHAPTER XXXV.

QUEEN ESTHER.

All this while Daisy's days were divided. Silks and jewels and pictures and practising, in one part; in the other part, the old cripple Molly Skelton, and her basket of bread and fruit, and her reading in the Bible. For Daisy attended as regularly to the one as to the other set of interests, and more frequently; for the practising party met only three times a week, but Daisy went to Molly every day.

Molly was not sick now. Daisy's good offices in the material line were confined to supplying her with nice bread and butter and fruit and milk, with many varieties beside. But in that day or two of rheumatic pains, when Molly had been waited upon by the dainty little handmaiden who came in spotless frocks and trim little black shoes to make her fire and prepare her tea, Daisy's tenderness and care had completely won Molly's heart. She was a real angel in that poor house; no vision of one. Molly welcomed her so, looked at her so, and would perhaps have obeyed her as readily. But Daisy offered no words that required obedience, except those she read out of the Book; and Molly listened to them as if it had been the voice of an angel. She was learning to read herself; really learning; making advances every day that showed diligent interest; and the interest was fed by those words she daily listened to out of the same book. Daisy had

got a large-print Testament for her at Crum Elbow; and a new life had begun for the cripple. The rose-bush and the geranium flourished brilliantly, for the frosts had not come yet; and they were a good setting forth of how things were going in the house.

One lovely October afternoon, when air and sky were a breath and vision of delight, after a morning spent in dressing and practising, Daisy went to Molly. She went directly after luncheon. She had given Molly her lesson; and then Daisy sat with a sober little face, her finger between the leaves of the Bible, before beginning her accustomed reading. Molly eyed her wistfully.

"About the crowns and the white dresses," she suggested.

"Shall I read about those?" said Daisy. And Molly nodded. And with her little face exceedingly grave and humble, Daisy read the seventh chapter of the Revelation, and then the twenty-first chapter, and the twenty-second; and then she sat with her finger between the leaves as before, looking out of the window.

"Will they all be sealed?" said Molly, breaking the silence.

"Yes."

"What is that?"

"I don't know exactly. It will be a mark of all the people that love Jesus."

"A mark in their foreheads?"

"Yes, it says so."

"What mark?"

"I don't know, Molly; it says, 'His name shall be in their foreheads.' " And Daisy's eyes became full of tears.

"How will that be?"

"I don't know, Molly; it don't tell. I suppose that everybody that looks at them will know in a minute that they belong to Jesus."

Daisy's hand went up and brushed across her eyes; and then did it again.

"Do they belong to Him?" asked Molly.

"Oh, yes! Here it is don't you remember? 'they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' "

"So they are white, then?" said Molly.

"Yes. And His mark is on them."

"I wish," said the cripple, slowly and thoughtfully, "I wish 'twas on me. I do!"

I do not think Daisy could speak at this. She shut her book and got up and looked at Molly, who had put her head down on her folded arms; and then she opened Molly's Testament and pressed her arm to make her look. Still Daisy did not speak; she had laid her finger under some of the words she had been reading; but when Molly raised her head she remembered the sense of them could not be taken by the poor woman's eyes. So Daisy read them, looking with great tenderness in the cripple's face.

" 'I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.' That is what it says, Molly."

"Who says?"

"Why, Jesus says it. He came and died to buy the life for us and now He will give it to us, He says, if we want it."

"What life?" said Molly, vaguely.

"Why, *that*, Molly; that which you were wishing for. He will forgive us, and make us good, and set His mark upon us; and then we shall wear those robes that are made white in His blood, and be with Him in heaven. And that is life."

"You and me?" said Molly.

"Oh, yes! Molly anybody. It says 'whosoever is athirst.'"

"Where's the words?" said Molly.

Daisy showed her; and Molly made a deep mark in the paper under them with her nail; so deep as to signify that she meant to have them for present study or future reference or both. Then, as Molly seemed to have said her say, Daisy said no more and went away.

It was still not late in the afternoon; and Daisy drove on, past the Melbourne gates, and turned the corner into the road which led to Crum Elbow. The air was as clear as October could have it; and soft, neither warm nor cold; and the roads were perfect; and here and there a few yellow and red maple leaves, and in many places a brown stubble field, told that autumn was come. It was as pleasant a day for a drive as could possibly be; and yet Daisy's face was more intent upon her pony's ears than upon any other visible thing. She drove on towards Crum Elbow, but before she reached it she turned another corner, and drew up before Juanita's house.

It was not the first visit she had made here since going home; though Daisy had in truth not come often nor stayed long. All the more glad were Juanita and she to see each other now. Daisy took off her flat and sat down on the old chintz couch, with a face of content. Yet it was grave content; not joyous at all. So Juanita's keen eyes saw, through all the talking which went on. Daisy and she had a great deal to say to each other; and among other things the story of Molly came in, and was enlarged upon; though Daisy left most of her own doings to be guessed at. She did not tell them more than she could well help. However, talk went on a good while, and still when it paused Daisy's face looked thoughtful and careful. So Juanita saw.

"Is my love quite well?"

"Oh, yes, Juanita. I am quite well. I think I am getting strong, a little."

Juanita's thanksgiving was earnest. Daisy looked very sober.

"Juanita, I have been wanting to talk to you."

Now they had been talking a good deal; but this, the black woman saw, was not what Daisy meant.

"What is it, my love?"

"I don't know, Juanita. I think I am puzzled."

The fine face of Mrs. Benoit looked gravely attentive, and a little anxiously watchful of Daisy's.

"The best way will be to tell you. Juanita, they are I mean, we are playing pictures at home."

"What is that, Miss Daisy?"

"Why, they take pictures pictures in books, you know and dress up people like the people in the pictures, and make them stand so, or sit so, and look so, as the people in the pictures do; and so they make a picture of living people."

"Yes, Miss Daisy."

"They are playing pictures at home. I mean, we are. Mamma is going to give a great party next week; and the pictures are to be all made and shown at the party. There are twelve pictures; and they will be part of the entertainment. There is to be a gauze stretched over the door of the library, and the pictures are to be seen behind the gauze."

"And does Miss Daisy like the play?" the black woman inquired, not lightly.

"Yes, Juanita I like some things about it. It is very amusing. There are some things I do not like."

"Did Miss Daisy wish to talk to me about those things she not like?"

"I don't know, Juanita no, I think not. Not about those things. But I do not exactly know about myself."

"What Miss Daisy not know about herself?"

"I do not know exactly whether it is right."

"Whether what be right, my love?"

Daisy was silent at first, and looked puzzled.

"Juanita I mean I don't know whether I am right."

"Will my love tell what she mean?"

"It is hard, Juanita. But I don't think I am quite right. I want you to tell me what to do."

Daisy's little face looked perplexed and wise. And sorry.

"What troubles my love?"

"I do not know how it was, Juanita I did not care at all about it at first; and then I began to care about it a little and now "

"What does my love care about?"

"About being dressed, Juanita; and wearing mamma's jewels, and looking like a picture."

"Will Miss Daisy tell Juanita better what she mean?"

"Why, you know, Juanita," said the child, wistfully, "they dress up the people to look like the pictures; and they have put me in some very pretty pictures; and in one I am to be beautifully dressed to look like Queen Esther with mamma's jewels all over me. And there is another little girl who would like to have that part, and I do not want to give it to her."

Juanita sat silent, looking grave and anxious. Her lips moved, but she said nothing that could be heard.

"And, Juanita," the child went on "I think, somehow, I like to look better than other people, and to have handsomer dresses than other people, in the pictures, you know."

Still Juanita was silent.

"Is it right, Juanita?"

"Miss Daisy pardon me. Who Miss Daisy think be so pleased to see her in the beautiful dress in the picture?"

"Juanita it was not that I meant. I was not thinking so much of that. Mamma would like it, I suppose, and papa; but I like it myself."

Juanita was silent again.

"Is it right, Juanita?"

"Why do Miss Daisy think it not right?"

Daisy looked undecided and perplexed.

"Juanita I wasn't quite sure."

"Miss Daisy like to play in these pictures r"

"Yes, Juanita and I like Juanita, I like it!"

"And another little girl, Miss Daisy say, like it too?"

"Yes, I think they all do. But there is a little girl that wants to take my part."

"And who Miss Daisy want to please?"

Daisy hesitated, and her eyes reddened; she sat a minute still; then looked up very wistfully.

"Juanita, I think I want to please myself."

"Jesus please not Himself," said the black woman.

Daisy made no answer to that. She bent over and hid her little head in Mrs. Benoit's lap. And tears undoubtedly came, though they were quiet tears. The black woman's hand went tenderly over the little round head.

"And He say to His lambs 'Follow me.' "

"Juanita" Daisy spoke without raising her head "I want to please him most."

"How Miss Daisy think she do that?"

Daisy's tears now, for some reason, came evidently, and abundantly. She wept more freely in Juanita's lap than she would have done before father or mother. The black woman let her alone, and there was silent counsel-taking between Daisy and her tears for some time.

"Speak to me, Juanita" she said at last.

"What my love want me to say?"

"It has been all wrong, hasn't it, Juanita? Oh, have I, Juanita?"

"What, my love?"

"I know I have," said Daisy. "I knew it was not right before."

There was yet again a silence; a tearful silence on one part. Then Daisy raised her head, looking very meek.

"Juanita, what ought I to do?"

"What my love said," the black woman replied very tenderly.
"Please the Lord."

"Yes; but I mean, how shall I do that?"

"Jesus please not Himself; and He say, 'Follow me.' "

"Juanita, I believe I began to want to please myself very soon after all this picture work and dressing began."

"Then it not please the Lord," said Juanita, decidedly.

"I know," said Daisy; "and it has been growing worse and worse. But Juanita, I shall have to finish the play now I cannot help it. How shall I keep good? Can I?"

"My love knows the Good Shepherd carry His lamb in His bosom, if she let Him. He is called Jesus, for He save His people from their sins."

Daisy's face was very lowly; and very touching was the way she bent her little head and passed her hand across her eyes. It was the gesture of penitent gentleness.

"Tell me some more, Juanita."

"Let the Lord speak," said the black woman, turning ever her well-used Bible. "See, Miss Daisy 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own ' "

"I was puffed up," said Daisy, "because I was to wear those beautiful things. I will let Nora wear them. I was seeking

my own, all the time, Juanita. I didn't know it."

See, Miss Daisy 'That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.' "

"Is there any *harm* in those pretty things, Juanita? They are so pretty!"

"I don't know, Miss Daisy; the Lord say He not pleased with them; and the Lord knows."

"I suppose," said Daisy but what Daisy supposed was never told. It was lost in thought.

"My love see here what please the Lord 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' "

Daisy lifted her little face and kissed the fine olive cheek of her friend.

"I know now, Juanita," she said with her accustomed placidness. "I didn't know what was the matter with me. I shall have to play in the pictures I cannot help it now but I will let Nora be Queen Esther."

It was quite late by this time, and Daisy after a little more talk went home; a talk which filled the child's heart with comfort. Daisy went home quite herself again, and looked as happy and busy as a bee when she got there.

"Daisy! what late doings!" exclaimed her father. "Out all the afternoon and practising all the morning Where have you been?"

"I have been visiting, papa."

"Pray whom?"

"Molly, papa and Juanita," Daisy said, not very willingly, for Mrs. Randolph was within hearing.

"A happy selection!" said she. "Go and get ready for dinner, Daisy."

"Have you been all the afternoon at those two places, Daisy." asked her father, within whose arms she stood.

"Yes, papa."

He let her go; and a significant look passed between him and his wife.

"A little too much of a good thing," said Mr. Randolph.

"It will be too much, soon," the lady answered.

Nevertheless Daisy for the present was safe, thanks to her friend Dr. Sandford; and she passed on upstairs with a spirit as light as a bird. And after she was dressed, till it was time for her to go in to the dinner-table, all that while a little figure was kneeling at the open window, and a little round head was bowed upon the sill. And after that, there was no cloud upon Daisy's face at all.

