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HERMIONE SKETCHING

THE FAIRY GODMOTHERS

AND OTHER TALES.

BY MRS. ALFRED GATTY.

Col miele, e non coll' aceto si piglian le mosche.

Italian Proverb.

London:
George Bell, 186, Fleet Street.

1851.

To My Children

These tales are most affectionately dedicated. They were written in hours of sickness, but are intended to be read by the healthy and joyous young: and to illustrate some favourite and long cherished convictions.

Margaret Gatty.

Ecclesfield Vicarage,
27th March, 1851.

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The design for the Frontispiece which adorns this volume is by the pencil of the writer's kind and highly gifted friend, Miss Lucette E. Barker.

THE FAIRY GODMOTHERS.

In one of the beautiful bays on the coast of Fairy Land, a party of Fairies was assembled on a lovely evening in July. There are many beautiful bays on the coast of England, and there is one especially, my dear little readers, which you and I know of, where a long line of grand old rocks stretches far into the sea on the left-hand extremity, while in the distance to the right a warning lighthouse with its changing lights gives an almost solemn beauty to the scene; for one cannot help thinking, at the sight of it, of the poor storm-driven mariner, whom even that friendly light may fail to save from a sad and sudden death. But beautiful as this little bay is, of which I speak, and fond as we are of it, it is nothing, I do assure you, compared to the bays in Fairy Land! There, there are no light-houses reminding one painfully of danger and destruction near, but all is loveliness and peace; and even the rocks would be turned into soft pillows by the good-natured Fairies who inhabit the country, should any strange accident drive a mortal ship on that shore.

Also the bays in Fairy Land face to the west, which is a great advantage, for in an evening there you may sit and watch the golden sun dipping behind the waves; and the rich red tints he sends out upon the rocks before he sets, are beyond measure beautiful and attractive. Especially, I believe, the Fairies enjoy this time of day, for they are odd little creatures, rather conceited, and fond of everything pretty; consequently they like to be floating about the rocks in their white

dresses when the crimson and golden hues of sunset shine on them, knowing very well they look like so many bright flowers on the occasion.

The day I speak of however had been very hot, and at the time I speak of, the Fairies felt a little lazy and were reclining on some rocks covered with sea-weed and amusing themselves by talking. In general the conversation of these little creatures is rather light and frivolous and gay; but it is really a fact that they were just then all serious together and all were engaged in a very profound conversation on human happiness.

I am sorry to have so many explanations to give, but I think it quite necessary to tell you the reason of so uncommon an event as a party of Fairies being serious. Well then, there were going to be, very shortly, several extremely gay christenings in the world, and some of the Fairies had been invited to attend at them as Godmothers, in order that they might bestow Fairy gifts on the different infants.

Four or five of the christenings were to take place the next day, and the Fairies who were going were discussing with each other what gifts they should bestow, and as their only object was to ensure the happiness of the children for whom they were interested, they naturally fell into a discourse as to what gifts were most likely to have so charming an effect. "Your Godchild is a girl too, I believe," said Euphrosyne to Ianthe [Fairies are privileged, you know, to have romantic names] "what do you think of bestowing upon her?" "Why," answered Ianthe, "the old story, I suppose—BEAUTY: at least such was my intention, but if you can any of you show me I am wrong in supposing it a cause of happiness to the mortal race, why, I suppose I must give her ugliness instead."

"Sister, I hope you will do no such thing," murmured a young Fairy who lay near twining seaweeds into a wreath. "I never until this evening heard a doubt upon the subject, and to tell you the truth the only time I ever envy a mortal is when I see a regular beauty enter a large assembly. Oh, the triumph of that moment! Every eye turned upon her; murmurs of admiration, not unmixed with envy, greeting her as she sweeps along; everyone courting her acquaintance; a word, a smile of hers more valued than a pearl or a ruby. A sort of queen of Nature's own making, reigning royally in undisputed sway, let her circumstances of life be what they may! Look how mean the richest woman who is ugly looks by the side of her! No no, dear Ianthe, make your little lady handsome, and you have done the best that Fairy can do for her. I declare I envy her beforehand! Here where we are all so beautiful together there is no interest or excitement about it—it is quite flat." And so saying the young fairy Leila laid herself down to her wreath again. "Why, Leila, you are absolutely eloquent!" observed Ianthe, "Beauty it certainly must be."

"Oh, I declare," pursued Ianthe, rousing up again, "I have sometimes really wished myself ugly, that I might some day have the pleasure of suddenly finding myself beautiful!"

"Oh, but then," said a Fairy from behind, "is there no danger of your regular beauty, as you call her, getting as tired of being beautiful as you are, and wishing herself ugly too?"

"Certainly, not," answered Ianthe, "for, for an earthly beauty there would always be the excitement of being envied."

"Come, come," persisted the former speaker, "then the gift of being envied would be the best thing to bestow, at all events a necessary addition."

"Oh," cried Leila, stopping her ears, "I can't argue, I never could—I can't hear any more, I am quite satisfied that I am right; you can't argue away the pleasure of being a beauty in a ball-room. Ask any of them themselves."

"Well," said Ianthe, "we need pursue the subject no further. I am resolved. My baby is to be beautiful, beautiful as the dawn of the morning; they shall call her Aurora!"

"I shall not follow your example," observed Euphrosyne, "I don't at all like that notion of the necessity of **envy** to make the beauty's joy complete. Besides, I'm not at all sure beauty is not much more charming in idea than in possession. Nobody spend their lives in entering a ball-room, and one gets sadly tired of one's own face. I'm sure **I** do, beautiful as it is;" and as she spoke the Fairy stooped over a clear tide pool which mirrored her lovely countenance; "and yet look what a nose I have! It is absolutely exquisite! And this hair!" and she held up her long silken curling tresses and looked at them reflected in the water as she spoke. A musical laugh rang through the fairy group. Euphrosyne resumed her seat. "There isn't a mortal damsel in the world who would not go into raptures to resemble me," pursued she, "and yet—but, oh dear, I am getting quite prosy, and it is quite useless, for Ianthe has decided. I, on the contrary, am thinking of something far less romantic and interesting, but I suspect far more necessary to the happiness of mortals than beauty—I mean RICHES."

"Men are horribly fond of them, certainly," observed the Fairy from behind, whose name was Ambrosia. "I can't endure men on that very account. Look at the grubby wretched lives they lead in counting-houses and banks, and dreadful dingy holes and corners of great towns, where we wouldn't set the soles of our feet, and this for forty or fifty years, perhaps, in order that in the fifty-first, or perhaps later still, they may turn into butterflies for the little bit of life that is left to them. And such butterflies, too! not knowing what to do with their gay coats and fine wings when they get them at last."

"I think you are putting an extreme case," observed Euphrosyne. "Though the grubs themselves may not thoroughly enjoy the riches they have so laboriously acquired, their children or grandchildren may, and live at ease and enjoy them. I should not think of bestowing great riches on uneducated paupers. But it is another matter to give them to people whom education has refined, and who would know how to enjoy and employ them."

"I wonder," suggested a very little Fairy, scarcely grown to her full size, "why you don't just give your Godchildren moderate good health, and enough money to make them quite comfortable without puzzling them?"

"You are a complete Solomon," observed Euphrosyne, "but you must know, my dear, that moderate good health and a mere comfortable competency would hardly be considered Fairy gifts by our friends in the lower world. These things are, as it were, the absolute **necessities** of a happy life; they are the beef and mutton (to borrow an earthly simile) of the entertainment. Fairy gifts form the somewhat unnecessary (and questionably wholesome) second course, the sweets, the bonbons, the luscious luxuries of the repast.

"Very few, by comparison, get them. Very few infants you know have Fairy Godmothers, but we make it a rule that those who have, shall always be distinguished from the crowd. Other-wise our power would not be believed in. No, my little Aglaia, all our Godchildren start from the point you spoke of—'caeteris paribus,' as those dingy black lawyers say—all other things being equal—it is a question now of bestowing extra superfine Fairy gifts."

Aglaia tittered—"I know Sister Euphrosyne is thinking of the christening suppers, and the whipped creams, and the syllabubs!" and away she tripped to the other end of the bay, lest the older Fairies should scold her for impertinence.

"Certainly," pursued Euphrosyne, "I have a great contempt for riches myself. Bah! the idea of all the troublesome as well as wicked things men do in order that they may be able to keep a lumbering thing they call a carriage, to drive them round a dirty town. Just think of that one thing

alone! It is hardly credible." And Euphrosyne laid her head by the side of Leila's, and looked up into the deep blue sky.

"Remember," said Ambrosia, from behind, "it is a choice with poor mortals between heavy foot-walking, and the lumbering vehicles you talk of. Perhaps when their legs ache terribly, the carriages are not such bad things. We can hardly judge dispassionately in such a matter, we who can float and fly!" and the delicate Ambrosia, springing up, floated softly round the bay, and then returned smiling to her companions. "It made me almost ill to think of aching legs," observed she, "how I do pity the mortal race!"

"How pretty you looked as the sun shone golden upon your white robe," exclaimed Leila, "It was a sight for a mortal painter to die of!"

"A genius for painting would be a grand Fairy gift," observed Ianthe.

"Too doubtful of success," answered Euphrosyne, "and the Musician's power the same; besides musicians always die young and with exhausted minds. The art is too much for mortal nerves."

"Their atmosphere is too thick," said Leila. "How tired I am of your discussions! Let us sing! Whatever music may be to them, it is food to us."

Then all those beautiful Fairies arose and joining hands on the rocks they sang to the now dying Sun a chorus of Fairy Land! Now and then these ravishing melodies are permitted to reach to mortal ears: chiefly in dreams to the sick and sorrowful, for Fairies have great compassion on such, and allow them a distant taste of this, the most exquisite of their enjoyments.

There was no more discussion that night, nor did they argue much the next morning. There was the rising sun to welcome from the sleeping caves on the eastern side of their country, and the bath to be enjoyed, and their wings to plume, and sweet odours to gather from the early flowers; and the time passed so quickly, they only met to take a hurried leave. "We must understand each other however, before we separate," said Euphrosyne.

"Dear Ianthe, your Gift is Beauty?" "It is." "And mine is Riches," said Euphrosyne. "All the pleasures of life shall be at my Godchild's feet," said another Fairy, laughing. "If that will not ensure happiness, I know not what will." Ambrosia held back—"Your choice, dear Sister?" asked Euphrosyne.

"Come! we have no time to lose."

"It must remain a secret," was the reply. "Our discourse yesterday evening was so thoughtful, so sad, I could not sleep. I arose hours before you this morning, ere daylight streaked the sky. Dear Sisters, how shocked you will be to hear I wept; but now I have determined. If my gift succeed I will tell you all about it, or you shall guess it yourselves; for I now propose that our Fairy Gifts this year shall be a sort of experiment on human happiness. Let us from time to time visit in company our young charges, and let the result—that is, which of our Gifts is proved to confer the greatest amount of happiness, be written in the archives of our kingdom for the future benefit of the mortal race."

A murmur of approbation rose, sweet as the vibration of a harp-chord through the assembly.

There was no time for enquiry about the other gifts: the travelling Fairies arose and beat their gauzy wings upon the western breeze. A melodious rushing was just audible; the distant murmurs of the earthly sea the most resemble that sweet dream of sound. In a few moments the

departing sisters became invisible, and those who remained returned to float by the sea shore, or make sweet music in the bowers of their enchanted land.

Time is a very odd sort of thing, dear readers. We neither know whence it comes nor whither it goes;—nay we know nothing about it in fact except that there is one little moment of it called the present, which we have as it were in our hands to make use of—but beyond this we can give no account of, even that little moment. It is ours to use, but not to understand. There is one thing in the world, however, quite as wonderful, and quite as common, and that is, **the Wind**. Did it never strike you how strange it was that the strongest thing in the world should be **invisible**? The nice breezes we feel in summer and the roughest blasts we feel in winter in England are not so extremely strong you will say: but I am speaking, besides these, of the winds called hurricanes that arise in the West Indian Islands, and in other places in the world. These dreadful hurricanes have at times done as much mischief as earthquakes and lightning. They tear down the strongest trees, overthrow the firmest houses and spread ruin and desolation around, and yet this terrible power, so tremendous, and against which the cleverest contrivances can provide no defence, is as invisible as the great Maker of Heaven and Earth. How unbelieving many people would look if you told them of a dreadful creature that was coming to the world, which could be heard to roar, be felt to knock down every thing in its path—men, women and children, houses, churches, towers, castles, cities, and trees the most firmly rooted—and yet which you could never catch the faintest glimpse of, for it was always invisible, even when it roared the loudest! As invisible then, as when in its mildest moods, it, as it were, purred softly over the country like a cat. How the good people would laugh, and tell you you were very silly to believe in such a thing. Yet I think this is not at all an incorrect description of the great invisible Power WIND. Now the lesson we may learn from this is to be humble-minded; for since we live in the constant presence of a Power we cannot see, we ought to feel it is equally possible other Powers may exist of which our other senses cannot take cognizance. There is an old proverb—"Seeing is believing"—but you perceive, dear readers, we are forced to believe in the wind though we never see him at all.

To return to Time who is travelling fast on while I am rambling after the wind, he has puzzled the artists a good deal I should say, for with all their skill at representation they have never hit upon any better idea of him than an old Man with wings. An old man with wings! Can you fancy anything so unnatural! One can quite understand beautiful young Angels with wings. Youth and power and swiftness belong to them. Also Fairies with wings are quite comprehensible creatures; for one fancies them so light and airy and transparent, living upon honey dew and ambrosia, that wings wherewith to fly seem their natural appendages. But the decrepitude of old age and the wings of youth and power are a strange mixture:—a bald head, and a Fairy's swiftness!—how ridiculous it seems, and so I think I may well say Time is a very odd sort of thing.

Among those who have to deal with Time, few are more puzzled how to manage him than we story-tellers. In my first chapter, for instance, I gave you a half-hour's conversation among some Fairies, but I think you would be very angry with me were I to give you as exactly every half-hour that passed over the heads of the little girls with Fairy Godmothers, till they grew up. How you would scold, dear little readers, if I were to enter into a particular description of each child's Nurse, and tell whether Miss Aurora, Miss Julia, Miss Hermione, &c. &c. &c. were brought up on baked flour, groat-gruel, rusks, tops and bottoms, or revalenta food! Whether they took more castor-oil, or rhubarb and magnesia; whether they squalled on those occasions or were very good. When they cut their teeth and how, together with all the &c. and ups and downs of Nursery life which large families, such as you and I belong to, go through daily.

Well then, suppose I altogether pass over a period of ten years, and enter into no minute particulars respecting that portion of Time. You must know that the Fairies had agreed that all the

children should have the same (and rather a large) amount of intellect, or what you would call cleverness: that is to say, they were all equally capable of learning anything they chose to learn: also they had all fair health, plenty to eat and drink, and all the so called "necessary" comforts of life.

Now then to our story.

At the end of ten years the Fairies agreed to go and have a peep how their charges were going on. They quite knew that nothing decisive could be found out, till the children had come to years of discretion and were their own mistresses. Still they thought it would amuse them just to go and see how the charms were working, as it were; so, away they went.

Now picture to yourselves a nice large nursery, much such a one as your own, in which several children are playing. The eldest, a girl of ten, you may see yonder lounging—gracefully perhaps —but still **lounging** in a rocking chair which she is swinging backwards and forwards, having set it in motion by the action of her foot on the floor. What a lovely face! I do not think you ever saw one so handsome except in a print in one of Mamma's best picture books. All the features are perfectly good and in proportion, and the dark blue eyes are fringed by the longest eyelashes ever seen. The hair of this little girl too—look at it, as the soft chestnut ringlets wave about on her shoulders as she swings, and show the round richness of the curls.

Now if you ask about the expression on her face, I must tell you it was rather languid and "**pensieroso**." Pensieroso is an Italian word really meaning thoughtful—but this little girl was not **thinking**, for then the expression of her face would have been much stronger and firmer and less languid; but the word has got to be used for a sort of awake-dreamy state when one lets thoughts float lazily along without having any energy to dwell upon them, and see whether they are good or bad.

The thought that was passing through this little girl's head at the time I mention and which made her look so languid and pensieroso, was

"I wish it was 6 o'clock."

Now here you are ready to laugh, I know, for there was nothing to look so languid about, in "I wish it was six o'clock!" but the fact was this: at half-past six the little girl's Mamma was expecting a large party to dinner and the little girl was to dress at six and be ready to go down and see the company:—I might add **and to be seen by them**; for the little girl was, as you will have guessed, the beautiful Aurora herself, and there had been plenty of foolish people, though her good Mamma was not one of them, to tell her how pretty she was and how much people admired her.

It is a very pleasant thing to be admired, both for children and grown up people. "The love of approbation," as it is called, i.e. the wish to be approved of and admired is a feeling which is very strong in most people; not in quite all, perhaps, but in **most** people certainly. But like all other powers of the mind considered apart from the influence of the heart and conscience, it is capable of being used to a very bad or a very good purpose. Thus you may remember what our Saviour says of the Pharisees who stood praying at the corners of the streets that they might be seen of men: Verily, they had their reward—viz: that men admired them: whereas those who do good deeds and pray privately, i.e. unseen and unadmired by men, should verily have their reward in that day when God who seeth in secret himself shall reward them openly.

Here you see is the same strong feeling,—love of approbation, exercised in a wrong and a right direction. The Pharisees wish for the approbation of men, good people wish for the approbation of God.

Now, love of approbation exists about much smaller matters than I have just been mentioning. But I would warn my young readers, that, to be always thinking, and bothering yourselves as to what other people are thinking about you, is one of the most uncomfortable and injurious habits a person can get into. It makes them so selfish and egotistical. And here was one of Aurora's dangers. Because she knew she was pretty, she was always wondering what other people were thinking about her, a habit which so far from contributing to what the good Fairy had wished, viz. her happiness, was constantly spoiling her comfort from hour to hour. And here, at ten years old, was this little lady swinging languidly and idly on the rocking chair, wishing it was six o'clock, instead of enjoying, as she might so well have done, that small portion of time, time present, which is, as I told you before, the only bit of him we can ever lay hold of, as it were. Of time present, just then, she thought nothing. She would have said, (had she been asked), that the old gentleman moved very slowly in spite of his wings, for her eye was fixed on that delightful time future, six o'clock. Well! at last the clock struck, and Aurora sprang from her chair,—her whole face altered in a moment. "Now, Nurse, I may dress, may I not?" she exclaimed, radiant with animation, and all the languor and dreaminess gone over like a cloud from before the sun. And it is true that just then Aurora was happy. It was a pleasant task to her to arrange and smooth that curling hair, and to put on the simple white dress she knew set off her beauty so well. But alas! for the happiness caused by thoughts of **one's self**! The toilet over, she ran down to her Mamma, and was welcomed with a smile of fondness and approbation. Indeed, when she was happy, a sweeter face could not be seen, for she was not a naughty child, and if it had not been for the Fairy gift, I do think she would have been a very nice one.

The Fairies who invisibly had witnessed all I have described to you, were not so loud in their admiration of Aurora as you or I might have been. They are so handsome themselves, they think but little of earthly beauty, and even Ianthe could not conscientiously say, "What a **happy** looking little girl she is." That was just the one thing that was wanting: ay, and it continued wanting even after the room was filled with company, and she was petted, and caressed, and praised on every side. Her spirits became very high, however, and she enjoyed herself much; and it is perhaps only very very critical folk, bent on spying out a fault, that could have detected the little clouds of anxiety that now and then shot across her face. A thought of whether her curls were all right, or her dress untumbled, &c. just now and then disturbed the charm, and prevented her forgetting herself sufficiently to allow her to be quite at ease and happy, and she would glance at herself in the mirror, and put back the hair from her brow, lest Mrs. I-know-not-who, who was just then entering the room, should not think her quite as lovely as Mrs. Somebody-else did, who had very foolishly been saying so rather in a loud tone to her Mamma.

At last the fatal time arrived to go to bed. Aurora was much too sensible to cry, or be cross, you must know, but as she closed the door of the drawing-room and left the gay company, a sigh very heavy for so young a heart to have breathed, escaped her, and it was slowly she retraced her steps up stairs. She was in reality tired, for it was later than her usual bed-time, and when she went into her room she threw herself on the chair and yawned. The young Nurse who attended to undress her, asked her if she had enjoyed herself. "Oh yes!" was her ready answer. "All is so bright, and gay, and entertaining among those ladies, and they are so good-natured to me,"—(another sigh coupled with the recollection of, and **how much they admire me!**)—"But I do so hate being a little girl, and having to go to bed. I wish the time would come quicker for me to be grown up, and be down stairs altogether, and talk, and enjoy myself all the evening!" Oh, Aurora, Aurora, with that dissatisfied face where is your beauty? with that discontented mind where is your happiness?

"Your charm is not working perfectly, Sister," observed Euphrosyne to Ianthe.

"Her's is not the age for perfect happiness and enjoyment as a beauty, remember," replied Ianthe, "and she feels this herself."

"Man never is but always **to be** blest," cried Ambrosia laughing. "You see I can quote their own poets against them."

"You are prejudging now, Ambrosia, wait till another ten years is over; but we must see our little beauty through the twenty-four hours." Ianthe now waved a tiny wand in a circle around Aurora's head,—the long eyelashes sank over her eyes, and the beautiful child fell into a sweet and placid sleep.

Morning, which awakens all young creatures to life, enjoyment, and action, awoke Aurora among the rest, and she arose in health and strength, and the full glow of animal spirits. "**This is** happiness, however," exclaimed Ianthe to her companions, as the young girl sprang about, carolling to herself the while. And so it was, for at that moment no forecastings into futurity disturbed the comfort of present pleasure: but an accidental glimpse of her face caught in a looking-glass as she passed, recalled Aurora to the recollection of HERSELF! and the admiration she had obtained the evening before. At first some pleasure attended the remembrance, and she gazed with a childish triumph at her pretty face in the glass. In a few minutes, however, the voice of her Governess calling her to lessons disturbed the egotistical amusement, and the charming Aurora frowned—yes, **frowned!** and looked cross at the looking-glass before she quitted the apartment.

And now, dear little readers, let me remind you that Aurora was a clever little girl, for the Fairy had taken care of that. She had every faculty for learning, and no real dislike to it; but this unlucky Fairy gift was in the way of every thing she did, for it took away her interest in every thing but herself; and so, though she got through her lessons respectably, it was with many yawns, and not a few sighs, and wonderings what Mamma was doing; and did the Governess think there would soon be another dinner party? and didn't the Governess, when **she** was a little girl, wish very much she was a grown up woman? and, finally, she wished she had been able to talk when she was a baby at her christening, because then me would have begged the Fairy Godmother to give her the gift of growing up to be a young lady very quick indeed, and of learning every thing without any trouble at all! And so saying, Aurora yawned and laid down her book, and the poor Governess could hardly keep her temper at such repeated interruptions to the subject in hand.

"My dear," she exclaimed, "Fairies have no power to counteract what God, has ordained, and he has ordained that we enjoy but little what we get at without labour and trouble."

"Ah taisez-vous donc ma cherè!" cried Aurora, flopping her ears with her hands, and running round the room shaking her long curls furiously. "Vous me faites absolument frémir! Excuse my French, but I am certain you are the eldest daughter of the old woman in the wood, and you are just now dropping vipers, toads, newts, and efts from your mouth at every word you utter!"

The good-natured Governess laughed heartily at the joke, for they had just been reading the old French fairy tale of "Les deux Fées," and the application amused her; but she shook her head gravely at Aurora afterwards, and reminded her that no serious truth was well answered by a joke, however droll.

A bell rings, a carriage is at the door. Miss Aurora is wanted. Visiters! Ah! here is happiness again! But it lasts but a short time, and the reaction is the same as before—drooping eyes, languid eyelids, and a sigh.

Books, drawing, music, work, even domestic recreations, all deprived of their charm through this idolatry of self!

The curtain closed over this scene.

"A charming child, Ianthe, but for your Fairy Gift, which is spoiling her."