In the drawing-room, when they were taking tea, Daisy carried her cup of milk and cake to a chair close by Preston.

"Well, Daisy, what now?"

"I want to talk to you about the pictures, Preston."

"We did finely to-day, Daisy! If only I could get the cramp out of Frederica's fingers."

"Cramp!" said Daisy.

"Yes. She picks up that handkerchief of hers as if her hand was a bird's claw. I can't get a blue jay or a canary out of my head when I see her. Did you ever see a bird scratch its eye with its claw, Daisy?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is what she puts me in mind of. That handkerchief kills Marie Antoinette, dead. And she won't take advice or she can't. It is a pity you hadn't it to do; you would hold it right queenly. You do Esther capitally. I don't believe a Northern girl can manage that sort of thing."

Daisy sipped her milk and eat crumbs of cake for a minute without making any answer.

"Preston, I am going to let Nora be Queen Esther."

"What!" said Preston.

"I am going to let Nora be Queen Esther."

"Nora! Not if I know it," said Preston.

"Yes, but I am. I would like it better. And Nora would like to be Queen Esther, I know."

"I dare say she would! Like it! Of course. No, Daisy; Queen Esther is yours and nobody's else. What has put that into your head?"

"Preston, I think Nora would like it; and you know, they said she was most like a Jewess of all of us; I think it would be proper to give it to her."

"I shall not do it. We will be improper for once."

"But I am going to do it, Preston."

"Daisy, you have not liberty. I am the manager. What has come over you? You played Esther beautifully only this morning. What is the matter?"

"I have been thinking about it," said Daisy; "and I have concluded I would rather give it to Nora."

Preston was abundantly vexed, for he knew by the signs that Daisy had made up her mind; and he was beginning to know that his little cousin was exceedingly hard to move when once she was fully set on a thing. He debated within himself an appeal to authority; but on the whole dismissed that thought. It was best not to disgust Daisy with the whole affair; and he hoped coaxing might yet do the work. But Daisy was too quick for him.

"Nora," she said at the next meeting, "if you like, I will change with you in the fainting picture. You shall be the queen, and I will be one of the women."

"Shall I be the queen?" said Nora.

"Yes, if you like."

"But why don't you want to do it?"

"I would rather you would, if you like it."

"Well, I'll do it," said Nora; "but Daisy, shall I have all the dress you were going to wear?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Because, if I don't, I won't. I must have just exactly what you were going to wear."

"Why you will of course, I suppose," said Daisy, a good deal astonished.

"Every bit," said Nora. "Shall I have that same white satin gown?"

"Yes, I suppose so. Of course you will. It is only you and I that change; not the dress."

"And shall I have the ornaments too?"

"Just the same, I suppose; unless Mrs. Sandford thinks that something else will look better."

"I won't have anything else. I want that same splendid necklace for my girdle shall I?"

"I suppose so, Nora."

"You say 'I suppose so' to everything. I want to know. Shall I have that same pink silk thing over my hair?"

"That scarf? yes."

"And the red necklace on it? and the bracelets? and the gold and diamonds round my neck? I won't be Esther if I don't have the dress."

"I suppose you will have the dress," said Daisy; "of course you will. But if you say you do not want to be Esther, they will make me do it."

A hint that closed Nora's mouth. She did not say she did not want to be Esther. Mrs. Sandford was astonished at the change of performers; but Daisy's resignation was so simply made and naturally, and Nora's acceptance was so manifestly glad, that nobody could very well offer any hindrance. The change was made; but Preston would not suffer Daisy to be one of the attendants. He left her out of the picture altogether, and put Jane Linwood in Nora's vacated place. Daisy was content; and now the practising and the arrangements went on prospering.

There was a good deal of preparation to be made, besides what the mantua-maker could do. Mr. Stilton was called into the library for a great consultation; and then he went to work. The library was the place chosen for the tableaux; the spectators to be gathered into the drawing-room, and the pictures displayed just within the wide door of communication between the two rooms. On the library side of this door Mr. Stilton laid down a platform, slightly raised and covered with green baize cloth, and behind the platform a frame-work was raised and hung with green baize to serve as a proper background for the pictures. A flower-stand was brought in from the greenhouse and placed at one side, out of sight from the drawing-room; for the purpose, as Preston informed Daisy, of holding the lights. All these details were under his management, and he managed, Daisy thought, very ably indeed. Meantime the dresses were got ready. Fortitude's helmet was constructed of pasteboard and gilt paper; and Nora said it looked just as if it were solid gold. The crown of Ahasuerus, and Alfred's six-foot bow were also made; and a beautiful old brown spinning-wheel was brought from Mrs. Sandford's house for Priscilla. Priscilla's brown dress was put together, and her white vandyke starched. And the various mantles and robes of velvet and silk which were to be used, were in some way accommodated to the needs of the young wearers. All was done well, and Preston was satisfied; except with Daisy.

Not that Daisy did not enter into the amusement of what was going forward; for perhaps nobody took so much real share in it. Even Mr. Stilton's operations interested her. But she was not engrossed at all. She was not different from her usual self. All the glory of the tableaux had not dazzled her, so far as Preston could see. And daily, every morning, she stepped into that little pony-chaise with a basket and drove off. Preston was at the pains to find out to spend a couple of hours with Molly Skelton. Preston sighed with impatience. And then, in the very act of dressing and practising for the pictures, Daisy was provokingly cool and disengaged. She did her part very well, but seemed just as much interested in other people's parts, and as much pleased with other people's adornment. Queen Esther in particular was Daisy's care, since she had given up the character; and without putting herself forward, she had once or twice made a suggestion to Mrs. Sandford, of something that she either thought would please Nora or that she felt called for by her own tastes; and in each case Mrs. Sandford declared the suggestion had been an improvement.

But with a pleasure much greater and keener, Daisy had seen the pot containing the 'Jewess' geranium taken up out of the ground, and set, with all the glory of its purple-red blossoms, in Molly's poor little room. There it stood, on a deal table, a spot of beauty and refinement, all alone to witness for the existence of such things on the earth. And heeded by Molly as well as by Daisy. Daisy knew that. And all the pleasure of all the tableaux put together could give nothing to Daisy equal to her joy when Molly first began to read. That day, when letters began really to be put together into words to Molly's comprehension, Daisy came home a proud child. Or rather, for pride is a bad word, she came home with a heart swelling with hope and exultation; hope and exultation that looked forward confidently to the glory to be revealed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TABLEAUX VIVANTS.

The great day came, and the evening of the day; and June dressed Daisy for the party. This was a simple dressing, however, of a white cambric frock; no finery, seeing that Daisy was to put on and off various things in the course of the evening. But Daisy felt a little afraid of herself. The perfected arrangements and preparations of the last few days

had, she feared, got into her head a little; and when June had done and was sent away, Daisy kneeled down by her bedside and prayed a good while that God would help her not to please herself, and keep her from caring about dress and appearance and people's flatteries. And then she got up and looked very wistfully at some words of the Lord Jesus which Juanita had showed her first and which she found marked by Mr. Dinwiddie's pencil. "The Father hath not left me alone; *for I do always those things that please Him.*"

Daisy was beginning to learn that to please God is not always to seek one's own gratification or that of the world. She looked steadily at the words of that Friend in heaven whom she loved and wished to obey; and then it seemed to Daisy that she cared nothing at all about anything but pleasing Him.

"Miss Daisy " said June, "Miss Nora is come."

Away went Daisy, with a bound, to the dressing-room; and carried Nora off, as soon as she was unwrapped from her muffings, to see the preparations in the library.

"What is all that for?" said Nora.

"Oh, that is to show the pictures nicely. They will look a great deal better than if all the room and the books could be seen behind them."

"Why?"

"I suppose they will look more like pictures. By and by all those lights on the stand will be lighted. And we shall dress in the library, you know, nobody will be in it, and in the room on the other side of the hall. All the things are brought down there."

"Daisy," said Nora? looking at the imposing green baize screen, "aren't you afraid?"

"Are you?" said Daisy.

"Yes I am afraid I shall not do something right, or laugh, or something."

"Oh, but you must not laugh. That would spoil the picture. And Mrs. Sandford and Preston will make everything else right. Come and see the crown for Ahasuerus!"

So they ran across the hall to the room of fancy dresses. Here Ella presently joined them with her sister, and indeed so many others of the performers that Preston ordered them all out. He was afraid of mischief, he said. They trooped back to the library.

"When are they going to begin?" said Nora.

"I don't know. Oh, by and by. I suppose we shall have tea and coffee first. People at a party must get through that."

To await this proceeding, and indeed to share in it, the little company adjourned to the drawing-room. It was filling fast. All the neighbourhood had been asked, and all the neighbourhood were very glad to come, and here they were, pouring in. Now the neighbourhood meant all the nice people within ten miles south and within ten miles north; and all that could be found short of some seven or eight miles east. There was one family that had even come from the other side of the river. And all these people made Melbourne House pretty full. Happily it was a very fine night.

Daisy was standing by the table, for the little folks had tea at a table, looking with a face of innocent pleasure at the scene and the gathering groups of people, when a hand laid gentle hold of her, and she found herself drawn within the doctor's arm and brought up to his side. Her face brightened.

"What is going on, Daisy?"

"Preston has been getting up some tableaux, Dr. Sandford, to be done by the young people."

"Are you one of the young people?"

"They have got me in," said Daisy.

"Misled by your appearance? What are you going to play,

Daisy?"

Daisy ran off to a table and brought him a little bill of the performances. The doctor ran his eye over it.

"I shall know what it means, I suppose, when I see the pictures. What is this 'Game of Life?'"

"It is Retsch's engraving," Daisy answered, as sedately as if she had been forty years old.

"Retsch! yes, I know him but what does the thing mean?"

"It is supposed to be the devil playing with a young man for his soul," Daisy said, very gravely.

"Who plays the devil?"

"Preston does."

"And who is to be the angel?"

"I am to be the angel," said Daisy.

"Very judicious. How do you like this new play, Daisy?"

"It is very amusing. I like to see the pictures."

"Not to be in them?"

"I think not, Dr. Sandford."

"Daisy, what else are you doing, besides playing tableaux, all these days?"

"I drive about a good deal," said Daisy. Then looking up at her friend with an entirely new expression, a light shining in her eye and a subdued sweetness coming into her smile, she added "Molly is learning to read, Dr. Sandford."

"Molly!" said the doctor.

"Yes. You advised me to ask leave to go to see her, and I did, and I got it."

Daisy's words were a little undertone; the look that went with them the doctor never forgot as long as he lived. His questions about the festivities she had answered with a placid, pleased face; pleased that he should ask her; but a soft irradiation of joy had beamed upon the fact that the poor cripple was making a great step upwards in the scale of human life. The doctor had not forgotten his share in the permission Daisy had received, which he thought he saw she suspected. Unconsciously his arm closed upon the little figure it held and brought her nearer to him; but his questions were somehow stopped. And Daisy offered no more; she stood quite still, till a movement at the table seemed to call for her. She put her hand upon the doctor's arm, as a sign that it must hold her no longer, and sprang away.

And soon now all the young people went back again to the library. Mrs. Sandford came with them to serve in her arduous capacity of dresser. June attended to give her help.

"Now what are we going to do?" whispered Nora, in breathless excitement. "What is to be the first picture? Oh, Daisy, I wish you would get them to have my picture last of all."

"Why, Nora?"

"Oh, because. I think it ought to come last. Aren't you afraid? Whew! I am."

"No, I don't think I am."

"But won't you want to laugh?"

"Why?" said Daisy. "No, I do not think I shall want to laugh."

"I shall be too frightened to laugh," said Jane Linwood.

"I don't see, Daisy, how you will manage those queer wings of yours," Nora resumed.

"I have not got to manage them at all. I have only to keep still."

"I can't think how they will look," said Nora. "They don't seem to me much like wings. I think they will look very funny."