"I repeat to you we are no judges yet. Now for riches, Euphrosyne!"

At the same hour of evening, and under the same circumstances, of a party about to assemble, let me introduce you to a beautiful little boudoir or up-stairs sitting-room adjoining an equally pretty sleeping apartment in a magnificent house in a town. The passages are carpeted all over, and so are the boudoir and the sleeping-room, and they are furnished with sofas, easy chairs, and every description of luxurious comfort; and all this for the accommodation of a little girl of ten years old, who in one of the easy chairs is lying back in front of the fire, with her tiny feet on a bright brass fender. She has a gold watch in her hand, which is suspended round her neck by a chain of the same material, and she is playing with it, and with the seals, and pretty ornaments hung to it, that jingle as she moves her hand. Ever and anon she glances at the face of the watch.

But life is very easy to her, and the chair is very soft, and her feet are very warm. At last, however, she gets up and rings a silver bell that is on the mantel-piece. A servant answers the summons. "It is time for me to dress, I believe, Annette; the company are expected to-day at half past six. Has my new frock come home?"

"Yes, Miss."

"Let me look at it."

A delicate blue satin, trimmed with the finest lace, is produced from a band-box.

"It is very pretty, I think, Annette."

"It is downright beautiful, Miss."

"And so expensive," pursued the little girl whose name was Julia, "that I don't think any one else I know is likely to imitate it, which is my greatest comfort!"

And so saying, the rich Miss Julia ---- (an only daughter), whose comfort seemed to depend on no one else being as comfortable as herself, commenced her toilet, i.e. her maid both commenced and finished it for her, for those who can command the unlimited assistance of servants are apt to be very idle in helping themselves.

"Your Julia looks self-satisfied enough," observed Ianthe, "but I do not see that this is more like real happiness than my Aurora's face before the party."

"Perhaps," returned Euphrosyne, "the same remark applies to her as to Aurora—the age for thoroughly enjoying riches is hardly arrived. You smile, Ambrosia! Well, we do not yet know your experiment, and you yourself do not know how it has answered. Take care that our turn for laughing at you does not soon come!"

Julia was dressed at the end of the half-hour, but not sooner. Her toilet occupied more time than Aurora's. She could not decide what ornaments she would wear, and at last getting out of humour with the "embarras des richesses" she fixed on a necklace which, though extremely handsome, was scarcely fit for a child. She was neither pretty nor otherwise, but when good humoured and happy her face, like that of all other creatures of her innocent time of life, was attractive and pleasant to behold. Oh, that children did but know wherein the secret of being loveable and beloved lies! In holding fast the innocence and simplicity of their infant years; in the cheerful spirit, the universal kindheartedness, the open honesty, the sweet teachableness and

readiness of belief, which are the real characteristics of childhood and which we so love to trace in their faces. It was these things our Saviour called upon grown-up people to imitate, and so to receive the kingdom of Heaven as little children. And oh, that grown-up people would imitate these things; for if they would become in these respects as little children, the sweet cast of mind would be reflected in **their** faces too, and the ugly looks given by envious discontent, deceitful thoughts, unkind intention and restless want of faith and hope would all be washed out of the world.

But now, my dear readers, can you call that the best of Fairy gifts, which had so great a tendency to bring the naughty passions of grown-up life into the heart, and therefore on to the face, of a little girl? Well, but riches **have** a tendency that way; and though Julia was not a very naughty girl she was being led into very sad feelings by the Fairy gift. When she went down to the company, her secret anxiety was to examine all the dresses of her Mamma's friends and resolve some day to surpass them all. Even as it was she received much pleasure from knowing that her own dress was far beyond the reach of ordinary folk. She thought too of her necklace with secret satisfaction, when the ladies were talking to her, for she perceived their eyes frequently attracted by its brilliancy and beauty. Then her mind rambled into futurity, to the day when she would astonish these very ladies far more than now by the richness of her costume. Ah, dear readers, would our Saviour if present have called **this** little child to him, and said, "Of **such** is the kingdom of Heaven?" But all these selfish thoughts made her conversation less pleasant and cheerful than it would otherwise have been; for you may be sure she was not listening with any interest to what was said to her, while she was thus planning silly schemes about herself.

And not having listened with any interest to what was said to her, you may guess that her answers were dull and stupid; for when people are talking of one thing and thinking of another they become very flat companions. At times when she could forget herself she became natural and then was both pleasant and pleased, and asked some ladies to let their children come and see her next day, to which they consented. But now came a sad drawback. One of the ladies told her that her little girl should bring to shew her a most beautiful gold fillagree work-box set with precious stones, which one of the maids of honour about court, who was her godmother, had given her a few days before. This lady had saved a few of the queen's hairs very carefully, and had had them placed in a little circle of crystal in the middle of the box, and they were set round with the most beautiful rubies. It was a present worthy of a Fairy Godmother, and certainly the donor was the daughter of a duchess, which perhaps is the nearest thing to being a fairy.

You will be shocked, my dear readers, to hear that the account of this box was as disagreeable as a dose of physic to poor Julia. Nay it was **worse** than physic, for a peppermint-drop can take the taste of that away in a minute. But not all the peppermint-drops in a chymist's shop could take away the taste of the fillagree-box from Julia. She had been thinking before of showing all the treasures of her boudoir to her little friends next day; but this horrid box was like a great cloud closing over her sunshine. She knew she was naughty, but she was so in the habit of being selfish she could not conquer her peevish vexation. Annette wondered what could be the matter, and her Governess sighed as she perceived her face clouded, even when she was repeating her evening prayer; but no questioning could extract from her what was amiss.

Oh, what a condition for a child to go to sleep in! Euphrosyne was greatly annoyed. "They are not correcting her evil dispositions," cried she. "I do not allow that this has anything to do **necessarily** with being very rich."

Ah, good Fairies, you do not know "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

Look now at that young face, asleep on a downy pillow, in a bed richly hung with crimson drapery, in a room filled with luxuries, glowing with warmth and comfort. You are shocked that

the heart within should be disturbed by nasty little envyings, that made the good things she possessed of no value to her. 'Tis well; but remember we are all rich by comparison. Go to the poor frost-bitten wayside beggar-child, my little readers; bring him into your comfortable drawing-room, which you sit in every day and think nothing about, and he will fancy he has got into Paradise. It is a luxurious palace to him. Take him to your snug bed and let him sleep there, and it will be to him what a state apartment in Windsor Castle would be to you. Do not then let you and me scold too much at Julia, but let us keep on the watch to drive away from ourselves the discontented grumbling thoughts that are apt to make us all ungrateful to God. Julia did not sleep well. The fillagree box was a fort of night-mare to her. She dreamt of its growing up into a great giant, and thumping her on the head, and calling out that she ought to be ashamed of herself. Do you know, I think this dream was owing to her Godmother, Euphrosyne, for she lingered behind the other Fairies as they vanished, and shook, not waved, her wand over the sleeping child, with a very angry face.

In the morning Julia, like Aurora, awoke in a temporary forgetfulness of her troubles. The morning air is so refreshing and sleep does one so much good, and the sun shining through the windows looks so gay, and all things speak of hope so loudly in a morning, who can be sullen? Certainly not little girls full of life and expectation. But the thought of the fillagree box by degrees took possession of her mind and rankled there as before. She too had a Governess, and many lessons to learn and much to do, and she did them; but neither English history nor French fairy tales could quite drive away the fillagree box. Indeed it introduced its horrid face before her into the midst of a multiplication sum, and Mademoiselle thought she was bewitched to have grown so stupid over her arithmetic all at once. She spent a half hour over that one sum, and when it was done she was so much tired she gave up lessons for the day. Besides, she had to prepare for her friends. She went into her boudoir, opened her cabinets and unfolded her treasures of various sorts—oh I can't tell you what beautiful things! besides interesting collections of foreign and English shells, and stuffed humming birds, which you and I should be charmed to possess. And Julia was in general most happy when she was looking over her property, but rather more because she possessed valuable curiosities than because she cared about them, I fear. For my part, I wonder very much that the humming birds and shells did not teach her to be more humble-minded; for no art or jewellery can imitate or come up to their glorious beauty. Well, she amused herself tolerably in spite of the visions of the fillagree box and the queen's hair, which now and then came between her and her usual feeling of self-satisfaction.

Presently her young friends came—several little girls of various ages, and now nature once more revived in poor Julia. The children felt and expressed such hearty pleasure at the sight of her treasures. There were such joyous exclamations; such bursts of delight; such springing and jumping about, that Julia became infected with the general pleasure, and was a happy child herself. Yes! even though the fillagree box had been shown off and admired. But what do children in general know about the **value** of things and how much they cost? Ah, much more just in their judgments than we elders are apt to be, a bird of Paradise such as adorned the top of Julia's cabinet, or a peacock's tail, such as she had in a drawer, is to their unprejudiced eyes more desirable than the gold of Ophir itself!

So now you see this triumph of simplicity over art, despoiled the fillagree box of all its horrors, for the innocent children admired her shells yet more—unsophisticated, and insensible to the long story about the value of the rubies, the maid of honour, and even the queen's hairs.

Still the Fairies felt and saw that it was not Euphrosyne's gift, but rather the forgetfulness of it which caused these hours of happiness to Julia, and somewhat puzzled as to the result they left the votary of riches, not quite without a sensation that little Aglaia's proposal of moderate health and enough riches to be "comfortable without being puzzled," was about the best thing after all, though not much of a Fairy gift. And now, my little readers, I am beginning to get rather tired of my story, and to feel that you may do so too. I think I am getting rather prosy, so I must try and

cut the matter short. Four out of the five Fairy gifts were like beauty and riches, worldly advantages. For instance, there was the little girl who was to have every earthly pleasure at her feet—i.e. she was to have every thing she wished for—why she was fifty times worse off than either Aurora or Julia, for I will tell you whom she was like. She was like the fisherman's wife in Grimm's German popular fairy tales, who had every thing she wished, and so at last wished to be king of the sun and moon. I doubt not you remember her well, and how she was in consequence sent back to her mud cottage. I think, therefore, I need not describe the young lady who had **that** Fairy gift.

There was another who was to be **loved** wherever she went; but nothing is worth having that is had so easily, and this child got so sick of being kissed and fondled and loved, that it was the greatest nuisance to her possible, for disagreeable people loved her just as much as nice ones, and for her part she hated them all alike. It was a very silly Fairy gift.

Come with me then to Ambrosia's God-daughter, whom they visited last, and whose Fairy gift the other Fairies were to guess at!

Neither you nor I, my dears, ever heard a fairy-laugh. Doubtless it is a sweet and musical sound. You can perhaps fancy it? Well then, do fancy it, and how it rang in silver peals when our fairy friends, on entering the last nursery they had to visit, found Ambrosia's protégée in a flood of angry tears, stamping her foot on the ground in a passion! "You naughty naughty girl!" exclaimed the old Nurse, "you'll wake the baby and make your own eyes so red you won't be fit to be seen to night by the company!"

"I don't care about my eyes being red, tho' I don't want to wake the poor baby," sobbed the little girl, slightly softening her wrath: "but the cat has unravelled all the stocking I have been knitting at for so many days, and I had nearly just finished it, and now it's all spoilt;" and she roared with vexation. "Miss Hermione, if you go on so I shall certainly send for your Mamma, and the baby will be quite poorly, he will! and we shall know who made him so," added Nurse triumphantly. "I can't make the baby poorly with crying, Nurse, so that's nonsense you know," observed Hermione; "but I didn't mean to disturb him; only my stocking is gone, and I don't know what to do." And here she sobbed afresh.

"Do! why ain't you going down to the ladies, and can't you be brushing your hair and washing your face and getting ready?" "But it isn't time." "Well, but can't you get ready **before** the time a little? and then, when you're dressed and look so clean and nice and pretty, you can sit in the chair and we can look at you!" and here the good old Nurse gave a knowing smile and nodded her head.

Hermione caught sight of the comical coaxing glance, and, in spite of her misfortune, burst into a fit of laughter. "Hum, hum, hum! now you'll wake the poor thing by laughing, Miss Hermione. I do wish you'd be quiet:" and here the Nurse rocked the child on her knee more vigorously than ever.

"Then why don't you tell me what I am to do with my stocking," cried Hermione. "Oh well, I know what I will do—something quite as quiet as a mouse. I will wind up my poor worsted." Hereupon the little girl picked up the puckered remains of her luckless grey stocking which a facetious young cat had spent at least a quarter of an hour in ingeniously unravelling with his claws. It was a tiresome tedious job we must admit, and required a strong effort of patient perseverance, but Hermione soon became engrossed in its difficulties and a dead silence ensued. At last Nurse who had while rocking the sleeping baby on her knee, been watching the child's proceedings, suddenly exclaimed, "Well to be sure, Miss Hermione, you have such patience as I never before did see."

[The Fairies exchanged glances.

"It is **Patience**, Ambrosia."

"What a hurry you are in!" was the reply.]

"No I haven't, Nurse, indeed," answered Hermione. "I had no patience at all when I was in a passion with the cat just now."

"Well, I suppose there are two or three sorts of Patiences, Miss, then," persisted Nurse, "for I'm certain you have **some** sorts. But, dear me, its ever so much past six o'clock, and you have to be dressed by half-past. Do put away the worsted and get yourself ready, Miss, and call Jane to help you."

Here the Nurse and Hermione nearly had a scuffle over the worsted. Hermione declared the cat had spoilt her stocking; and the only comfort left to her now was to roll it comfortably up into a ball. Nurse on the contrary insisted that it didn't signify a bit what became of the worsted; she must dress and go down. The dispute ended by Hermione running off with the half finished ball and its untidy remains, and cramming the whole concern into the pocket of her best frock. "The people will soon be tired of talking to me," muttered she to herself, "and then I can finish my ball quietly in the corner behind Mamma's chair."

The thought of this ingenious plan for her private amusement down stairs so tickled Hermione's fancy that she was on the giggle the whole time she was being dressed. "If Nurse did but know what was in the pocket of my best frock and how fat it is! how she would scold, and what a fight we should have." And she could hardly refrain from loud laughter at the thought. When she had got her frock on she sat down, and laying her arm over the fat pocket asked Jane to touch up her curls: and while this operation was going on she began to talk to the nurse.

"Nurse, should you think it a very nice thing to go to a dinner party and sit in chairs all round a large room, where the coloured covers are taken away and everything looks very gay, and so tidy, nobody is allowed to do anything but smile, and talk, and wear white kid gloves?"

"Very nice, Miss, it's so like a lady," was the Nurse's ready reply.

"Well then, I don't think it's nice at all, Nurse—I think it's very nasty and stupid."

"Dear, Miss Hermione, how you do talk; I hope you won't tell the ladies so when you get down stairs."

"Oh dear no, that would be rude, and it's wrong to be rude, but to tell you the truth I don't know what I shall do when I grow up if I am obliged to be so dull as that is, very often."

"Goodness, Miss Hermione, to hear you talk one would think you'd better be a housemaid at once, instead of a lady with nothing to do."

"Nurse, I should see no objection to be a housemaid at all, only that I am learning so many things that wouldn't suit a housemaid; but without being a housemaid there are many pleasanter things to do than to sit in that stupid sort of way. I like the room when all Papa's books and papers are about, and when he is scribbling away so busy, and when Mamma has got her microscope out looking at seaweeds or curiosities. I have a chance then myself. I don't like ladies who say nothing but 'Pretty little dear, what a nice colour she has,' just to please Mamma."

What Nurse in England could be expected to enter into so philosophical an investigation of the habits of society?

Hermione's did nothing but assure her it was time to be off, and she only hoped she would sit still and talk prettily, and never trouble her head whether it was stupid or not.

When Hermione got into the drawing room and saw the company seated as she had described to her Nurse, she felt very much disposed to laugh again, but made an effort and composed herself. Still her face was beaming with mirth and fun, and when some ladies said "What a happy looking little girl," they were quite sincere. That sort of face too worked wonders, and her Mamma's friends liked her much and talked pleasantly to her, and she was pleased and happy and quite forgot the ball of worsted, as well as the ladies' white kid gloves. A young lady however who had her arm round Hermione's waist and was playing with her, suddenly felt the round protuberance in her pocket. "Ah you little rogue, what have you here?" "Its a secret," cried Hermione. "I think I can unravel your mysterious secret, little girl, you are a favourite with the housekeeper," added she, whispering in Hermione's ear, "and she has just given you an orange."

"You are a very bad guesser of secrets," whispered Hermione in return. "It's no such thing!"—"Then it's an apple." "No, nor an apple."—"Then it's a peach, and your new frock will be spoilt." "No it isn't a peach either, and it's a secret." The young lady loved fun, and a playful struggle ensued between her and Hermione; in the course of which the large grey worsted ball and its long ravelled tail were drawn from the little pocket.

Hermione had now to tell the history of the ball, which she did naturally and honestly, but when she added, quite seriously, that she intended, when they had done talking to her, to go behind her Mamma's chair and finish winding it up, you may guess how they laughed.

"Come here, my little dear, and let me look at you," cried an elderly lady in spectacles, putting out her hand and laying hold of Hermione's. "Why what an industrious little soul you must be! a perfect pattern! There now! you may go behind my chair and finish your ball of worsted; nobody wants to talk to you any longer."

This old lady was rather crabbed, and had not quite believed Hermione sincere, so she did this to try her, and expected to see her pout and refuse. To her surprize, Hermione only said "Oh thank you, ma'am," with a quite smiling face, and going behind the chair, sat down on the floor to her worsted. For a few moments the old lady kept thinking "It won't last long: she'll soon be glad of an excuse to come out:" but no such thing happened; and just what Hermione expected did happen. The ladies fell to talking among themselves, and in a very short time the presence of the little girl was quite forgotten, even by the old lady, who was handed out to dinner, without once remembering whom she had left behind her chair.

Hermione stayed in the room till her task was over, and then rushed up stairs to the nursery, and stopping at the door, half opened it and rolled the great grey worsted ball so cleverly in, that it hit the old Nurse's foot as she sat (once more rocking the baby) over the fire. "Goodness, bless me! what ever is that?" Then, spying a laughing face at the door, "Oh dear heart, it's you I declare, Miss Hermione! will you never leave off waking the baby? I thought a great black dog was laying hold of my foot."

"Nurse," said Hermione, "your baby is always and always going to sleep; why doesn't he go, and then I could have a bit of fun? You don't know where I finished winding the worsted ball!"

"Why goodness me, Miss Hermione, where?"

"Down in the drawing-room among all the fine ladies; so good night!" and off she ran to avoid further explanation. A few words with her Governess; a sober time of evening prayer; and the happy child laid her head on her pillow, and needed no Fairy wand to lull her to sleep. She had been some time with her Governess in the morning before her Mamma coming to her there, heard a loud discussion going on within. The voices, however, were those of good-humour. "Hermione," said her Mother, "I am come to say that your Governess told me yesterday you had been so very good for a long time over all that you have had to do, that I have arranged for your having a holiday and a treat to-day, and several of your young friends are coming to see you.

Among them is Aurora, the granddaughter of the old lady in spectacles, who, just before she was going away at night, recollected you, and began to look for you behind her chair."

"Oh what a goose, Mamma!" "No, not a goose, my dear—only an oddity, but a very kind one too—for she desired me to find out whether you really did roll up the whole of the ravelled worsted last night; and **if** you really persevered till it was finished, I have something to give you from her, but not otherwise. How was it?" "Oh, it's finished, Mamma; ask Nurse; for when I rolled it against her foot last night, she took it for a great black dog." "Well then, I suppose this is yours, Hermione; but, I must say, I never knew a gold thimble earned so easily." Yes, dear little readers, it was a pretty gold thimble, and round the bottom of it there was a rim of white enamel, and on the enamel were gold letters.

"L'industrie ajoute à la beauté."

"Mamma," said Hermione, looking at it in delight, as she found it exactly fitted her finger, "it's lovely; but, do you know, I think the old lady ought to have given it to her granddaughter, Aurora, with such a motto." "My dear, she has had it, she told me, some months in her pocket secretly, for the purpose you mention, but she cannot ever satisfy herself that Aurora has got the spirit of real industry in her, and to bribe her to **earn** the thimble is not her object, so you see it has accidentally fallen to your share."

And as she said this, Hermione's mother turned round to leave the room; but before she had reached the door, her little girl stopped her—"Mamma, do turn back."

"What is the matter, Hermione?"

"I've something I want to say to you."

"I am all attention, my dear, particularly as your face looks so unusually grave."

"Why, you and my Governess are always calling me **good** for doing my lessons well, and now you are rewarding me for being **good** and all that, and I don't see that I am good at all."

"Upon my word this is a very serious matter, Hermione; who or what has put this into your head?"

"I read in a serious book lately, that nobody could be good without practising self-denial; and that, to be really good, one must either do something that one does **not** like, or give up something that one **does**; so that I am quite sure I cannot be good and deserve a reward when I do French and music and drawing and work well, because I am so very fond of doing every thing I do do, that every thing is a pleasure to me. And there is no struggle to do what is tiresome and no other wish to give up. The only time when I have to try to be good at all, is when I have to leave off one thing and go to another. That is always a little disagreeable at first, but unfortunately the disagreeableness goes off in a very few minutes, and I like the new employment as well as the last. This is what I was talking about to my Governess when you came, and she laughed so loud I felt quite vexed."

"My dear Hermione," said her Mamma, "you have quite misapplied what you have read in the book. Self-denial is always required of us, when we feel inclined to do any thing that is wrong, but it does not apply to any aptitude you may have for enjoying the occupations I require of you. That is only a piece of good fortune for you; for to many little girls, doing lessons is a very great act of self-denial, as they want to be doing something else. But now, as you are so lucky in liking every thing you do, you must practise your self-denial in some other way."

"How, Mamma?"

"In not being vexed when your Governess laughs, and in not being in a passion with the cat next time he unravels your stocking."

Hermione blushed. "Oh, Mamma, I understand the difference now."

"But this is not all, Hermione."

"Well, Mamma?"

"Why, as you are so fortunate as to be always happy when employed, and as therefore there is no **goodness** strictly speaking, in your doing your business so cheerfully and well, you must do this, you must spend some portion of time every day in making your energy of use to other people, and then you will be doing active good if not practising self-denial."

"Oh, Mamma, what a nice idea! Perhaps you will give me some needlework to do for the poor women you give money to; and, besides, just now I can do something actively useful and still a little really disagreeable,—really it is, Mamma,—what makes you laugh?"

"Your resolution to do something you don't like. What is it, Hermione?"

"To knit up again the stocking the cat pulled out. I quite dislike the idea."

"Then set to work by all means, Hermione. You will at least have the comfort of 'beginning by a little aversion;' but I warn you beforehand, not to set your heart upon the disagreeableness lasting very long, and if you find yourself shortly, as happy as ever over the stocking, do not be puzzled and vexed any more, but thank God as I do, that, so far at least, you are spared one of the troubles of life. The trouble of an indolent, discontented mind."

An affectionate embrace was exchanged between Mother and Daughter; and the latter, with the assistance of her Governess, recommenced the unlucky grey stocking, and was working assiduously at it when her young friends arrived.

It was a curious sight to the Fairies to see two of their god-daughters together, as they now did. But the conviction was forced upon them, that, for the present at least, Hermione had the balance of happiness in her favour. Whatever their amusements were,—whether looking over curiosities, playing with dolls, or any of the numerous games invented for the entertainment of the young, Hermione's whole heart and attention were in the matter, and she was as much engrossed as over learning at other times, and quite happy. With poor Aurora it was not so; the childishness of the play every now and then annoyed her; there was no food for her vanity, in playing with children; they cared nothing about her beauty; the gayest and most good-natured face has always the most charms for them, and this did not suit Aurora at all, and ever and anon her thoughts wandered, and her wishes too.

For ever straining into the future!

"I cannot make out your Fairy gift at all, Ambrosia," said Euphrosyne, "and I begin to suspect you have not given her one."

"We are all growing philosophical, I perceive," said Ambrosia, smiling. "Who could think you would have guessed that my happy child has had no Fairy gift at all. But she has, I assure you. What do you say to the Philosopher's Stone? It is quite clear that me has got something which TURNS EVERY THING SHE TOUCHES INTO GOLD."