"Hush, children run away; you are not wanted here. Go into the drawing-room and I will ring this hand-bell when I want you."

"What comes first, aunt Sandford?"

"Run away! you will see."

So the younger ones repaired to the drawing-room, for what seemed a weary time of waiting. Nora expressed her entire disapprobation of being shut out from all the fun of the dressing; she wanted to see that. She then declared that it would be impossible to show all the twelve pictures that evening, if it took so long to get ready for one. However, the time was past at length; the signal was given; the lights in the drawing-room were put down, till the room was very shadowy indeed; and then, amid the breathless hush of expectation, the curtain that hung over the doorway of the library was drawn back.

The children thought it was fairy-land.

Frederica Fish sat there facing the company, quaintly dressed in antique costume; and before her knelt, on one knee, two grand-looking personages, very richly attired, presenting a gilt crown upon a satin cushion. Lady Jane Grey and the lords who came to offer her the kingdom. The draperies were exceedingly well executed and did Mrs. Sandford great credit. They were the picture.

"Isn't she *beau-tiful*!" Nora exclaimed under her breath.

"Isn't it like a picture!" said Daisy.

"How funnily those boys kneel and twist themselves round!" said Jane. "Who are they?"

"Daisy, wouldn't you like to be dressed every day like that?" said Nora.

"I don't think it would be convenient," said Daisy. "I think a white frock is nicer."

"Oh, but it makes people look so handsome! Frederica looks like she is a real beauty! I should like to be dressed so. Daisy, don't you suppose queens and ladies, like those in the pictures, *are* always dressed so?"

"I suppose they put on nightgowns when they go to bed," said Ella Stanfield, soberly. "They can't *always* be dressed so."

"Oh, but, I mean when they are up. And I dare say they wear beautiful nightgowns Daisy, don't you think they do? I dare say they have splendid lace and ribbands; and you call make a white dress very handsome, if you put plenty of lace and ribbands."

"Oh, it's gone!" exclaimed Jane and Ella. The curtain had fallen. The company clapped their hands and cheered.

"What's that for?" said Nora.

"That means that they like it, I suppose," said Daisy.

"You will have to go now, Nora, I know. Little Red Riding-Hood comes next. Come we'll all go."

"Horrid Little Red Riding-Hood!" said Nora. "I hate that picture!"

"Why do you hate it?"

"Because! It is nothing but a red hood."

Mrs. Sandford's bell sounded.

"Oh, Daisy!" said Nora, as they went, "won't you get them to leave Esther to the last? They will do whatever you ask

them. Do!"

"Why, Nora?"

"Oh, because! "

What Nora's "because" meant, Daisy did not know; that it had reference to some supposed advantage of place, was pretty certain. Daisy stood thinking about it while she saw Nora dressed, and then ran into the drawing-room to take the effect of the tableau. The curtain was withdrawn; Daisy was astonished; she had no idea that Nora could be so changed by a little arrangement of lights and dress. The picture was exceeding pretty. Nora's black hair and bright cheeks peeped out from under the shadowing red cardinal, which draped her arms also Mrs. Sandford had mysteriously managed it. She had got over her hatred of the part, for she looked pleased and pleasant; and the little basket in her hand and the short petticoat and neat little feet completed a tidy Red Riding-Hood. The applause was loud. "Lovely!" the ladies said. "What a sweet little thing! how beautiful she looks!" Nora did not smile, for that would have hurt her picture; but she stood with swelling complacency and unchanging red cheeks as long as the company were pleased to look at her.

"Who is that, Daisy?" asked her father, near whom Daisy had stationed herself.

"It is Nora Dinwiddie, papa."

"She is a pretty little girl. When does your turn come?"

"I do not know, papa."

"Not know! Why, I thought all this was your affair."

"Oh, no, papa; it is Preston's affair."

Off ran Daisy, however, when the curtain fell, or rather when it was drawn, to see the getting ready of the next tableau. There was something of a tableau on hand already. June stood holding up a small feather-bed, and two little figures in white nightgowns were flying round, looking and laughing at two exceedingly fierce, bearded, moustached, black-browed individuals, on whose heads Mrs. Sandford was setting some odd-looking hats.

"Who are those, Nora?" said Daisy to Little Red Riding-Hood.

"Daisy, did you like it? Did I stand well?"

"Yes, I liked it very much; it was nice. Nora, who are those two?"

"Why, one of 'em is Preston I don't know who the other is.
Daisy, did you ask about Esther?"

Could it be possible that Preston had so transformed himself? Daisy could hardly see that it was he. His fellow she did not recognise at all. It was big George Linwood.

"Now are the little princes ready?" said Preston. "Because we will finish up this business."

"Oh, you won't let the feather-bed come down on us?" cried
Jane Linwood.

"If you don't be quiet and keep still, I will," said Preston. "Let only your eye wink or your mouth move to smile and you are an unlucky prince! I am a man without mercy."

"And I am another," said George. "I say, old fellow, I suppose I'm all right for that French pikeman now, hey? After this smothering business is attended to."

"You think the trade is the thing, and the costume a matter of indifference?" said Preston. "In the matter of morals I dare say you are right; in tableaux before spectators it's not exactly so. Here, June hand on your big pillow there."

Mrs. Sandford was laughing at him, and in fact there was a good deal of hilarity and some romping before the actors in the tableau could be settled in their places.

"Don't keep us long," said Preston. "I never knew before what an uninteresting thing a featherbed is when you are obliged to hold it in your arms. Everything in its place, I find. I used to have a good opinion of them."

Daisy ran back to the drawing-room, and was utterly struck with wonder at the picture over which all this fun had been held. It was beautiful, she thought. The two children lay so naturally asleep, one little bare foot peeping out from under the coverings; and the grim faces that scowled at them over the feather-bed with those strange hats overshadowing, made such a contrast; and they were all so breathlessly still, and the lights and shadows were so good; Daisy was disposed to give her verdict that there never was a play like this play. The "Princes in the Tower" was greatly applauded.

"Have you asked about my picture?" said Nora, who stood beside Daisy.

"No, I have not had a chance."

"Do, Daisy! I want that to be the last."

Daisy thought she was unreasonable. Why should Nora have the best place, if it was the best? She was not pleased with her.

The next picture was Marie Antoinette; and that drew down the house. Frederica Fish had nothing to do but to stand as she was put, and Mrs. Sandford had seen to it that she stood right; another person might have done more in the picture, but that was all that could be got from Frederica. Her face was coldly impassive; she could come no nearer to the expression of the indignant queen. But Preston's old woman, and Theresa's pretty young French girl; one looking as he had said, with eyes of coarse fury, the other all melting with tenderness and reverent sympathy; they were so excellent that the company were delighted. Frederica's handkerchief, it is true, hung daintily in her fingers, showing all the four embroidered corners; Mrs. Sandford had not seen it till it was just too late; and Preston declared afterwards the "fury" in his face was real and not feigned as he glared at her. But the company overlooked the handkerchief in favour of the other parts of the picture; and its success was perfect.

"Alfred in the neat-herd's cottage" followed next, and would have been as good; only that Nora, whose business it was to blow her cheeks into a full moon condition over the burnt cakes, would not keep her gravity; but the full cheeks gave way every now and then in a broad grin which quite destroyed the effect. Preston could not see this, but Daisy took her friend to task after it was over. Nora declared she could not help it.

"You don't know how it felt, Daisy, to keep my cheeks puffed out in that way. I couldn't do it; and whenever I let them go, then I couldn't help laughing. Oh, Daisy! is my picture to be the last?"

"I will see, as soon as I can, Nora," Daisy said, gravely. It was her own turn now, and while Mrs. Sandford was dressing her she had no very good chance to speak of Esther. How wonderfully Mrs. Sandford arranged the folds of one or two long scarfs, to imitate Sir Joshua Reynolds' draperies. Preston declared it was beautiful, and so did Hamilton Rush; and when the little helmet with its plumes was set on Daisy's head, Mrs. Sandford smiled and Preston clapped his hands. They had still a little trouble to get Dolce into position. Dolce was to enact the lion, emblem of courage and strength, lying at Fortitude's feet. He was a sensible dog, but knowing nothing about playing pictures, naturally, did not immediately understand why it should be required of him to lie down there, on that platform of green baize, with his nose on his paws. However, more sensible than some animals of higher order are apt to be, he submitted patiently to the duty of obedience where he did not understand; and laid down accordingly his shaggy length at Daisy's feet.

The curtain was drawn aside, and the company shouted with delight. No picture had been so good yet as this one. The little grave figure, the helmet with its nodding plumes in mock stateliness; the attitude, one finger just resting on the pedestal of the broken column (an ottoman did duty for it), as if to show that Fortitude stood alone, and the shaggy St. Bernard at her feet, all made in truth an extremely pretty spectacle. You could see the faintest tinge of a smile of pleasure on the lips of both Mr. and Mrs. Randolph; they were silent, but all the rest of the people cheered and openly declared their delight. Daisy stood like a rock. *Her* mouth never gave way; not even when Dolce, conceiving that all this cheering called upon him to do something, rose up and, looking right into Daisy's face, wagged his tail in the blandest manner of congratulation. Daisy did not wince; and an energetic "Down, Dolce, down!" brought the St. Bernard to his position again, in the very meekness of strength; and then the people clapped for Daisy and the dog together. At last the curtain fell.

"Well, that will do," said Mrs. Sandford.

"Dolce you rascal!" said Preston, as the great creature was now wagging his tail in honour of his master, "how came you to forget your business in that style, sir?"

"I do not think it really hindered the effect at all, Preston," said Mrs. Sandford. "Daisy kept her countenance so well."

"Yes, if Fortitude had smiled!" said Theresa. "Mrs. Sandford, is it out of character for Fortitude to smile?"

"It would be out of character for Portia, just at this crisis so take care of her."

"What made them make such a great noise, Daisy?" said Nora, while Daisy was getting undressed.

"I suppose they liked the picture," said Daisy.

"But they made a great deal more noise than they did for anybody else," said Nora.

"I suppose they liked the picture better than they liked any of the others," said Ella Stanfield. "I know they did, for I was in the other room. Come, let's go see this picture!"

"Not you, Daisy," said Mrs. Sandford, as the children were running off "I want you. Priscilla comes next."

So Daisy had to stay and be dressed for Priscilla. She missed Portia and Bassanio. It was not much missed, for her little heart began to be beating with excitement; and she wished very much that Priscilla might be as much liked as Fortitude. The dressing was an easy matter, for the costume had been prepared for her and a gown and vandyke made on purpose. Would Alexander dare to wink this time, she wondered? And then she remembered, to her great joy, that he could not; because his face would be in full view of the people behind the scenes in the library. The little brown spinning-wheel was brought on the platform; a heap of flax, at which Priscilla is supposed to have been working, was piled together in front of it; and she and Alexander took their places. The curtain was drawn aside, and a cry of pleasure from the company testified to the picturesque prettiness of the representation. It was according to the fact, that Priscilla should be looking in John Alden's face; it was just at the moment when she is supposed to be rebuking him for bringing to her his friend's suit and petition. Thinking herself safe, and wishing to have the picture as good as possible, Daisy had ventured to direct her eyes upon the face of Alexander Fish, who personified the Puritan suitor. To her horror, Alexander, wholly untouched by the poetry of the occasion, and unawed by its hazards, dared to execute a succession of most barefaced and disagreeable winks right at Priscilla's eyes. Poor Daisy could not stand this. Forgetting her character and the picture and everything, her eyes went down; her eyelids drooped over them; and the expression of grave displeasure would have done for a yet more dissatisfied mood of mind than Priscilla is supposed to have known at the time. The company could not stand this, either; and there burst out a hearty chorus of laughter and cheers together, which greatly mortified Daisy. The curtain was drawn, and she had to face the laughing comments of the people in the library. They were unmerciful, she thought. Daisy grew very pink in the face.