What **is** the Philosopher's Stone? I hear my little readers exclaim. There is no such thing, my dears, nor ever was; but the chymists in old times, who were very ignorant, and yet knew that many wonderful things had been done by the mixture of minerals and metals, and the curious effects some had upon others, guessed that yet more wonderful things might be found out by searching, and they got into their heads that it might be possible to find, or make, a stone that would have the power of turning every thing it touched into gold. In the same manner, the doctors of those times fancied there might be such a thing made as a draught that would turn old people into young ones again. This was called "The Elixir of Life." But I do assure you these old fellows never did discover either a Philosopher's Stone, or an Elixir of Life.

So this was only a joke of Ambrosia's.

Now to go on and finish my story. It was ten years more before the Fairies revisited their Godchildren in the lower world, and this time they were to decide who had given the best Fairy gift.

And I dare say you expect me to give you as long an account of their visits to the young ladies of twenty, as I did of their peeps at the little girls of ten. But I really do not think it worth while. I would do so indeed in a minute if there were anything quite fresh and new to describe. But on the faith of a story-teller I assure you, it would be "the old story over again," only on an enlarged scale.

Did you ever look at any interesting object first with your natural eyes, and then through a microscope or magnifying glass? If so, you will remember that through the magnifying glass you saw the same thing again, only much bigger.

In the same manner the ten years acted as a sort of magnifying glass over Aurora, Julia, and Hermione. Everything was the same, but increased in size and made clearer and plainer.

Aurora's triumphant joy as she entered the ball-room as a beauty, was much greater certainly than her pleasure at her Mamma's dinner party. But the weariness and anxiety afterwards were increased also. She was still getting away from our friend Time present, and forecasting into some future delight. "The good time **coming**, Boys," was her, as well as many other people's bugbear. She never could feel that (with God's blessing) **the good time** is always **come**.

The only time she ever thoroughly enjoyed was the moment of being excessively admired. But judge for yourselves how long that can last. Could you sit and look at a pretty picture for an hour together? No, I know you could not. You cannot think how short a time it takes to say "Dear me, what a beautiful girl!" and then, perhaps, up comes somebody who addresses the admiring gazer on the subject of Lord John Russel's last speech, and the "beautiful girl," so all important in her own eyes, is as entirely forgotten as if she had never been seen. And then, to let you into another secret, Aurora was by no means a very entertaining companion: nobody **can** be, with their heads full of themselves: and she had often the mortification, even in that scene of her triumph, a ball-room, of feeing her admirers drop off, to amuse themselves with other people; less handsome perhaps, but more interesting than herself.

And so the Fairies, having accompanied her through a day of Triumphs, mixed with mortifications, followed by languors, unsettled by hopes of future joy, clouded with anxieties that all but spoilt those hopes:—came one and all to the conclusion that Aurora could not be considered as a model of human happiness.

Nor could they say much more for Julia. Perhaps, indeed, there is more equanimity in the pleasures of a very rich person, than in those of a very beautiful one: but, oh dear, they are of such a mean sort! Still, there is a good deal of impertinent comfort in money I do admit. Life rolls on, upon such well oiled hinges! The rich say, "Do this," to people around them; and the

people, "do it." But the Fairies had no sympathy with such an **unnatural** fault as the pride of wealth. They saw Julia reclining in one of those "lumbering things" they so much despised: and driving round the "dirty town" they so much disliked: and along a park a great deal too smoky for their taste: and they could not understand the haughty glance of self-satisfaction with which she looked out upon the walking crowds she passed, or the affected graciousness with which she smiled upon the few whom she condescended to recognize as acquaintances. They thought her very naughty and very absurd for being conceited about such matters. They followed her to her Milliner's too, and there I assure you they had nearly betrayed their presence by the uncontrollable fits of laughter they fell into when she was trying on, or talking about, bonnets, head dresses, gowns, &c. with the affected Frenchwoman who showed them off. Julia cared for nothing because it was pretty or tasteful, but chose every thing by its costliness and magnificence. Of course the milliner assured her that every thing she took a fancy to from its rarity, was becoming; and then, oh dear! how the Fairies were amused! for poor Julia looked downright ugly in some of the things she selected, and still went away as self satisfied as ever, on the old grounds that the costume was so expensive that none of her acquaintance could get one like it. This was still her chief comfort! Euphrosyne actually shook her fist at her as she was going away, and she had the toothache for the rest of the day, and was extremely cross to her husband in consequence. For, by the way, Julia had married—and married a nobleman—a man somewhat older than herself; but he and she had had a sort of mutual conviction that riches and rank go very well together, and so they married; and suited very well in this respect, that as their heads were full of other things they neither claimed nor required from each other a great amount of affection.

Still, was Julia happy? The Fairies shook their heads. She had gardens, hot-houses, magnificent collections of curiosities, treasures that might have softened and opened her heart, if she had made a right use of them. But riches have a very hardening tendency, and she never struggled against it.

Then, too, she could get every thing she wanted so easily, that she cared very little about anything. Life becomes very stale when your hands are full and you have nothing to ask for.

Her greatest pleasure was to create astonishment and envy among her associates: but, besides the naughtiness of the feeling, this is a triumph of very short duration; for most people, when they cannot get at what they envy, amuse themselves with something else; and then, what a mortification to see them do this!

"Besides," said the Fairies, "we must follow her into her solitude, to see if she is happy."

Ah! there, lying back once more in the easy chair, in a dress which—

> "China's gayest art had dyed,"

do you think that self-satisfied, but still uncheerful looking face tells of happiness?

No! She too, like Aurora, was unoccupied, and forecasting into futurity for the "good time coming," which so many spend their lives in craving after and expecting, but which the proud, the selfish and the idle never reach to.

The Fairies turned from her sorrowful and angry.

In the outskirts of a forest, just where its intricacy had broken away into picturesque openings, leaving visible some strange old trees with knotted trunks and mysteriously twisted branches, sat

a young girl sketching. She was intently engaged, but as her eyes were ever and anon raised from her paper to the opening glade, and one of the old trees, the Fairies had no difficulty in recognizing their protégée, Hermione. The laughing face of childhood had become sobered and refined by sentiment and strength, but contentment and even enjoyment beamed in her eyes as she thoughtfully and earnestly pursued her beautiful art. The little beings who hovered around her in that sweet spot, almost forgot they were not in Fairy land; the air was so full of sweet odours from ferns and mosses, and the many other delicious scents you find so constantly in woods.

Besides which, it amused the good souls to watch Hermione's skilful hand tracing the scene before her; and they felt an admiring delight when they saw the old tree of the forest reappear on the paper, with all the shadows and lights the sun just then threw upon it, and they wondered not a little at the skill with which she gave distance and perspective to the glade beyond. They felt, too, that though the drawing they saw rising under the sketcher's hand was not made powerful by brilliant effects or striking contrasts, it was nevertheless overflowing with the truth and sentiment of nature. It was the impression of the scene itself, viewed through the poetry of the artist's mind; and as the delicate creatures who hung over the picture, looked at it, they almost longed for it, slight as it was, that they might carry it away, and hang it up in their fairy palace as a faithful representation of one of the loveliest spots of earth, the outskirts of an ancient English forest.

It is impossible to say how long they might not have staid watching Hermione, but that after a time the sketch was finished, and the young lady after writing beneath it Schiller's well known line in Wallenstein, arose. "Das ist das Loos des Schönen auf der Erde."[1]

[1] "Such is the lot of the beautiful upon earth."

The poor tree was marked for felling! Ambrosia was almost affected to tears, once more. The scene was so beautiful, and the allusion so touching, and there seemed to her such a charm over her God-daughter Hermione; she was herself so glad, too, to feel sure that success had crowned her gift, that, altogether, her Fairy heart grew quite soft. "You may do as you like about observing Hermione further," cried she. "But, for my part, I am now satisfied. She is enjoying life to the uttermost; all its beauties of sight and sound; its outward loveliness; its inward mysteries. She will never marry but from love, and one whose heart can sympathise with hers. Ah, Ianthe, what more has life to give? You will say, she is not beautiful; perhaps not for a marble statue; but the grace of poetical feeling is in her every look and action. Ah, she will walk by the side of manhood, turning even the hard realities of life into beauty by that living well-spring of sweet thoughts and fancies that I see beaming from her eyes. Look at her now, Ianthe, and confess that surely that countenance breathes more beauty than chiselled features can give." And certainly, whether some mesmeric influence from her enthusiastic Fairy Godmother was working on Hermione's brain, or whether her own quotation upon the doomed tree had stirred up other poetical recollections, I know not; but as she was retracing her steps homewards, she repeated to herself softly but with much pathos, Coleridge's lines:[2]

> "O lady, we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does nature live:
> Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
> And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
> Than that inanimate cold world allowed
> To the poor loveless ever anxious crowd,
> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the earth—
> And from the soul itself must there be sent

A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!"

[2] Coleridge's "Dejection: an Ode."

And, turning through the little handgate at the extremity of the wood, she pursued the train of thought with heightened colour in her cheeks—

"I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within."

And thus Hermione reached her home, her countenance lighted up by the pleasure of success, and the sweet and healthy musings of her solitary walk.

She entered the library of a beautiful country house by the low window that opened on to the lawn, and found her mother reading.

"I cannot tell you how lovely the day is, Mamma, every thing is so fresh, and the shadows and lights are so good! I have immortalized our poor old friend the oak, before they cut him down," added she, smiling, as she placed the drawing in her mother's hands. "I wish the forest belonged to some one who had not this cruel taste for turning knotted oak trees into fancy work-tables. It is as bad as what Charles Lamb said of the firs, 'which look so romantic alive, and die into desks.'—Die into desks!" repeated Hermione musingly, as she seated herself on the sofa, and took up a book that was before her on the table; mechanically removing her bonnet from her head, and laying it down by her side as she spoke.

And here for some time there was a silence, during which Hermione's mother ceased reading, and, lifting up her eyes, looked at her daughter with mingled love, admiration, and interest. "I wish I had her picture so," dreamt the poor lady, as she gazed; "so earnest, and understanding, and yet so simple, and kind!—There is but one difficulty for her in life," was the next thought; "with such keen enjoyment of this world, such appreciation of the beauties, and wonders, and delights of God's creations on earth—to keep the eye of faith firmly fixed on the 'better and more enduring inheritance,' to which both she and I, but I trust she, far behind, are hastening. Yet, by God's blessing, and with Christian training, and the habit of active charity, and the vicissitudes of life, I have few or no fears. But such capability of happiness in this world is a great temptation, and I sometimes fancy must therefore have been a Fairy gift." And here the no longer young Mother of Hermione fell into a reverie, and a long pause ensued, during which Ambrosia felt very sad, for it grieved her to think that the good and reasonable Mother should be so much afraid of Fairy gifts, even when the result had been so favourable.

A note at length interrupted the prolonged silence. It was from Aurora the Beauty, whose Father possessed a large estate in the neighbourhood, and who had just then come into the country for a few weeks. Aurora earnestly requested Hermione and her Mother to visit her.

"I will do as you wish," said Hermione, looking rather grave; "but really a visit to Aurora is a sort of small misfortune."

"I hope you are not envious of her beauty, Hermione? Take care."

"Nay, you are cruel, Mamma, now. I should like to be handsome, but not at the expense of being so very dull in spirits as poor Aurora often is. But really, unless you have ever spent an hour alone with her, you can form no idea of how tired one gets."

"What of, Hermione? of her face?"

"Oh no, not of her face; it is charming, and by the way you have just put into my head how I may escape from being tired, even if I am left alone with her for hours!"

"Nay, now you really puzzle me, my dear; I suggested nothing but looking at her face."

"Ah, but as she is really and truly such a model of beauty, what do you think of offering to make a likeness of her, Mamma? It will delight her to sit and be looked at, even by me, in the country, and I shall be so much pleased to have such a pleasant occupation. I am quite reconciled to the idea of going."

And a note was written, and despatched accordingly.

"But," persisted Hermione, rising to sit near her Mother, "you do not above half know Aurora. One would think she had been born in what is called a 'four warnt way,' with nothing but cross roads about her. Nothing is ever right. She is always either exhausted with the heat of the sun, or frozen with cold, or the evening is so tedious, she wants it to be bedtime, or if there is any unusual gaiety going on, she quarrels with the same length of evening, because it is so intolerably short; and, in short, she is never truly happy but when she is surrounded by admirers, whether men or women. And this seems to me to be a sad way of '**getting her time over**,' as the poor women say of life. Ah, Mamma, it goes but too quickly."

"Aurora is indeed foolish," musingly ejaculated the Mother.

"Not altogether either, my dear Mother. She knows much; but the fault is, she cares for nothing. She has got the carcase, as it were, of knowledge and accomplishments; but the vivifying spirit is wanting. You know yourself how well she plays and sings occasionally, if there is a question of charming a room full of company. Yet there can be no sentiment about her music after all, or it would be an equal pleasure to her at other times. But really it almost makes me as discontented with life as herself to hear her talk in unexcited hours. Turning over my books one day, she said, 'You can never be either a poet or a painter, or a Mozart or a philosopher, Hermione? what is the use of all your labour and poking?' What could I say? I felt myself colour up, and I laughed out, 'Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity!' Yet certainly God has set before us the things of earth in order that we may admire and find them out; and that is the answer to all such foolish questions!" And Hermione was turning to leave the room, but she came back and said—"Do you know, Mamma, though you will laugh at the idea, I do think Aurora would be a very nice girl, and very happy, if she either could grow very ugly all at once, or if any thing in the world could make her forget her beauty.—And," added she, in a half whisper, "if there is any thing in Fairy lore, I could almost fancy some cruel Fairy had owed her family a grudge, and had given her this gift of excessive beauty on purpose to be the plague and misfortune of her life."

"Enough, enough, and too much," cried Euphrosyne impatiently. "The matter is now, I think, concluded. Ianthe and I have failed, and though you are successful, Ambrosia, even you have not come off without a rebuff. Now, farewell to earth. I am weary of it. I do not know your gift, and I am sick of listening to conversations I cannot understand. Let us begone. If we de delay, they will begin again. Ah, my sisters, my spirit yearns for our fairer clime!"

And they arose; but yet awhile they lingered on the velvet lawn before that country-house, for as they were preparing for flight, the sounds they loved so well, of harmonious music, greeted their ears.

"Ah, there is the artist's hand again," cried Ambrosia. "I see the lovely sketch before me once more!"

And so it was, that it, and the peaceful forest scene, and the interesting face of Hermione, seemed to reappear before them all as they listened to her music. Tender, and full of sentiment were the sounds at first, as if the musician were acting the scene of the opera whence they came.

"Lieder ohne Worte,"[3] murmured Ambrosia.

[3] Songs without Words.—Mendelssohn.

But it was to the swelling sounds of a farewell chorus that they arose into the air, and took their leave of earth.

And now, dear Readers, there is but one thing more to do. To ask if you have guessed the Fairy gift?

The Fairies, you see, had not. What Euphrosyne had said was true. They had listened to such a quantity of conversation they could not understand, and they were so unused to **think** much about any thing, or to hear much beyond their own pretty light talk and sweet songs, that their poor little brains had got quite muddled.

Perhaps remaining so long in the Earth's atmosphere helped to cloud their intelligence. Certain it is, they returned very pensive, very cross, and rather dusty to Fairy Land.

They arrived at the beautiful bay I first described, and floated to a large party of their sisters, who were dancing on the sands.

There was a clapping of tiny hands, and shouts of joy as they approached; and "What news? what news?" cried many voices.

"Ah, what news, Sister Euphrosyne!" cried little Aglaia, floating forward, "from the smudgy old earth; Is it beauty, riches, or what?"

"I cannot answer your question," said Euphrosyne, pushing forward.

A circle was now formed round the travellers, and the details I have given you were made by Ianthe. And she wound up by saying, "And what Ambrosia's gift to Hermione has been, we cannot make out."

"Then I will tell you!" cried little Aglaia, springing lightly high into the air, and descending gently on a huge shell at her feet; "**She likes every thing she does, and she likes to be always doing something**. You can't put the meaning into one word, as you can Beauty and Riches; but still it **is** something. Can't you think of some way of saying what I have told you? Dear me, how stupid you are all grown. And **liking** isn't the right word: it is something stronger than common **liking**."

"Love, perhaps," murmured Leila.

"An excellent idea," cried Euphrosyne; "dear me, this delicious air is clearing my poor head. Sisters, I will express it for you, and Ambrosia shall say if I am right. It is THE LOVE OF EMPLOYMENT."

Ambrosia laughed assent; but a low murmur of discontent resounded through the Fairy group.

"Intolerable!" cried Leila, shrugging her shoulders like a French woman.

"It is no Fairy gift at all," exclaimed others; "it is downright plodding and working."

"If the human race can be made happy by nothing but labour," cried another; "I propose we leave them to themselves, and give them no more Fairy gifts at all."

"Remember," cried Ambrosia, now coming forward, "this is our first experiment upon human happiness. Hitherto we have given Fairy gifts, and never enquired how they have acted. And I feel sure we have always forgotten one thing, viz. that poor men and women living in Time, and only having in their power the small bit of it which is present, cannot be happy unless they make Time present happy. And there is but one plan for that; I use Aglaia's words: '**To like every thing you do, and like to be always doing something**.'"

Ambrosia ceased speaking, and the circled group were silent too. They were not satisfied, however; but those sweet, airy people take nothing to heart for long. For a short time they wandered about in little knots of two and three, talking, and then joined together in a dance and song, ere night surrounded them. There was from that time, however, a general understanding among them that the human race was too coarse and common to have much sympathy with Fairies, and even the Godmothers agreed to this, for they were sadly tired with the unusual quantity of thinking and observing they had had to undergo. So if you ever wonder, dear Readers, that Fairy Gifts and Fairy Godmothers have gone out of fashion; you may conclude that the adventure of Ambrosia and Hermione is the reason.

The story is ended; and if any enquiring child should say, "There are no more Fairy gifts, and we can no more give ourselves love of employment than beauty or riches;" let me correct this dangerous error! Wiser heads than mine have shown that every thing we do becomes by HABIT, not only **easy**, but actually **agreeable**.[4]

[4] Abercrombie. Moral Feelings.

Dear Children! encourage a habit of **attention** to whatever you undertake, and you may make that habit not only easy, but agreeable; and then, I will venture to promise you, you will **like** and even **love** your occupations. And thus, though you may not have so many talents as Hermione, you may call all those you do possess, into play, and make them the solace, pleasure and resources of your earthly career.

If you do this, I think you will not feel disposed to quarrel, as the Fairies did, with Ambrosia's gift; for increased knowledge of the world, and your own happy experience, will convince you more and more that no Fairy Gift is so well worth having, as,

THE LOVE OF EMPLOYMENT.

JOACHIM THE MIMIC.

 There was, once upon a time, a little boy, who, living in the time when Genies and Fairies used now and then to appear, had all the advantage of occasionally seeing wonderful sights, and all the **dis**advantage of being occasionally dreadfully frightened. This little boy was one day walking alone by the sea side, for he lived in a fishing town, and as he was watching the tide, he perceived a bottle driven ashore by one of the big waves. He rushed forward to catch it before the wave sucked it back again, and succeeded. Now then he was quite delighted, but he could not get the cork out, for it was fastened down with rosin, and there was a seal on the top. So being very impatient, he took a stone and knocked the neck of the bottle off.

What was his surprize to find himself instantly suffocated with a smoke that made his eyes smart and his nose sneeze, just as much as if a quantity of Scotch snuff had been thrown over him! He jumped about and puffed a good deal, and was just beginning to cry, as a matter of course for a little boy when he is annoyed; when lo! and behold! he saw before him such an immense Genie, with black eyes and a long beard, that he forgot all about crying and began to shake with fear.

The Genie told him he need not be afraid, and desired him not to shake; for, said he, "You have been of great use to me; a Genie, stronger than myself, had fastened me up in yonder bottle in a fit of ill humour, and as he had put his seal at the top, nobody could draw the cork. Luckily for me, you broke the neck of the bottle, and I am free. Tell me therefore, good little boy, what shall I do for you to show my gratitude?"

But now, before I go on with this, I must tell you that the day before the little boy's adventure with the bottle and the Genie, the King of that country had come to the fishing town I spoke of, in a gold chariot drawn by twelve beautiful jet black horses, and attended by a large train of officers and followers. A herald went before announcing that the King was visiting the towns of his dominions, for the sole purpose of doing justice and exercising acts of charity and kindness. And all people in trouble and distress were invited to come and lay their complaints before him. And accordingly they did so, and the good King, though quite a youth, devoted the whole day to the benevolent purpose he proposed; and it is impossible to describe the amount of good he accomplished in that short time. Among others who benefited was our little boy's Mother, a widow who had been much injured and oppressed. He redressed her grievances, and in addition to this, bestowed valuable and useful presents upon her. "Look what an example the young King sets," was the cry on every side! "Oh, my son, imitate him!" exclaimed our poor Widow, as in a transport of joy and emotion, she threw her arms around her boy's neck. "I wish I **could** imitate him and be like him!" murmured little Joachim: (such was the child's name). "My boy," cried the Widow, "imitate every thing that is good, and noble, and virtuous, and you **will** be like him!" Joachim looked earnestly in her face, but was silent. He understood a good deal that his Mother meant; he knew he was to try to do every thing that was good, and so be like the young King; but, as he was but a little boy, I am not quite sure that he had not got a sort of vague notion of the gold chariot and the twelve jet black horses, mixed up with his idea of imitating all that was good and noble and virtuous, and being like the young King. I may be wrong; but, at seven years old, you will excuse him if his head did get a little confused, and if he could not quite separate his ideas of excessive virtue and goodness from all the splendour in which the pattern he was to imitate appeared before his eyes.

However that may be, his Mother's words made a profound impression upon him. He thought of nothing else, and if he had been in the silly habit of telling his dreams, I dare say he would have told his mother next morning that he had been dreaming of them. Certainly they came into his head the first thing in the morning; and they were still in his head when he walked along by

the sea-shore, as has been described; so much so, that even his adventure did not make him forget them; and therefore, when this Genie, as I told you before, offered to do any thing he wanted, little Joachim said, "Genie, I want to imitate every thing that is good, and noble, and virtuous, so you must make me able!"

The Genie looked very much surprized, and rather confused; he expected to have been asked for toys, or money, or a new horse, or something nice of that sort; but Joachim looked very grave, so the Genie saw he was in earnest, and he did a most wonderful thing for a Genie; he actually sat down beside the little boy to talk to him. I don't recollect that a single Genie in the Arabian Nights, ever did such a thing before; but this Genie did: What is more, he stroked his beard, and spoke very softly, as follows:

"My dear little boy, you have asked a great thing. I can do part of what you wish, but not all; for you have asked what concerns the heart and conscience, and we Genies, cannot influence these, for the great Ruler of all things alone has them under his control. He allows us, however, power over the intellect—ah! now I see you cannot understand me, little boy!—Well! I mean this;—I can make your head clever, but I cannot make your heart good: I can give you the power of imitation, but as to **what** you imitate, that must depend upon yourself, and the great Being I dare not name!"

After saying this, the Genie laid his immense forefingers on each side of Joachim's head just above his forehead, and then disappeared.

Joachim felt no pain, but when he got up and put on his cap to go home, his head seemed almost too large for it.

Perhaps he wanted a new cap, but the phrenologists would tell you he had got the organ of Imitation.

He did not thoroughly understand what the Genie said, but he was convinced that something had been done towards making him like to the young King. As he was dawdling home, his eye was struck by the sight of a beautiful because picturesque dark fishing-boat, which he saw very plainly, because the red sun was setting behind it. Joachim felt a strange wish to make something like it; and, taking up a bit of white chalk he saw at his feet, he drew a picture of the boat on the tarred side of another that was near him. While he was so engaged, an old fisherman came up very angrily. He thought the child was disfiguring his boat; but, to his surprise, he saw that the little fellow's drawing was so capital, he wished he could do as much himself.