Cinderella was the next picture, in which she had also to play. Dresses were changed in haste; but meanwhile Daisy began to think about herself. Was she all right? Mortified at the breaking of her picture; angry at Alexander; eager to get back praise enough to make amends for this loss; whom was little Daisy trying to please? Where was the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit now? was it on?

They had after all given her place in the Cinderella tableau; she was one of the two wicked sisters; and she looked dissatisfied enough for the character. She wanted to get away to be alone for two minutes; but she had this part to fill first. It is very hard to play when one's heart is heavy. Daisy could not go on so. She could not bear it. Without waiting till June could undress her, she slipped away, the moment the curtain was drawn, and ran across the hall to the dressing-room. People were coming and going everywhere; and Daisy went out upon the piazza. There, in a dark spot, she kneeled down and prayed; that this terrible spirit of pleasing herself might be put away from her. She had but a minute; she knew she must be back again immediately; but she knew too it takes but a minute for ever so little a prayer to go all the way to heaven; and the answer does not take any longer to come, if it pleases God. Daisy was very much in earnest, and quite well knew all that. She went back to the library feeling humbled and ashamed, but quiet. The library was all in commotion.

Nora was begging that Esther might be put off till the last. Mrs. Sandford and Preston objected. They chose that it should come next.

"Here is Priscilla," said Hamilton Rush, "I beg pardon! it is Cinderella's wicked sister I don't know what *her* name was.

Let us have your vote, my angel; I will address you in your prospective character; will you put on your wings at once? Or shall we get done with the terrestrial first? What do you say? I hope you are going to make Miss Stanfield the queen, Mrs. Sandford; she has done one part so well that I should like to see her in another."

"Why, you are going to be Ahasuerus yourself!" said the lady.

"Am I?" said Hamilton; who it must be noticed had not met for the practising as often as the other people, being held not to need them. "Then I must respectfully be allowed to choose my own queen. I vote for Miss Theresa."

"It is a capital idea," said Preston.

"I think so too," said Mrs. Sandford. "Theresa, my dear, I wonder we did not think before of something so much to our advantage; but these children seemed to have got the picture into their own hands. You will do it far better. Come! let me robe you."

"I would rather be Vāshti," murmured Theresa. "I don't like submissive characters. Mrs. Sandford, Vāshti is far more in my line. Go off, boys, and get ready! What a pity we didn't think of having Vāshti, Mrs. Sandford."

However, Theresa made no objection to be dressed for Esther.

"Who will be your supporters? Ella is too short. Jane and Nora? Where is Nora?"

Nora was in the furthest corner of the room, seated in gloom.

"Nora! "

"I am not going to play any more " said Nora.

"You must come and be one of the queen's women I want you for that."

"I am not going to play " repeated Nora; but nobody heard except Daisy. "I am Esther myself! nobody else has any right to be it. I have practised it, and I know how to do it; and I am Esther myself. Nobody else has any right to be Esther!"

Daisy stood by in dismay. She did not know what comfort to bring to this distress.

"I won't play at all!" said Nora. "If I can't be Esther I won't be anything. You have all the good things, Daisy! you have all the prettiest pictures; and I might have had just this one. Just Esther. I just wanted to be Esther! It's mean."

"Why, you've been plenty of things I think," said Jane Linwood, coming near this corner of gloom.

"I haven't! I have been that hateful prince in the tower and Cinderella's ugly sister only hateful things."

"But you were Little Red Riding-Hood."

"Red Riding-Hood!" exclaimed Nora, in unspeakable disdain. "Red Riding-Hood was nothing at all but a red cloak! and Daisy wore feathers, and had the dog "

And the vision of Queen Esther's jewels and satin gown and mantle here overcame Nora's dignity if not her wrath; she began to cry.

"But won't you come and be one of the queen's maids? *They* will be very nicely dressed too," Daisy ventured, gently.

"No! I won't be anybody's maid, I tell you," sobbed the disconsolate child.

"Bring her along, Daisy," Mrs. Sandford called from the other side of the room. "I am almost ready for her."

Daisy made another vain effort to bring Nora to reason, and then went sorrowfully to Mrs. Sandford. She thought tableaux were on the whole a somewhat troublesome amusement.

"Will I do, Mrs. Sandford?" she said. "Nora does not want to play."

"In dudgeon, hey?" said the lady. "I expected as much. Well, Daisy I will take you. I might perch you up on a foot-cushion to give you a little more altitude. However I don't know but it will do. Theresa will be letting down her own height."

"I think I am letting myself down altogether, Mrs. Sandford, in allowing Ahasuerus to pick me out in that lordly style. But never mind I shan't touch his sceptre any way. Boys, boys! are you ready?"

"Splendid, Theresa!" said Preston, as he came in. "Splendid! You are the very thing."

"I am diamonds and satin, you mean. I thank you. I know that is what I am at present."

"You look the character," said Hamilton.

Theresa made him a mock little courtesy. It was admirably done. It was the slightest gesture of supercilious disdain excellent pantomime. The boys laughed and shouted, for Theresa's satin and diamonds gave effect to her acting, and she was a good actor.

This picture had been delayed so long, that at last, hearing the shout of applause behind the scenes, the audience began to call for their share. In haste, but not the less effectively, Theresa and the rest threw themselves into attitude, and the curtain was pulled aside.

Daisy wished she could have been in the drawing-room to see the picture; she knew it must be beautiful; but she was supporting one jewelled arm of Queen Esther, and obliged by her duty to look only at the Queen's face. Daisy thought even that was a good deal to look at, it was so magnificently surrounded with decoration: but at the same time she was troubled about Nora and sorry for her own foolishness, so that her own face was abundantly in character for the grave concern that sat upon it. This picture met with great favour. The people in the library were in much glee after it was over; all but Daisy and Nora.

"It is all spoiled!" said the latter. "The evening has been hateful. I wish I hadn't come."

"Oh, Nora! don't say that," Daisy urged. "The pictures are almost over now; and then we shall have supper."

"I don't want supper! I only wanted to be Queen Esther, and you said I might. It was the prettiest picture of the whole lot."

"But I couldn't help it, Nora."

"I could have done it just as well as Theresa! She didn't look handsome a bit."

"Oh, Nora, I think she did for a picture."

"She didn't a bit; the things she had on looked handsome."

Daisy was called away. Her last dressing was to be done now, and the one of which Daisy was most doubtful. She was to stand for the angel in the "Game of Life." Other people had no doubt about it. Mrs. Sandford was sure that the angel's wings would make a good representation, which Daisy was slow to believe; near by, they looked so very like gauze and pasteboard! They were arranged, at any rate, to appear as if they grew out of her shoulders; she was arrayed in flowing white draperies over her own little cambric frock; and then she was ready. Hamilton came in. He was to be the young man in the picture. Daisy liked his appearance well. But when Preston followed him, she felt unspeakably shocked. Preston was well got up, in one respect; he looked frightful. He wore a black mask, ugly but not grotesque; and his whole figure was more like the devil in the picture than Daisy had imagined it could be. She did not like the whole business at all. There was no getting out of it now; the picture must be given; so the performers were placed.

Hamilton and Preston sat on two sides of a chess-board, and behind them the little angel stood watching the game. Mrs. Sandford was right. By a skilful placing and shielding of the lamps, the lights were thrown broadly where they ought to be, on faces and draperies, leaving the gauze wings of the angel in such obscurity that they just showed as it was desired they should. The effect was extremely good, and even artistic. The little angel herself was not in full light; it was through a shade of gloom that her grave face of concern looked down upon the game on the chess-board. Truly Daisy looked concerned and grave. She thought she did not like to play such things as this, One of the figures below

her was so very wicked and devilish in its look; and Hamilton leaned over the pieces on the board with so well-given an expression of doubt and perplexity, his adversary's watch was so intent, and the meaning of the whole was so sorrowfully deep; that Daisy gazed unconsciously most like a guardian angel who might see with sorrow the evil one getting the better over a soul of his care. For it was real to Daisy. She knew that the devil does in truth try to bewitch and wile people out of doing right into doing wrong. She knew that he tries to get the mastery of them; that he rejoices every time he sees them make a "false move;" that he is a great cunning enemy, all the worse because we cannot see him, striving to draw people to their ruin; and she thought that it was far too serious and dreadful a thing to be made a *play* of. She wondered if guardian angels did really watch over poor tempted souls and try to help them. And all this brought upon Daisy's face a shade of awe, and sorrow, and fear, which was strangely in keeping with her character as an angel, and very singular in its effect on the picture. The expressions of pleasure and admiration which had burst from the company in the drawing-room at the first sight of it, gradually stilled and ceased; and it was amid a profound and curious silence and hush that the curtain was at length drawn upon the picture. There were some people among the spectators not altogether satisfied in their minds.

"How remarkable!" was the first word that came from anybody's lips in the darkened drawing-room.

"Very remarkable!" somebody else said. "Did you ever see such acting?"

"It has all been good," said a gentleman, Mr. Sandford; "but this was remarkable."

"Thanks, I suppose you know to whose management," said the soft voice of the lady of the house.

"Management is a good thing," said the gentleman; "but there was more than management here, Mrs. Randolph. It was uncommon, upon my word! I suppose my wife came in for the wings, but where did the *face* come from?"

"Daisy," said Mr. Randolph, as he found his little daughter by his side again, "are you here?"

"Yes, papa."

Her father put his arm round her, as if to assure himself there were no wings in the case.

"How do you like playing pictures?"

"I think I do not like them very much " Daisy said, sedately, nestling up to her father's side.

"Not? How is that? Your performance has been much approved."

Daisy said nothing. Mr. Randolph thought he felt a slight tremor in the little frame.

"Do you understand the allegory of this last tableau, Daisy?"
Dr. Sandford asked.

"I do not know what an allegory is, Dr. Sandford."

"What is the meaning of the representation, then, as you think of it?"

"This last picture?"

"Yes."

"It is a trial of skill, Dr. Sandford."

The room was still darkened, and the glance of intelligence and amusement that passed between her friend and her father, their own eyes could scarcely catch. Daisy did not see it. But she had spoken diplomatically. She did not want to come any nearer the subject of the picture in talking with Dr. Sandford. His mind was different, and he went on.

"What is the trial of skill about, Daisy?"

The child hesitated, and then said, speaking low and most un-child-like "It is about a human soul."

"And what do you understand are the powers at work or at play?"

"It is not play," said Daisy.

"Answer Dr. Sandford, Daisy," said her father.

"Papa," said the child, "it isn't play. The devil tries to make people do wrong and if they try to do right, then there is a "

"A what?"

"I don't know a fight, papa."

Mr. Randolph again felt a tremor, a nervous trembling, pass over Daisy.

"You do not suppose, my darling," he said, softly, "that such a fight goes on with anything like this horrible figure that your cousin Preston has made himself?"

"I do not suppose he looks like that, papa."

"I do not think there is such a personage at all, Daisy. I am sure you need not trouble your little head with thinking about it."

Daisy made no answer.

"There is a struggle always going on, no doubt, between good and evil; but we cannot paint good and evil without imagining shapes for them."

"But papa, " said Daisy, and stopped. It was no place or time for talking about the matter, though her father spoke low. She did not want even Dr. Sandford to hear.

"What is it, Daisy?"

"Yes," said the doctor, "I should like to know what the argument is."

"Papa," said Daisy, awesomely, "there is a *place* prepared for the devil and his angels."

Mr. Randolph was silent now. But he felt again that Daisy was nervously excited, by the quiver that passed over her little frame.

"So you think, Daisy," said the doctor leaning towards her, "that the white and the black spirits have a fight over the people of this world?"

Daisy hesitated, struggled, quivered with the feeling and the excitement which were upon her, tried for self-command and words to answer. Mr. Randolph saw it all and did not hurry her, though she hesitated a good deal.

"You think they have a quarrel for us?" repeated the doctor.

"I don't know, Dr. Sandford " Daisy answered, in a strangely tender and sober voice. It was strange to her two hearers.