"Why, who taught you to do that, young Master?" said he.

Joachim was no great talker at any time, and he now merely said, "Nobody," and smiled.

"Well, you must draw my boat some day, for me to hang up; and now here's a luck penny for you, for you certainly are a capital hand for such a youngster."

Joachim was greatly pleased with the penny, for it was a curious old one, with a hole through it; and he told his Mother all about it; but though it may seem strange, he never mentioned the bottle and the Genie to her at all. That appeared to him to be a quite private affair of his own.

He altered very much, however, by degrees. He had been till then rather a dull, silent boy: now he talked much more, was more amusing, was always endeavouring to draw, and after being at church would try to read the prayers like the parson. His Mother was delighted. She began to think her son would grow up a good scholar after all, and being now well off, owing to the King's kindness, she resolved on sending little Joachim to school.

To school, accordingly, he went; and here, my little readers, there was a great change for him. Hitherto he had lived very much alone with his Mother, and being quiet, and somewhat dull by nature, he had never till quite lately had many acquaintances of his own age.

Now, however, he found himself among great numbers of youths, of all ages, and all characters. At first he was shy and observant, but this soon wore off, and he became a favourite. Nobody was more liked at any time, and he was completely unrivalled in the play-ground. He could set all the boys in a roar of laughter, when, hid behind a bush, he would bark so like a dog that the unhappy wights who were not in the secret expected to see a vicious hound spring out upon them, and took to their heels in fright. He was first in every attempt at acting, which the boys got up; and there was not a cat nor a pig in the neighbourhood whose mew and squeak he could not give with the utmost exactness. If you ask how he got on at lessons, I must say—well, but not **very** well. His powers of entertaining his companions were so great, that I fear he found their easily-acquired praise more tempting than the rewards of laborious learning. He could learn easily enough, it is true; but while his steadier neighbours were working hard, he was devising some new scheme for fun when lessons should be over, or making some odd drawing on his slate to induce his companions to an outburst of laughter.

There were many excuses to be made for little Joachim; and it is always so pleasant to please, that I do not much wonder at his being led astray by possessing the power.

Time went on, meanwhile; and Joachim became aware at last that he possessed a larger share than common of the power of imitation. When he first clearly felt this, he thought of the Genie and his two forefingers, I believe;—but his school life, and his funny ways, and the constant diversion of his mind, quite prevented his thinking of all the serious things the Genie had spoken. Nay, even his Mother's words had nearly faded from his mind, and he had forgotten the young King, and his own wishes to be like him. It was a pity it was so; but so it was! Poor Joachim! he was a very good fellow, and kind also in reality; but first the pleasure of making his companions laugh, and then the pleasure of being a sort of little great man among them, were fast misleading him. For instance, though at first he amused them by imitating dogs, and cats, and pigs, he next tried his powers at imitating any thing queer and odd in the boys themselves, and, for a time, this was most entertaining. When he mimicked the awkward walk of one boy, and the bad drawl of another, and the loutish carriage of a third, the school resounded with shouts of laughter, which seemed to our Hero a great triumph,—something like the cheers which had greeted the good young King as he left the fishing-town. But certainly the cause was a very different one! By degrees, however, it must be admitted, that Joachim's popularity began a little to decrease; for, though a boy has no objection to see his neighbour laughed at, he does not like quite so well to be laughed at himself, and there are very few who can bear it with good humour. And now Joachim had given such way to the pastime, that he was always hunting up absurdities in his friends and neighbours, and **no one felt safe**.

It was a long time before Joachim found out the change that was taking place, for there were still plenty of loud laughers on his side; but once or twice he had a feeling that all was not right: for instance, one day when he mimicked the awkward walker to the boy who spoke badly and stuttered, and then in the afternoon imitated the stutterer to the awkward boy, he had a twinge of conscience, for it whispered to him that he was a sneak, and deceitful; particularly, as both these boys had often helped him in doing his sums and lessons when he was too idle and **too funny** to labour at them himself. In fact, he had been so much helped that he was sadly behind hand in his books, for all the school had been willing to assist "that good fellow '**Joke him**,'" as they called him.

At last a crisis came. A new boy arrived at the school; very big for his age, and rather surly tempered, but a hard working, persevering lad, who was striving hard to learn and get on. He had one defect. He lisped very much, which certainly is an ugly trick, and sounded silly in a great stout boy, nearly five feet high: but he had this excuse; —his mother had died when he was very

little, and his good Father had more important business on hand in supporting his family, of which this boy was the eldest, than in teaching him to pronounce his S's better. It is perhaps only Mothers who attend to these little matters. Well;—this great big boy was two or three days at the school before Joachim went near him. There was something serious, stern, and unfunny in his face, and when Joachim was making the other boys laugh, the great big boy never even smiled, but fixed his eyes in a rather unpleasant manner upon Joachim as he raised them from his books. Still he was an irresistible subject for the Mimic; for, though he learnt his lessons without a mistake, and always obtained the Master's praise, he read them with so strong a lisp, and this was rendered so remarkable by his loud, deep voice, that it fairly upset what little prudence Joachim possessed; and, as he returned one day to his seat, after repeating a copy of verses in the manner I have described, Joachim, who was not far off, echoed the last two lines with such accuracy of imitation, that it startled even the Master, who was at that moment leaving the school-room.

But no laugh followed as usual, for all eyes were suddenly turned on the big boy, who, crimson with indignation, and yet quite self-possessed in manner, walked up to Joachim and deliberately knocked him down on the floor. Great was Joachim's amazement, you may be sure, and severe was the blow that had levelled him; but still more severe were the words that followed. "Young rascal," exclaimed the big boy, "who has put **you** in authority over your elders, that you are to be correcting our faults and failings, instead of attending to your own. You are beholden to any lad in the school who will do your sums, and write your exercises for you, and then you take upon yourself to ridicule us if we cannot pronounce our well learnt lessons to your fancy! You saucy imp, who don't know what labour and good conduct are, and who have nothing to boast of, but the powers which a monkey possesses to a greater extent than yourself!" Fancy Joachim's rage! **He**, the admired wit! the popular boy! nothing better than a monkey! He sprang up and struck his fist into the face of his antagonist with such fury, that the big boy, though evidently unwilling to fight one less than himself, was obliged to bestow several sharp blows before he could rid himself of Joachim's passion.

At last, however, other boys separated them; but Joachim, who was quite unused to fighting, and who had received a very severe shock when he first fell, became so sick and ill that he was obliged to go home. His Mother asked what was the matter. "He had been quizzing a great big boy who lisped, and the boy knocked him down, and they had fought." His Mother sighed; but she saw he was too poorly for talking, so she put him to bed and nursed him carefully.

Now, you may say, what had this Mother been about, not to have found out and corrected Joachim's fault before? First, he was very little at home, and as owing to the help of others, his idleness had not become notorious, she had heard no complaints from the Masters, and thinking he did his lessons well, she felt averse to stopping his fun and amusements in holiday hours. Still, she had latterly begun to have misgivings which this event confirmed. In a few days Joachim was better, and came down stairs, and his Aunt and two or three Cousins called to enquire after him. Their presence revived Joachim's flagging spirits, and all the boys got together to talk and laugh. Soon their voices echoed through the house. Joachim was at his old tricks again, and the Schoolboys, the Ushers and the Master all furnished food for mirth. His Cousins roared with delight. "Clever child!" exclaimed his Aunt, "what a treasure you are in a house! one could never be dull where **you** are!" "Sister, Sister!" cried Joachim's Mother, "do not say so!" "My dear," said the Aunt, "are you dull enough to be unable to appreciate your own child's wit; oh, I wish you would give him to me. Come here, my dear Joachim, and do the boy that walks so badly once more for me; it's enough to kill one to see you take him off!" Joachim's spirits rose above all control. Excited by his Aunt's praise and the sense of superior ability, he surpassed himself. He gave the bad walker to perfection; then imitated a lad who had commenced singing lessons, and whose voice was at present broken and bad. He even gave the big boy's lisp once more, and followed on with a series of pantomimic exhibitions.

All at once, he cast his eyes on his Mother's face—that face so full of intelligence and the mild sorrow of years of widowhood, borne with resigned patience. Her eyes were full of tears, and there was not a smile on her countenance. Joachim's conscience—he knew not why—twinged him terribly. He stopped suddenly; "Mother!"

"Come here, Joachim!" He came.

"Is that boy whom you have been imitating—your Aunt says so cleverly—the **best** walker of all the boys in your school?"

"The **best**, Mother?" and the puzzled Joachim could not suppress a smile. His Cousins grinned.

"Dear Mother, of course not," continued Joachim, "on the contrary, he is the very worst!"

"Oh—well, have you no **good** walkers at your school?"

"Oh yes, several; indeed one especially; his father was a soldier, he walks beautifully."

"Does he, Joachim? Let me see you walk like him, my dear."

Joachim stepped boldly enough into the middle of the room, and drew himself up; but a sudden consciousness of his extreme inferiority to the soldier's son, both in figure, manner and mode of walking, made him feel quite sheepish. There was a pause of expectation.

"Now then!" said Joachim's Mother.

"I cannot walk like **him**, Mother," said Joachim.

"Why not?"

"Because he walks so **very well**!"

"Oh,"—said Joachim's Mother.

There was another pause.

"Come, Joachim," continued the Widow, "I am very anxious to admire you as much as your Aunt does. You are not tired; let us have some more exhibitions. You gave us a song just now horribly out of tune, and with the screeching voice of a bagpipe."

"I was singing like Tom Smith," interrupted Joachim.

"Is he your best singer?" enquired the Mother. Another laugh followed.

"Nay, Mother, no one sings so badly."

"Indeed! How does the Singing Master sing, Joachim?"

"Oh, Mother," cried Joachim, "so beautifully, it would make the tears come into your eyes with pleasure, to listen to him."

"Well, but as I cannot listen to him, let me, at all events, have the pleasure of hearing my clever son imitate him," was the reply.

Joachim was mute. He had a voice, though not a remarkable one, but he had shirked the labour of trying to improve it by practice. He made one effort to sing like the Master, but overpowered

by a sense of incapacity, his voice failed, and he felt disposed to cry.

"Why, Joachim, I thought you were such a clever creature you could imitate any thing," cried the Mother.

No answer fell from the abashed boy, till a sudden thought revived him.

"But I **can** imitate the singing-master, Mother."

"Let me hear you, my dear child."

"Why it isn't exactly what you can hear," observed Joachim murmuringly; "but when he sings, you have no idea what horrible faces he makes. Nay, it's true, indeed, he turns up his eyes, shuts them, distorts his mouth, and swings about on the stool like the pendulum of a clock!"

And Joachim performed all the grimaces and contortions to perfection, till his Aunt and Cousins were convulsed with laughter.

"Well done," cried his Mother. "Now you are indeed like the cat in the German fable, Joachim! who voted himself like the bear, because he could lick his paws after the same fashion, though he could not imitate either his courage or his strength. Now let me look a little further into your education. Bring me your drawing-book." It came, and there was page after page of odd and ugly faces, strange noses, stranger eyes, squinting out of the book in hideous array.

"I suppose you will laugh again if I ask you if these are the **beauties** of your school, Joachim; —but tell me seriously, are there no good, pleasant, or handsome faces among your schoolfellows?"

"Plenty, Mother; one or two the Master calls models, and who often sit to him to be drawn from."

"Draw one of those faces for me, my dear; I am fond of beauty." And the Mother placed the book in his hands, pointing to a blank page.

Joachim took a pencil, and sat down. **Now** he thought he should be able to please his Mother; but, alas, he found to his surprise, that the fine faces he tried to recall had not left that vivid impression on his brain which enabled him to represent them. On the contrary, he was tormented and baffled by visions of the odd forms and grotesque countenances he had so often pictured. He seized the Indian-rubber and rubbed out nose after nose to no purpose, for he never could replace them with a better. Drawing was his favourite amusement; and this disappointment, where he expected success, broke down his already depressed heart. He threw the book from him, and burst into a flood of tears.

"Joachim! have you drawn him? What makes you cry?"

"I cannot draw him, Mother," sobbed the distressed boy.