"But you believe in the white spirits, I suppose, as well as in the other branch of the connexion?"

"Papa," said Daisy, her feeling breaking a little through her composure so much as to bring a sort of cry into her voice "there is joy among the angels of heaven whenever anybody grows good! "

She had turned to her father as she spoke and threw her arms round his neck, hiding her face, with a clinging action that told somewhat of that which was at work in her mind. Mr. Randolph perhaps guessed at it. He said nothing; he held her close to his breast; and the curtain drew at that moment for the last tableau. Daisy did not see it, and Mr. Randolph did not think of it; though people said it was very good. It was only the head and shoulders of Theresa Stanfield as an old country schoolmistress, seen behind a picture frame, with her uplifted finger and a bundle of rods. Theresa was so transformed that nobody would have known her; and while the company laughed and applauded, Daisy came back to her usual self; and slid out of her father's arms when the show was over, all ready for supper and Nora Dinwiddie.

There was a grand supper, and everybody was full of pleasure and complimentary speeches and discussion and praise of the tableaux. That was among the elder portion of the company. The four or five children were not disposed to such absolute harmony. Grapes and ices and numberless other good things were well enjoyed, no doubt; but amidst them all a spirit of criticism was rife.

"Daisy, your wings didn't look a bit like real wings " said Jane Linwood.

"No," echoed Nora, "I guess they didn't. They were like let me see what they were like! They were like the wings of a windmill."

"No, they weren't!" said Ella. "I was in the drawing-room and they didn't look like a windmill a bit. They looked queer, but pretty."

"Queer, but pretty!" repeated Nora.

"Yes, they did," said Ella. "And you laughed when you were Red Riding-hood, Nora Dinwiddie."

"I didn't laugh a bit!"

"It is no matter if you did laugh, Nora," said Daisy; "you got grave again, and the picture was very nice."

"I didn't laugh!" said Nora; "and if I did, everybody else did. I don't think the pictures I saw were at all like pictures they were just like a parcel of people dressed-up."

Some gay paper mottoes made a diversion and stopped the little mouths for a time; and then the people went away.

"Well, Daisy," said Mrs. Gary, "how do you like this new entertainment?"

"The pictures? I think they were very pretty, aunt Gary."

"How happened it that somebody else wore my diamonds?" said her mother, "and not you. I thought you were to be dressed for Queen Esther?"

"Yes, mamma, so I was at first; and then it was thought best "

"Not by me," said Preston. "It was no doing of mine. Daisy was to have been Esther, and she herself declared off backed out of it, and left me to do as best I could."

"What was that for, Daisy?" said Mrs. Gary. "You would have made an excellent Esther."

"What was that for, Daisy?" said Mrs. Randolph. "Did you not like to be Esther?"

"Yes, mamma I liked it at one time."

"And why not at another time?"

"I found out that somebody else would like it too, mamma; and I thought "

Mrs. Randolph broke out with a contemptuous expression of displeasure.

"You thought you would put yourself in a corner! You were not manager, Daisy; and you must remember something is due to the one that is. You have no right to please yourself."

"Come here, Daisy," said her father, "and bid me good-night. I dare say you were trying to please somebody else. Tell mamma she must remember the old fable, and excuse you."

"What fable, Mr. Randolph?" the lady inquired, as Daisy left the room.

"The one in which the old Grecian told the difficulty of pleasing more people than one or two at once."

"Daisy is ruined!" said Mrs. Randolph.

"I do not see how it appears."

"She has not entered into this thing at all as we hoped she would not at all as a child should."

"She looked a hundred years old, in the Game of Life," said Mrs. Gary. "I never saw such a representation in my life. You would have said she was a real guardian angel of somebody, who was playing his game not to please her."

"I am glad it is over!" said Mrs. Randolph. "I am tired of it all." And she walked off.

So did Mr. Randolph, but as he went he was thinking of Daisy's voice and her words "There is joy among the angels of heaven whenever anybody grows good."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN ACCIDENT.

It was growing late in the fall now. Mrs. Randolph began to talk of moving to the city for the winter. Mr. Randolph more than half hinted that he would like as well to stay where he was. But his wife said that for Daisy's sake they must quit Melbourne, and try what new scenes, and lessons, and dancing school would do for her. "Not improve the colour in her cheeks, I am afraid," said Mr. Randolph; but, however, he did not oppose, and Mrs. Randolph made her arrangements.

It was yet but a day or two after the tableaux, when something happened to disturb her plans. Mr. Randolph was out riding with her, one fine October morning, when his horse became unruly in consequence of a stone hitting him; a chance stone thrown from a careless hand. The animal was restive, took the stone very much in dudgeon, ran, and carrying his rider under a tree, Mr. Randolph's forehead was struck by a low-lying limb, and he was thrown off. The blow was severe; he was stunned; and had not yet recovered his senses when they brought him back to Melbourne. Mrs. Randolph was in a state almost as much beyond self-management. Daisy was out of the house. Mrs. Gary had left Melbourne; and till the doctor arrived Mrs. Randolph was nearly distracted.

He came; and though his fine face took no gloom upon it, and his blue eye was as usual impenetrable, the eyes that anxiously watched him were not satisfied. Dr. Sandford said nothing; and Mrs. Randolph had self-control sufficient not to question him, while he made his examinations and applied his remedies. But the remedies, though severe, were a good while in bringing back any token of consciousness. It came at last, faintly. The doctor summoned Mrs. Randolph out of the room then, and ordered that his patient should be kept in the most absolute and profound quiet. No disturbance or excitement must be permitted to come near him.

"How long, doctor?"

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Randolph? "

"How long will it be before he is better?"

"I cannot say that. Any excitement or disturbance would much delay it. Let him hear nothing and see nothing except you, and some attendant that he is accustomed to."

"Oh, doctor, can't you stay till he is better?"

"I will return again very soon, Mrs. Randolph. There is nothing to be done at present for which I am needed."

"But you will come back as soon as you can?"

"Certainly!"

"And oh, Dr. Sandford, cannot you take Daisy away?"

"Where is she?"

"I don't know she is not come home. Do take her away!"

The doctor went thoughtfully downstairs, and checking his first movement to go out of the front door, turned to the library. Nobody was there; but he heard voices, and passed out upon the piazza. Daisy's pony chaise stood at the foot of the steps; she herself had just alighted. Preston was there too, and it was his voice the doctor had first heard, in anxious entreaty.

"Come, Daisy! it's capital down at the river; and I want to show you something."

"I think I am tired now, Preston. I'll go another time," said Daisy.

"Daisy, I want you now. Come! come! I want you to go now, this minute."

"But I do not feel like a walk, Preston. I can't go till I have had my dinner."

Preston looked imploringly at the doctor, towards whom Daisy was now mounting the steps. It is safe to say that the doctor would willingly have been spared his present task.

"Where have you been now, Daisy?" he said.

Daisy's face brightened into its usual smile at sight of him.

"I have been to Crum Elbow, Dr. Sandford."

"Suppose you go a little further and have luncheon with Mrs. Sandford and me? It will not take us long to get to it."

"Does mamma say so, Dr. Sandford?"

"Yes."

"Then I will be ready in a moment."

"Where are you going?" said her friend, stopping her.

"Only up stairs for a minute. I will be ready in two minutes, Dr. Sandford."

"Stop," said the doctor, still detaining her. "I would rather not have you go upstairs. Your father is not quite well, and I want him kept quiet."

What a shadow came over Daisy's sunshine.

"Papa not well! What is the matter?"

"He does not feel quite like himself, and I wish him left in perfect repose."

"What is the matter with him, Dr. Sandford?"

Daisy's words were quiet, but the doctor saw the gathering woe on her cheek; the roused suspicion. This would not do to go on.

"He has had a little accident, Daisy; nothing that you need distress yourself about; but I wish him to be quite quiet for a little."

Daisy said nothing now, but the speech of her silent face was so eloquent that the doctor found it expedient to go on.

"He was riding this morning; his horse took him under the low bough of a tree, and his head got a severe blow. That is all the matter."

"Was papa *thrown*?" said Daisy, under her breath.

"I believe he was. Any horseman might be unseated by such a thing."

Daisy again was mute, and again the doctor found himself obliged to answer the agony of her eyes.

"I do not think he is in much, if any, pain, Daisy; but I want him to be still for a while. I think that is good for him; and it would not be good that you should disturb him. Your mother is there, and that is enough."

Daisy stood quite still for a few minutes. Then making an effort to withdraw herself from the doctor's arm, she said, "I will not go into the room I will not make any noise."

"Stop! Daisy, you must not go upstairs. Not this morning."

She stood still again, grew white and trembled.

"As soon as I think it will do him good to see you, I will let you into his room. Now, shall we send June up for anything you want?"

"I think, Dr. Sandford," said Daisy, struggling for steadiness, "I will not go away from home."

Her words were inexpressibly tender and sorrowful. The doctor was unrelenting.

"Your mother desired it."

"Did mamma? "

"Yes; she wished me to carry you home with me. Come, Daisy! It is hard, but it is less hard after all than it would be for you to wander about here; and much better."

Daisy in her extremity sunk her head on the doctor's shoulder, and so remained, motionless, for more minutes than he had to spare. Yet he was still too, and waited. Then he spoke to her again.

"I will go," said Daisy.

"You wanted something first?"

"I did not want anything but to change my gloves. It is no matter."

Very glad to have gained his point, the doctor went off with his charge; drove her very fast to his own home, and there left her in Mrs. Sandford's care; while he drove off furiously again to see another patient before he returned to Melbourne.

It was a long day after that to Daisy; and so it was to Mrs. Sandford. Nora Dinwiddie was no longer with her; there was nobody to be a distraction or a pleasure to the grave little child who went about with such a weird stillness, or sat motionless with such unchildlike quiet. Mrs. Sandford did not know what to do; but indeed nothing could be done with Daisy. She could not be amused or happy; she did not wish Nora were there; she could only keep patient and wait, and wait, with a sore, straining heart, while the hours passed, and Dr. Sandford did not come, and she had no tidings. Was she patient? It seemed to Daisy that her heart would burst with impatience; or rather with its eager longing to know how things were at home, and to get some relief. The hours of the day went by, and no relief came. Dr. Sandford did not return. Daisy took it as no good omen.

It was hard to sit at the dinner-table and have Mr. and Mrs. Sandford showing her kindness, while her heart was breaking. It was hard to be quiet and still, and answer politely and make no trouble for her entertainers. It was hard; but Daisy did it. It was hard to eat too; and that Daisy could not do. It was impossible.

"Mustn't be cast down," said Mr. Sandford. He was one of the people who look as if they never could be. Black whiskers and a round face sometimes have that kind of look. "Mustn't be cast down! No need. Everybody gets a tumble from horseback once or twice in his life. I've had it seven times. Not pleasant; but it don't hurt you much, nine times in ten."

"Hush, Mr. Sandford," said his wife. "Daisy cannot feel about it just as you do."

"Never been thrown yet herself, eh! Give her one of those peaches, my dear she will like that better than meats to-day. Eat one of my red-cheeked peaches, Daisy; and tell me whether you have any so good at Melbourne. I don't believe it."

Daisy peeled her peach. It was all she could bear to do. She peeled it carefully and slowly; there never was a peach so long in paring; for it was hardly more than finished when they rose from table. She had tried to taste it too; that was all; the taste never reached her consciousness. Mrs. Sandford knew better than her husband, and let her alone.

Daisy could think of nothing now but to watch for the doctor; and to do it with the most comfort and the best chance she placed herself on the steps of the piazza, sitting down on the uppermost step. It was a fair evening, warm and mild; and Mrs. Sandford sitting in her drawing-room with the windows open was but a few feet from Daisy, and could observe her. She did so very often, with a sorrowful eye. Daisy's attitude bespoke her intentness; the child's heart was

wound up to such a pitch of expectation that eye and ear were for nothing else. She sat bending both upon the road by which she looked for the doctor to come; her little figure did not stir; her head rested slightly on her hand with a droop that spoke of weariness or of weakness. So she sat looking down the road, and the sweet October light was all over her and all around her. Mrs. Sandford watched her, till the light lost its brightness and grew fair and faint, and then began to grow dim. Daisy sat still, and Mrs. Sandford looked at her, till a step within the room drew her attention on that side.

"Why, there you are!" said the lady "come the other way. What news?"

"I have no news."

"Yes, but how is Mr. Randolph?" The lady had dropped her voice very low.

"He is sensible."

"Sensible!" Mrs. Sandford said with a startled look; but then drawing the doctor silently to her side, she pointed to the watching, anxious little figure there on the steps. It did not need that Dr. Sandford should speak her name. Daisy had perfectly well heard and understood the words that had passed; and now she rose up slowly and came towards the doctor, who stepped out to meet her.

"Well, Daisy have you been looking for me?" he said. But something in the little upturned face admonished him that no light words could be borne. He sat down and took her hand.

"Your father looks better than he did this morning; but he feels badly yet after his fall."

Daisy looked at him and was silent a moment.

"Will they send for me home?"

"Not to-night, I think. Mrs. Randolph thought better that you should stay here. Can't you do it contentedly?"

Daisy made no audible answer; her lip quivered a very little; it did not belie the singular patience which sat upon her brow. Her hand lay yet in the doctor's; he held it a little closer, and drew the child affectionately to his side, keeping her there while he talked with Mrs. Sandford upon other subjects; for he said no more about Melbourne. Still while he talked he kept his arm round Daisy, and when tea was brought he hardly let her go. But tea was not much more to Daisy than dinner had been; and when Mrs. Sandford offered to show her to her room if she desired it, Daisy accepted the offer at once.

Mrs. Sandford herself wished to supply the place of June, and would have done everything for her little guest if she could have been permitted. Daisy negatived all such proposals. She could do everything for herself, she said; she wanted no help. A bag of things had been packed for her by June and brought in the doctor's gig. Daisy was somehow sorry to see them; they looked like preparations for staying.

"We will send for June to-morrow, Daisy, if your mamma will leave you still with me."

"Oh, I shall go home to-morrow I hope," said Daisy. "I hope " she repeated, humbly.

"Yes, I hope so," said Mrs. Sandford. She kissed Daisy and went away. It was all Daisy wanted, to be alone. The October night was mild; she went to the window; one of the windows, which looked out upon the grass and trees of the courtyard, now lighted by a faint moon. Daisy sunk down on her knees there; the sky and the stars were more homelike than anything else; and she felt so strange, so miserable, as her little heart had never known anything like before. She knew well enough what it all meant, her mother's sending her away from home, her father's not being able to bear any disturbance. Speak as lightly, look as calmly as they would, she knew what was the meaning underneath people's faces and voices. Her father had been very much hurt; quite well Daisy was assured of that. He was too ill to see her, or too ill for her mother to like her to see him. Daisy knelt down; she remembered she had a Father in heaven, but it seemed at first as if she was too broken-hearted to pray. Yet down there, through the still moonlight, she remembered His eye could see her, and she knew He had not forgotten His little child. Daisy never heard her door open; but it did once, and some time after it did again.

"I do not know what to do " said Mrs. Sandford, downstairs. There the lamps made a second bright day; and the two gentlemen were busy over the table with newspapers and books.

Both of them looked up, at the sound of her perplexed voice.

"That child, " said Mrs. Sandford. "She is not in bed yet."

The lady stood by the table; she had just come from Daisy's room.

"What is she doing?" her husband asked.

"I don't know. She is kneeling by the open window. She was there an hour ago, and she is there yet. She has not moved since."

"She has fallen asleep " suggested Mr. Sandford. "I should say, wake her up."

"She is too wide awake now. She is lifting her little face to the sky, in a way that breaks my heart. And there she has been, this hour and more."

"Have some supper directly, and call her down, " was the second suggestion of the master of the house. "It will be supper-time soon. Here it's some time after nine."

"Grant, what is the matter with Mr. Randolph? Is it very serious?"

"Mrs. Randolph thinks so, I believe. Have you spoken to Daisy?"

"No, and I cannot. Unless I had good news to carry to her."

"Where is she?" said the doctor, getting up.

"In the room next to yours."

So Mrs. Sandford sat down and the doctor went up stairs. The next thing, he stood behind Daisy at her window. She was not gazing into the sky now; the little round head lay on her arms on the window-sill.

"What is going on here?" said a soft voice behind her.

"Oh! Dr. Sandford " said the child, jumping up. She turned and faced her friend, with a face so wistful and searching, so patient, yet so strained with its self-restraint and fear, that the doctor felt it was something serious with which he had to do. He did not attempt a light tone before that little face; he felt that it would not pass.

"I came up to see *you*," he said. "I have nothing new to tell, Daisy. What are you about?"

"Dr. Sandford," said the child, "won't you tell me a little?"

The inquiry was piteous. For some reason or other, the doctor did not answer it with a put-off, nor with flattering words, as doctors are so apt to do. Perhaps it was not his habit, but certainly in other respects he was not too good a man to do it. He sat down and let the moonlight show Daisy his face.

"Daisy," he said, "your father was stunned by his blow, and needs to be kept in perfect quiet for a time, until he is quite over it. People after such a fall often do; but I do not know that any other consequences whatever will follow."

"He was stunned " repeated Daisy.

"Yes."

The child did not say any more, yet her eyes of searching eagerness plainly asked for fuller information. They were not content nor at rest.

"Can't you have patience, and hope for other tidings tomorrow?"

"May I? " said Daisy.

"May you? Certainly. It was your mother's wish to send you here not mine. It was not needful; though if you could be

content, I think it would be well."

She looked a little relieved; very little.

"Now what are you doing? Am I to have two patients on my hand in your family?"

"No, sir."

"What are you doing then, up so late? Watching the stars?"

"No, sir."

"I am your physician you know you must tell me everything, What were you about, Daisy?"

"Dr. Sandford," said Daisy, in difficulty how to speak, "I was seeking comfort."

And with the word, somehow, Daisy's self-restraint failed; her head went down on the doctor's shoulder; and when she lifted it up there were two or three tears that needed to be brushed away. No more; but the doctor felt the slight little frame tremble.

"Did you find comfort, Daisy?" he said, kindly. "I ask as your physician; because if you are using wrong measures for that end I shall forbid them. What were you doing to get comfort?"

"I did not want to go to sleep, sir."

"Daisy, I am going to carry you down to have some supper."

"Oh, I do not want any, Dr. Sandford!"

"Are you ready to go down?"

"No sir in a minute, I only want to brush my hair."

"Brush it, then."

Which Daisy did; then coming to her friend with a face as smoothly in order as the little round head, she repeated humbly, "I do not want anything, Dr. Sandford."

"Shall I carry you down?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"Come then. One way or the other. And Daisy, when we are down stairs, and when you come up again, you must obey my orders."

The supper-table was laid. Mrs. Sandford expressed delight at seeing Daisy come in, but it would maybe have been of little avail had her kindness been the only force at work. It was not. The doctor prescribed peaches and bread, and gave Daisy grapes, and a little bit of cold chicken; and was very kind, and very imperative too; and Daisy did not dare nor like to disobey him. She eat the supper, which tasted good when he made her eat it; and then was dismissed up stairs to bed, with orders to go straight to sleep. And Daisy did as she was told.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SOMETHING WRONG.

The doctor's horse was before the door, and Daisy was on the piazza. The doctor came out, ready for his day's work.

"Do you want me to do anything for you at Melbourne, Daisy?"

"Cannot I go home to-day, Dr. Sandford?"

"I do not know. Supposing that you be still kept in banishment what then?"

Daisy struggled with herself succeeded, and spoke calmly. "I should like to have Loupe sent, Dr. Sandford, if you please."

"Loupe? what is that? What is Loupe, Daisy?"

"My pony, sir. My pony-chaise."

"Oh! Not to drive to Melbourne?"

Daisy met the doctor's blue eye full, and answered with guileless submission.

"No, sir."

"I will send Loupe. By the way Daisy, have you business on hand?"

"Yes, sir."

"So much that you can do none for me?"

"Oh, no, sir. I have not a great deal of business. What may I do, Dr. Sandford?"

"Can you go to Crum Elbow?"

"Yes, sir. I have got to go there."

"All right, then. Daisy, there is a poor family down by the railway that were burnt out a night or two ago; they have lost everything. The neighbours will have to supply them with a few things. Will you go to the village and buy clothing for two little children, six and seven years old? One is a girl, the other a boy."

The doctor took out his pocket-book and began to look over bank bills.

"Dresses, do you mean, Dr. Sandford? and a boy's dress?"

"I mean, everything they need to put on dresses and petticoats, and jacket and trousers, and a shirt or two for the boy. Here is money, Daisy; spend whatever you find needful."

"But, Dr. Sandford "

"Well?"

"I don't believe Mr. Lamb keeps those things ready made."

"I am sure he does not. Buy the stuff, Daisy all the stuff we will see about getting it made afterwards. You can consult my sister, Mrs. Sandford, about quantities and all that; or I dare say the storekeeper can tell you."

So away went the doctor. Daisy felt in great need of consulting somebody; but Mrs. Sandford was busy, and so engaged that there was no chance for several hours. Not indeed before the pony chaise came; and Daisy resolved then to wait no longer, but to do some other business first.

The news that she eagerly asked for from Melbourne was not much when she got it. Sam knew little; he believed Mr. Randolph was better, he said; but his tone of voice was not very encouraging, and Daisy drove off to Juanita's cottage. There was one person, she knew, who could feel with her; and she went with a sort of eagerness up the grassy pathway from the road to the cottage door, to get that sympathy.

Juanita was within, busy at some ironing. The work fell from her hands, and the iron was set down with an expression of pleasure as she saw Daisy come in. The next minute her tone changed and her look.

"What ails my love?"

"Juanita " said Daisy, standing still and pale by the ironing table, "haven't you heard? Papa "

"What, Miss Daisy?"

"Papa he was knocked off his horse yesterday and they won't let me see *him!*"

So far Daisy's power of composure went, and no further. With that last word her voice failed. She threw her arms around Juanita, and hiding her face in her gown, burst into such tears as Daisy rarely shed at all; very rarely under any one's observation. Juanita, very much startled, sat down and drew the child into her arms, so far as she could; for Daisy had sunk on her knees, and with her face in Juanita's lap was weeping all her heart out. Mrs. Benoit hardly knew how to ask questions.

"Why must not Miss Daisy see her papa?"

"I don't know! I suppose he's not well enough."

Juanita breathed more freely.

"Let us pray for him, Miss Daisy."

"Oh, yes, Juanita, do!"

There was an intensity of meaning in these words and in Daisy's hurried assuming of another place and posture to leave Juanita free to kneel too, that almost took away the black woman's power of speech. She read what was breaking the child's heart; she knew what for was that suppressed cry of longing. For a moment Juanita was silent. But she had long known not only trouble but the Refuge from trouble; and to that Refuge she now went, and carried Daisy. As one goes who has often been there; who has many a time proved it a sure Refuge; who knows it sure and safe and unfailling. So she prayed; while Daisy's sobs at first were excessive, and then by degrees calmed and quieted and ceased. They were quite still before Juanita finished; and when they rose up from their knees Daisy's face was composed again. Then she came and stood with her hand on Juanita's shoulder, both of them silent; till Daisy put her lips to the fine olive-dark cheek of the old woman and kissed it. Juanita drew her into her arms, and Daisy sat there, nestling and tired.

"Can Miss Daisy trust the Lord?"

"Trust Him, how, Juanita."

"That He do no harm to His little child."

"Oh, it isn't *me*, Juanita " Daisy said, with a very tender and sad accent.

"When Joseph my love knows the story when he was sold away from his father and home, to be servant of strangers far off maybe he thought it was hard times. But the Lord meant it for good, and the father and the child came together again, in a happy day."

Daisy rose up, or rather raised her head, and looked steadily in her friend's face as if to see what this might mean.

"The Lord knoweth them that trust in Him," said the black woman.

Daisy's head went down again; and there was a long silence. It was broken at last by Juanita's offering her some refreshment; and then Daisy started up to the business on hand. She explained to Juanita where she was staying, and what she had that morning to do. Meanwhile Juanita made her take some bread and milk.

"So how much must I get, Juanita? can you tell me? how much for two little frocks, and two little petticoats, and one suit of boy's clothes?"

"My love knows, it must be accordin' to the stuff. If the stuff narrow, she want more; if wide, she want less."

"Then you cannot tell me; and Mrs. Sandford could not either. And I cannot tell. What shall I do?"

"Mrs. Sandford maybe get the things for Miss Daisy."

"No, she must not. Dr. Sandford wants me to do it. I must get them, Juanita."

"H'm! Suppose I put up my irons and walk round to the village

and Miss Daisy go in her shay."

"To the store!" cried Daisy. "Oh, yes, Juanita; get ready, and I will take you with me. Then you can tell me all about it."

Juanita demurred and objected to this proposal, but Daisy was greatly pleased and would have it so. Mrs. Benoit put up her ironing work, and arrayed her head in a new clean bright handkerchief, wonderfully put on; she was ready then; and Sam grinned to see the tall fine figure of the old coloured woman sitting in the pony-chaise by the side of his little mistress. It was as good to Daisy as anything could have been, that day. They drove into Crum Elbow, went to the store; and there she and Juanita had a pretty large morning's business in choosing the various goods Dr. Sandford had desired Daisy to get. Daisy got excited over it. Calico for a little frock, and muslin for the underclothes, and stuff for the boy's jacket and trousers and shirt; Juanita knew the quantities necessary, and Daisy had only the trouble of choice and judgment of various kinds. But that was a great responsibility, seeing she was doing it for Dr. Sandford. It took a good while. Then Daisy drove Juanita home again, gave her another kiss, and with her carriage load of dry goods, and a tired and hungry little body, went home to Mrs. Sandford's.

It was then pretty late in the day, and the doctor not come in. Daisy dressed, and went down to the drawing-room to wait for him. Not long this time. There was a certain air of calm strength about Dr. Sandford's face and cool blue eye, that Daisy loved; she felt she loved it now, as she saw him come in; she trusted him. He spoke first to his brother and sister; then came where Daisy was standing, sat down on the sofa and placed her beside him.

"I have no bad news for you, Daisy," he said, kindly, "and not the good news neither that you are looking for. Your father is no worse, though it will require several days to let him recover from the immediate effects of his accident. The quieter he is meanwhile the better."

"And mamma she said? "

"She said yes, you have guessed it; she would like to have you remain here for a few days longer. She thinks you are better under my care than under hers."

"Under *my* care, I think it is," said Mrs. Sandford.

"Can you bear it, Daisy?"

She looked up meekly, and answered, "Yes, Dr. Sandford." So meekly that the doctor's eye took special note of her.

"Have you been to Crum Elbow to-day?"

"Yes, sir. I got all the things."

"All of them?"

"Yes, sir."

"What reward shall I give you?"

She had been speaking with a sad meekness, a sober self-restraint, unlike her years. If Dr. Sandford meant to break it up, which I think he did, he had partial success. Daisy looked up and smiled at him. But yet it was a meek smile, and sad even in its composed denial of any notion of reward. Not satisfactory to the doctor.

"I always repay anybody that does me any service," he went on.

"Ought one always to do that?" said Daisy.

"What is your judgment?"

"I think *everybody* could not."

"Why not?"

"Some people have nothing to pay with, for things that are done for them."

"I do not believe that."

"Some people, Dr. Sandford?"

"Whom do you know in that condition for instance?"

"Why, I for instance."

"You! What cannot you pay for?"

"A great many things," said Daisy, slowly. "Hardly anything. I am only a child."

"How is it about Molly Skelton? Does she pay you for the various attentions she receives from you?"

"Pay me, Dr. Sandford! I do not want pay."

"You are very unlike me, then," said the doctor; "that is all I have to say."

"Why, Dr. Sandford, what pay could she give me?"

"Don't you get any, then?"

"Why, no, sir," said Daisy, eagerly answering the doctor's blue eye. "Except yes, of course, I get a sort of pay; but Molly does not yes she does give it to me; but I mean, she does not mean to pay me."

The doctor smiled, one of those rare pleasant smiles, that showed his white teeth in a way that Daisy liked; it was only a glimmer.

"What sort of pay is that? which she gives, and does not mean to give, and you take and do not ask for?"

"Oh! *that* sort of pay!" said Daisy. "Is it that sort you mean, Dr. Sandford?"

"That is one sort."

"But I mean, is it the sort that you always give, you say?"

"Always, when people deserve it. And then, do you not think it is natural to wish to give them, if you can, some other sort of pay?"

"I think it is," said Daisy, sedately.

"I am glad you do not disapprove of it."

"But I do not think people *want* that other kind of pay, Dr. Sandford."

"Perhaps not. I suppose it is a selfish gratification of oneself to give it."

Daisy looked so earnestly and so curiously at him, as if to see what all this was about, that the doctor must have had good command of his lips not to smile again.

They went in to dinner just then and the conversation stopped. But though not talked to, Daisy was looked after; and when she had forgotten all about dinner, and was thinking mournfully of what was going on at home, a slice of roast beef or a nice peach would come on her plate with a word from the doctor "You are to eat that, Daisy" and though he said no more, somehow Daisy always chose to obey him. At last they went into the drawing-room again, and were drinking coffee. Daisy was somewhat comforted; she thought Dr. Sandford did not act as if there were anything very dreadful the matter at home.

"Daisy," said the doctor, "you have done work for me to-day would you object to be paid?"

Daisy looked up smiling; it depended on what the pay might be, she thought; but she said nothing.

"Would it be violently against your principles?"

"I do not want pay, Dr. Sandford."

"Not if I were to offer to give you a sight of those little baskets on the frond of the Marchantia?"

Daisy's face all changed; but she said in the quietest manner,
"Can you do that, Dr. Sandford?"

"Come with me."

He held out his hand, which Daisy willingly took, and they went upstairs together. Just short of her room the doctor stopped, and turned into his own. This was a very plain apartment; there was no beauty of furniture, though it struck Daisy there was a great deal of something. There were boxes, and cabinets, and shelves full of books and boxes, and book-cases, and one or two tables. Yet it was not a pretty-looking room, like the others in Mrs. Sandford's house. Daisy was a little disappointed. The doctor, however, gave her a chair, and then brought one of the unlikely deal boxes to the table and opened it. Daisy forgot everything. There appeared a polished, very odd brass machine, which the doctor took out and spent some time in adjusting. Daisy patiently looked on.

"Do you know what this is, Daisy?"

"No, sir."

"It is a microscope. And looking through this, you will see what you could not see with your two eyes alone; there are some strong magnifying glasses here and I found to-day some plants of Marchantia growing in a sheltered place. Here is one of the baskets for you "

"Is it on that bit of green leaf?"

"Yes, but you can see nothing there. Try this view."

He stood back and helped Daisy to take a kneeling position in her chair, so that her eye could reach the eye-piece of the microscope. Daisy looked, took her eye away to give a wondering glance of inquiry at her friend's face, and then applied it to the microscope again; a pink hue of delight actually spreading over her poor little pale cheeks. It was so beautiful, so wonderful. Again Daisy took her eye away to examine out of the glass the coarse little bit of green leaf that lay upon the stand; and looked back at the show in the microscope with a bewitched mind. It seemed as if she could never weary of looking from one to the other. The doctor bade her take her own time, and Daisy took a good deal.

"What stuffs did you buy this morning?" the doctor asked.

Daisy drew back from the microscope.

"I got all you told me, sir?"

"Exactly. I forget what that was."

"I bought a little piece of red and green linsey-woolsey for a frock for the little girl and some brown strong stuff for the boy's suit; and then white muslin to make things for the girl, and blue check for the boy's shirt."

"Just right. Did your money hold out?"

"Oh, I had three dollars and two shillings left, Dr. Sandford.
Two shillings and sixpence, I believe."

"You did well." The doctor was arranging something else in the microscope. He had taken out the bit of liverwort.

"I had Juanita to help me," said Daisy.

"How do you suppose I am going to get all those things made up?" said the doctor.

"Won't Mrs. Sandford attend to it?"

"Mrs. Sandford has her own contribution to attend to. I do not wish to give her mine too."

"Cannot the children's mother make the things?"

The doctor's lip curled in funny fashion.

"They have no mother, I think. There is an old aunt, or grandmother, or something, that does *not* take care of the children. I shall not trust the business certainly to her."

Daisy wondered a little that Mrs. Sandford, who was so good-natured, could not do what was needful; but she said nothing.

"I think I shall turn over the whole thing in charge to you, Daisy."

"But, Dr. Sandford, what can *I* do?"

"Drive down with me to-morrow and see how big the children are, and then have the things made."

"But I am afraid I do not know enough."

"I dare say you can find out. *I* do not know enough that is very certain; and I have other things to attend to besides overseeing mantua-makers."

"Our seamstress could do it, if I could see her."

"Very well, then some other seamstress can. Now, Daisy you may look at this."

"What a beautiful thing! But what is it, Dr. Sandford?"

"What does it look like?"

"It does not look like anything that I ever saw."

"It is a scale from a butterfly's wing."

"Why, it is as large as a small butterfly," said Daisy.

The doctor showed her where the little scale lay, so little that she could hardly see it out of the glass; and Daisy went back to the contemplation of its magnified beauty with immense admiration. Then her friend let her see the eye of a bee, and the tongue of a fly, and divers other wonders, which kept Daisy busy until an hour which was late for her. Busy and delightfully amused.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BREAKING UP.

One day passed after another, and Daisy looked longingly for her summons home, and still she did not receive it. Her fears and agonies were somewhat quieted; because Dr. Sandford assured her that her father was getting better; but he never said that her father was well, or that he had not been very ill. Daisy knew that the matter had been very serious that had prevented her being at Melbourne all these days. Her imaginings of evil were doubtful and dim; but it seemed to her that her father himself would have commanded her presence in all ordinary circumstances; and a doubt like an ice-wind sometimes swept over her little spirit, whether he could be too ill to know of her absence! No word that could be said would entirely comfort Daisy while this state of things lasted; and it was very well for her that she had a wise and energetic friend watching over her welfare, in the meanwhile. If business could keep her from pining and hinder her from too much imagining, Dr. Sandford took care that she had it. He contrived that she should indeed oversee the making of the dresses for the poor children, and it was a very great charge for Daisy. A great responsibility; it lay on her mind for days, and gave occasion for a number of drives to Crum Elbow and to Juanita's cottage. Then at evening, after hearing her report progress, the doctor would take Daisy up to his room and show her many a wonder and beauty that little Daisy had never dreamed of before; and the friendship between the two grew closer than ever.

"Grant, you are a good fellow!" said Mrs. Sandford one night. "I do not know what I should do with that child, if it were not for you."

"You would do nothing. She would not be here if it were not for me."

"I do not suppose, however, that your care for her is dictated by a conscientious regard for that fact. It is good of you."

"She is my patient, Mrs. Sandford."

"Yes, yes; impatient would be the word with some young men."

"I am glad you do not class me with such young men."

"Well, no child ever gave less cause for impatience, I will say that. Nor had more. Poor child! How she looks at you every day when you come home! But I suppose you doctors get hard hearts."

Dr. Sandford's lips curled a little into one of the smiles that Daisy liked, but he said nothing.

Daisy did look hard at her friend those days, but it was only when he came home. So she was not expecting anything the next morning when he said to her, "Daisy will you take a ride with me?"

Daisy looked up. The doctor was sitting by the breakfast-table, poring over a newspaper. Breakfast was done, and Daisy herself busy with a book. So she only answered, "If you please, Dr. Sandford."

"Where shall we go?"

Daisy looked surprised. "I supposed you had business, sir."

"So I have. I am going to visit a patient. Perhaps you would like to make the visit with me."

"To one of your patients, Dr. Sandford?"

"Yes, one. Not more than one. But I think that one would like to see you."

A light came into Daisy's face, and colour started upon her cheeks, almost painfully.

"Dr. Sandford do you mean?"

"I think so, Daisy," said her friend, quietly. "It will do no harm, if you are a good child."

He was so quiet, that it stilled Daisy's feeling, which else might have been impetuous. There was danger of that, as the child's eye and cheek bore witness. But she only said, "I'll get ready, Dr. Sandford" and went off in orderly style till she reached the hall, and was out of sight. Then Daisy's feet made haste up the stairs. In three minutes she was back again, with her hat and gloves in her hand.

The doctor threw down his newspaper and drew her up to him.

"Daisy, can you be quiet?"

"I think so, Dr. Sandford."

"I think so too; therefore I tell you beforehand that I wish it. Your father has not fully recovered his strength yet; and it would not be good for him to be excited. You will be very glad to see him, and he will be very glad to see you; that is quite enough; and it would be too much, if you were to show him how glad you are."

Daisy said nothing, but she thought within herself she could not do that!

"Can you command yourself, Daisy?"

"I will try, Dr. Sandford."

"You *must* do it for my sake," added the doctor.

"Dr. Sandford," said Daisy, "was that what you meant?"

"When?"

"When you said, if I was a good child?"

"It must have been that I meant, I think. I could have said it in no other connection."

"The pony-chaise, ma'am, for Miss Randolph " said a servant at the door.

"The chaise may go away again, Daisy, I suppose," said Mrs. Sandford. "You will not want it."

"Yes, she will," said the doctor, "to drive to Melbourne. Go, Daisy, since you are ready; I will follow you. That little waddling fellow can be overtaken without any great difficulty."

"Do you want me to drive slowly, sir?"

"Not at all," said the doctor; "only drive well, for I shall come and see."

If ever a little pride in her driving accomplishments had lodged in Daisy's mind, she certainly did not feel it that afternoon. She drove without knowing very well how she drove; she did not think of Dr. Sandford's criticism, or admiration; what she thought of, was the miles of the road to Melbourne.

They were not very many, and unconsciously the eager spirit in Daisy's fingers made itself known to Loupe's understanding, through the medium of the reins. He travelled better than usual, so that they were not more than half way from Melbourne when the doctor's gig overtook them. And then Loupe went better yet.

"Remember, Daisy, and keep quiet " said the doctor, as he took her out of the chaise. Daisy trembled, but she followed him steadily through the hall and up the stairs, and into her father's room. Then she went before him, yet even then she went with a moderated step, and stood by her father's couch at last, silent and breathless. Breathless with the very effort she made to keep silent and quiet. With excitement too; for Mr. Randolph was looking feeble and pale, more than Daisy had ever seen him, and it frightened her. He was not in bed, but on a sofa; and as Daisy came to his side he put out his arm and drew his little daughter close to him. Without a word at first and Daisy stooped her lips to his, and then stood hiding her face on his shoulder; perfectly quiet, though trembling with contained emotion, and not daring to say anything, lest she should say too much.

"Daisy," said her father, "Daisy, do you know I have been ill?"

There was a little, little tone of surprise or disappointment in the voice. Daisy felt it, knew it, but what could she do? She was afraid to speak, to say anything. She turned her face a little to Dr. Sandford; he saw an agony struggling in the eye that appealed to him. This was not what he wanted.

"She knows it almost too well," he said, coming to the rescue; "I have been her gaoler all these days; a severe one."

"Are you glad to see me, Daisy?" said Mr. Randolph.

Daisy half raised herself, half glanced at his face, and turning from him threw herself upon Dr. Sandford's arm with a cry, and gave way to a deep passion of weeping. Deep and still; her sobs could not but be heard, but they were kept under as much as the heaving of that little breast could bear. Mr. Randolph's pale face flushed; and the doctor saw that his precautions had been too good.

"Why, Daisy!" he said, lightly, "is this your self-command?"

"Let me have her " said Mr. Randolph. "Self-command is a good thing, doctor; but people may have too much of it."

And getting hold of Daisy's hand, which the doctor brought within his reach, he again drew the sobbing child to his breast and folded her close in both his arms. The sobs were very soon hushed; but during all the rest of the doctor's visit, and through all the conversation that took place, Daisy and her father never changed their position. The conversation indeed was not much, being confined to a few quiet questions and answers and remarks; and then Dr. Sandford took his departure, leaving Daisy very unconscious of his movements. He only waved his hand to Mr. Randolph, with a smile at Daisy who did not see him.

"Daisy my darling " said Mr. Randolph, when he was gone.

"Papa! " came in a whisper.

"What is the matter?"

Daisy lifted her face from its resting-place and kissed, with kisses that were like velvet, first one side of her father's mouth, and then the other.

"Papa Dr. Sandford told me I must keep quiet."

"Well, you shall," said Mr. Randolph. "That is right enough. You shall keep quiet, and I will go to sleep."

So he did. But he did not loose his hold of Daisy; and she lay, still as happiness could make her, with her head upon his breast. She knew, she was conscious, that he must be very feeble yet, to go to sleep in that way; but she was with him again, and in his arms, and her heart was so full of joy that it could do nothing but overflow in silent thanksgivings and prayers. Daisy would not have stirred till he did, no matter how long it might have been; but there came an interruption. A door opened, and Mrs. Randolph appeared on the threshold, and so soon as she saw Daisy, beckoned her to come to another room. Mr. Randolph's arms had relaxed their hold somewhat, and Daisy obeyed the signal, and left him.

Her mother wanted then to know all the story of her days at Mrs. Sandford's; and Daisy had a good deal to tell. That is, Mrs. Randolph's questionings made it so. Daisy herself would not have had it a long story. Then she must see June, and Joanna; and then came dinner. It was not till the afternoon was well passed that the call came for her to go to her father again. Daisy had watched and waited for it; her mother had forbidden her to go in without it. At last she was sent for, and Daisy sprang away.

Mrs. Randolph was there.

"No noise! remember," she said, lifting her finger as Daisy came in. Daisy came near slowly. Her father held out his hand to her, and folded her in his arms again.

"You are such a noisy child!" he said, "your mother does wisely to warn you."

"She is an excitable child," said Mrs. Randolph; "and I think you want warning too."

"We will keep each other quiet," said Mr. Randolph.

The lady looked on, with what seemed a doubtful eye. Nobody watched it. Her husband's eyes were often closed; Daisy's little head lay on his breast, quiet enough, unless when she moved it to give soft noiseless kisses to her father's cheek. They remained so a good while, with scarce any word spoken; and Mrs. Randolph was busy at her tetting. The light faded; the evening drew on.

"It is time for Daisy's tea." It was the first thing that broke a long silence.

"She and I will have it together," said Mr. Randolph.

"Will that be best for you, Mr. Randolph?"

"I hope so."

"I doubt it."

"Most things in this world are doubtful," said Mr. Randolph; "but we will try."

"Will you choose to have tea now, then?"

"Now? no."

"This is Daisy's time."

"Very well. She must wait for my time."

Not a word did Daisy say; only little alternate throbs of joy and fear, as her father or her mother spoke, passed through her heart. Mrs. Randolph gave it up; and there was another hour of quiet, very sweet to Daisy. Then lights were brought, and again Mrs. Randolph proposed to have the tea served; but again Mr. Randolph negatived her proposal; and things remained as they were. At last Mrs. Randolph was summoned to preside at the tea-table downstairs; for even now there were one or two guests at Melboume. Then there was a stir in the room upstairs. The tray came with Mr. Randolph's supper; and Daisy had the delight of sharing it, and of being his attendant in chief. He let her do what

she would; and without being unquiet, Daisy and her father enjoyed themselves over that entertainment.

"Now I think I could bear a little reading," said Mr. Randolph, as he laid his head back on his couch.

"What, papa?" said Daisy, a sudden hope starting into some dark corner of her heart, almost without her knowing it.

"What? what you please."

"Shall I read what I like, papa?"

"Yes. If I do not like it, I will tell you."

Daisy ran away and flew through the rooms to her own, and there hastily sought her Bible. She could not wait to get another; she took her own and ran back softly with it. Her father's languid eye watched the little white figure coming towards him, book in hand; the gentle, eager step, the slight flush on the cheek; till she took her seat beside him.

"What have you got there, Daisy?" he asked.

"Papa my Bible."

"Well what are you going to read?"

"I don't know, papa " said Daisy, doubtfully. What would come next?

"Do you remember your picture, the 'Game of Life'?"

"Yes, papa."

"Do you remember your talk about good and evil spirits?"

"Yes, sir."

"Find me the grounds of your philosophy."

Daisy thought what that might mean, and guessed at it. She turned to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, a favourite chapter, and read the parable of the sheep and the goats. The servant had withdrawn; Daisy and her father were alone. There was a moment's pause when she had done.

"Is that all?" said Mr. Randolph.

"That is all of *this*, papa."

"There is nothing there about the rejoicings of the good spirits," said Mr. Randolph.

Daisy's fingers trembled, she hardly knew why, as she turned over the leaves to find the place. Her father watched her.

"Are you sure it is there, Daisy?"

"Oh, yes, papa it is in the story of the man with a hundred sheep I will find it directly."

So she did, and read the parable in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. Her father listened with shut eyes, while the child's voice gave the words in a sort of sweet clear gravity.

"Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, in he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had

lost. Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.' "

There Daisy stopped, and there was silence. Presently her father opened his eyes. He saw that hers were full, but they were not looking at her book, neither at him; they were gazing away at the light, with an intent, very serious expression.

"Daisy! " said her father.

She came back instantly to a sweet happy look at him.

"What were you studying?"

"Papa! I was thinking "

"What were you thinking."

"I was thinking, papa," said Daisy, unwillingly, "how strange it is that anybody should try to *hide himself from God*."

She started a little and rose up, for her mother stood on the other side of the light now. Mrs. Randolph's voice was a note belonging to another chord.

"Daisy, it is your bedtime."

"Yes, mamma."

Mr. Randolph made no attempt to hinder his wife's arrangements this time. Daisy exchanged a very tender good-night with him and then went away. But she went away very happy. She thought she saw good days coming.

There were good days that followed that one, for a while. Daisy's readings and sweet companionship with her father were constant, and grew sweeter as he grew stronger. But the strengthening process was not rapid. About a fortnight had passed, when Mrs. Sandford one day made enquiry about it of her brother-in-law.

"Slow work " said the doctor.

"He will get over it, won't he?"

"I hope he will."

"But cannot anything be done for him, Grant?"

"He is going to do the best thing. He is going to Europe."

"To Europe! This winter?"

"Now, in a few weeks, or less."

"It will be good for your pet Daisy."

"Doubtfully " said the doctor, with a very complicated expression of face; but he was taking off his boot at the moment, and maybe it pinched him. "She will not go."

"Not go! Daisy! Does not her mother go?"

"Yes."

"And not Daisy? Why not Daisy."

"She gives so much trouble " said the doctor.

"Trouble! I thought her parents were so fond of her."

"Mr. Randolph is unequal to any agitation; and Mrs. Randolph regulates everything."

"But wouldn't it be good for Daisy?"

"I think so."

"Poor child! What will they do with her?"

"Send her to a Southern plantation, under care of a governess, as I understand."

"It will half kill Daisy," said Mrs. Sandford.

"It takes a great deal to kill people," said the doctor.

"I do not know how to believe you," said the lady. "Is it all fixed and settled, Grant?"

"They leave Melbourne next week."

THE END

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LONDON