"And why not? Just look here; here is an admirable likeness of squinting Joe, as you have named him. Why cannot you draw the handsome boy?"

"Because his face is so handsome!" answered Joachim, still sobbing.

"My son," said his Mother gravely, "you have now a sad lesson to learn, but a necessary and a wholesome one. Get up, desist from crying, and listen to me."

Poor Joachim, who loved his mother dearly, obeyed.

"Joachim! your Aunt, and your Cousins, and your schoolfellows have all called you clever. In what does your cleverness consist? I will tell you. In the Reproduction of Deformity, Defects, Failings, and Misfortunes of every sort, that fall under your observation. A worthy employment truly! A noble ambition! But I will now tell you the truth about yourself. You never heard it before, and I feel sure you will benefit now. A good or an evil Genie, I know not which, has bestowed upon you a great power; and you have misused it. Do you know what that power is?"

Joachim shook his head, though he trembled all over, for he felt as if awaking from along dream, to the recollection of the Genie.

"It is the power of Imitation, Joachim; I call it a great power, for it is essential to many great and useful things. It is essential to the orator, the linguist, the artist, and the musician. Nature herself teaches us the charm of **imitation**, when in the smooth and clear lake you see the lovely landscape around mirrored and **repeated**.[5] What a lesson may we not read in this sight! The commonest pond even that reflects the foliage of the tree that hangs over it, is calling out to us to reproduce for the solace and ornament of life, the beautiful works of God. But oh, my son, my dear son, you have abused this gift of Imitation, which might be such a blessing and pleasure to you."

[5] Schiller.—"Der Künstler."

"You might, if you chose, **imitate every thing that is good, and noble, and virtuous, and beautiful**; and you are, instead of that, reproducing every aspect of deformity that crosses your path, until your brain is so stamped with images of defects, ugliness, and uncouthness, that your hand and head refuse their office, when I call upon you to reproduce the beauties with which the world is graced."

I doubt if Joachim heard the latter part of his Mother's speech. At the recurrence to the old sentence, a gleam of lightning seemed to shoot across his brain. Latent memories were aroused as keenly as if the events had but just occurred, and he sank at his Mother's feet.

When she ceased to speak, he arose.

"Mother," said he, "I have been living in a cloud. I have been very wrong. Besides which, I have a secret to tell you. Nay, my Aunt may hear. It has been a secret, and then it has been forgotten; but now I remember all, and understand far more than I once did."

Here Joachim recounted to his Mother the whole story of her words to him, and his adventure with the Genie and the bottle; and then, very slowly, and interrupted by many tears of repentance, he repeated what the Genie had said about giving him **the power** of imitation, adding that the use he made of it must depend on himself and the great Ruler of the heart and conscience.

There was a great fuss among the Cousins at the notion of Joachim having talked to a Genie; and, to tell you the truth, this was all they thought about, and soon after took their leave. The heart of Joachim's Mother was at rest, however: for though she knew how hard her son would find it to alter what had become a habit of life, she knew that he was a good and pious boy, and she saw that he was fully alive to his error.

"Oh Mother," said he, during the course of that evening, "how plain I see it all now! The boy that stutters is a model of obedience and tenderness; I ought to have dwelt upon and imitated that, and, oh! I thought only of his stuttering. The boy that walks so clumsily, as well as the great fellow that lisps, are such industrious lads, and so advanced in learning, that the master thinks both will be distinguished hereafter; and I, who—(oh, my poor mother, I must confess to you)—hated to labour at any thing, and have got the boys to do my lessons for me;—I, instead of

imitating their industry, lost all my time in ridiculing their defects.—What shall—what shall I do!"

The next morning poor Joachim said his prayers more humbly than he had ever before done in his life; and, kissing his mother, went to school. The first thing he did on arriving was to go up to the big boy, who had beaten him, and beg him to shake hands.

The big boy was pleased, and a grim smile lightened up his face. "But, old fellow," said he, laying his hand on Joachim's shoulder, "take a friend's advice. There is good in all of us, depend upon it. Look out for all that's good, and let the bad points take care of themselves. **You** won't get any handsomer, by squinting like poor Joe; nor speak any pleasanter for lisping like me; nor walk any better for apeing hobbling. But the ugliest of us have some good about us. Look out for **that**, my little lad; I do, or I should not be talking to you! I see that you are honest and forgiving, though you **are** a monkey! There now, I must go on with my lessons! You do yours!"

Never was better advice given, and Joachim took it well, and bore it bravely; but, oh, how hard it was to his mind, accustomed for so long to wander away and seek amusement at wrong times, to settle down resolutely and laboriously to study. He made a strong effort, however; and though he had often to recall his thoughts, he in a measure succeeded.

After school-hours he begged the big boy to come and sit by him, and then he requested his old friends and companions to listen to a story he had to tell them. They expected something funny, and many a broad grin was seen; but poor Joachim's eyes were yet red with weeping, and his gay voice was so subdued, the party soon became grave and wondering, and then Joachim told them every thing. They were delighted to hear about the Genie, and were also pleased to find themselves safe from Joachim's ridicule. It could not be expected they should all understand the story, but the big boy did, and became Joachim's greatest friend and adviser.

That evening our little friend, exhausted with the efforts and excitement of his almost first day of repentance, strolled out in a somewhat pensive mood to his favourite haunt, the sea shore. A stormy sunset greeted his arrival on the beach, but the tide was ebbing, and he wandered on till he reached some caverns among the cliffs. And there, as had often been his wont, he sat down to gaze out upon the waste of waters safe and protected from harm. It is very probable that he fell asleep—but the point could never be clearly known, for he always said it was no sleep and no dream he had then, but that, whilst sitting in the inmost recesses of the cave, he saw once more his old friend the Genie, who after reproaching him with the bad use he had made of his precious gift, gave him a world of good advice and instruction.

There is no doubt that after that time, Joachim was seen daily struggling against his bad habits; and that by degrees he became able to exercise his mind in following after the good and beautiful instead of after the bad and ugly. It was a hard task to him for many a long day to fix his flighty thoughts down to the business in hand, and to dismiss from before his eyes the ridiculous images that often presented themselves. But his Mother's wishes, or the Genie's advice, or something better still, prevailed. And you cannot think, of what wonderful use the Genie's gift was to him then. Once turned in a right direction and towards worthy objects, he found it like a sort of friend at his right hand, helping him forward in some of the most interesting pursuits of life. Ah! all the energy he had once bestowed on imitating lisps and stuttering, was now engaged in catching the sounds of foreign tongues, and thus taking one step towards the citizenship of the world. And instead of wasting time in gazing at the singing master's face, that he might ape its unnatural distortions—it was now the sweet tones of skilful harmony to which he bent his attention, and which he strove, and not in vain, to reproduce.

The portfolio which he brought home to his Mother at the end of another half-year, was crowded with laborious and careful copies from the best models of beauty and grace. And not with those only, for many a face could be found on its pages in which the Mother recognized

some of her son's old companions. Portraits, not of the mere formation of mouths and noses, which in so many cases, viewed merely as forms, are defective and unattractive, but portraits of the same faces, upon which the character of the inward mind and heart was so stamped that it threw the mere shape of the features far into the background.

Thus with the pursuit of his favourite art, Joachim combined "that most excellent gift of charity;" for it was now his pride and pleasure to make the charm of expression from "**the good points**" his old friend had talked about, triumph over any physical defects. The very spirit and soul of the best sort of portrait painting. And here, my dear young readers, I would fain call your attention to the fact of how one right habit produces another. The more Joachim laboured over seizing the good expression of the faces he drew from, the more he was led to seek after and find out the good points themselves whence the expression arose; and thus at last it became a **Habit** with him to try and discover every thing that was excellent and commendable in the characters of those he met; a very different plan from that pursued by many of us, who in our intercourse with each other, are but too apt to fasten with eagle-eye accuracy on failings and faults. Which is a very grave error, and a very misleading one, for if it does nothing else, it deprives us of all the good we should get by a daily habit of contemplating what is worthy our regard and remembrance. And so strongly did Joachim's mother feel this, and so earnestly did she wish her son to understand that a power which seems bestowed for worldly ends, may be turned to spiritual advantage also, that when his birthday came round she presented to him among other gifts, a little book, called "The Imitation of Jesus Christ." It was the work of an old fellow called Thomas à Kempis, and though more practical books of piety have since been written, the idea contained in the title suggests a great lesson, and held up before Joachim's eyes, Him whom one of our own divines has since called "The Great Exemplar."

This part of our little hero's 'Lesson of Life,' we can all take to ourselves, and go and do likewise. And so I hope his story may be profitable, though we have not all of us a large Genie-gift of Imitation as he had. With him the excess of this power took a very natural turn, for though he possessed through its aid, considerable facilities for music and the study of languages also, the course of events led him irresistibly to what is usually called "the fine arts." And if the old dream of the royal chariot and the twelve jet black horses was never realized to him, a higher happiness by far was his, when some years after, he and his Mother stood in the council house of his native town; she looking up with affectionate pride while he showed her a portrait of the good young King which had a few hours before been hung up upon its walls. It was the work of Joachim himself.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

The darkness and the light to Thee are both alike.

Far away to the west, on the borders of the Sea, there lived a lady and gentleman in a beautiful old house built something like a castle. They had several children, nice little boys and girls, who were far fonder of their Sea Castle, as they called it, than of a very pleasant house which they had in a great town at some distance off. Still they used to go and be very merry in

the Town House in the winter time when the hail and snow fell, and the winds blew so cold that nobody could bear to walk out by the wild sea shore.

But in summer weather the case was quite altered. Indeed, as soon as ever the sun began to get a little power, and to warm the panes of glass in the nursery windows of the Town House, there was a hue and cry among all the children to be off to their Sea Castle home, and many a time had Papa and Mamma to send them angrily out of the room, because they would do nothing but beg to "set off directly." They were always "sure that the weather was getting quite hot," and "it **must** be summer, for they heard the sparrows chirping every morning the first thing," and they "thought they had seen a swallow," and "the windows got so warm with the sunshine, Nurse declared they were enough to burn one's fingers:" and so the poor little things teazed themselves and everybody else, every year, in their hurry to get back to their western home. But I dare say you have heard the old proverb, "One swallow does not make a summer;" and so it was proved very often to our friends. For the Spring season is so changeable, there are often some soft mild days, and then a cruel frost comes again, and perhaps snow as well; and people who have boasted about fine weather and put off their winter clothes, look very foolish.

Still Time passes on; and when May was half over, the Town House used to echo with shouts of noisy delight, and boxes were banged down in the passages, and there was a great calling out for cords, and much scolding about broken keys and padlocks, and the poor Carpenter who came to mend the trunks and find new keys to old locks, was at his wits' end and his patience' end too.

But at last the time came when all this bustle was succeeded by silence in the Town House, for carriages had rolled away with the happy party, and nobody was left behind but two or three women servants to clean out the deserted rooms.

And now then, my little readers, who are, I hope, wondering what is coming next, you must fancy to yourselves the old Sea Castle Home. It had two large turrets; and winding staircases led from the passages and kitchens underneath the sitting rooms, up to the top of the turrets, and so out upon the leads of the house, from which there was the most beautiful view of the Ocean you ever saw; and, as the top of the house was battlemented, like the top of your church tower, people could walk about quite safely and comfortably, without any fear of falling over. Then, though it is a very unusual thing near the Sea, there were delightful gardens at the place, and a few very fine old elm trees near the house, in which a party of rooks built their nests every year; and the children had gardens of their own, in which they could dig up their flowers to see if the roots were growing, to their heart's content, and perform other equally ingenious feats, such as watering a plant two or three times a day, or after a shower of rain, and then wondering that, with such tender care, the poor thing should rot away and die.

But I almost think the children liked the sands on the shore as well as the gardens, though they loved both. Not that there was any amusement astir by the water side there, as you have seen in other places where there are boats and fishermen and nets, and great coils of ropes, and an endless variety of entertaining sights connected with the seafaring business going on. Nay, in some places where there is not a very good shore for landing, it is an amusement of itself to see each boat or fishing yawl come in. There is such a contrast between the dark tarred wood and the white surf that dashes up all round it; and the fishermen are so clever in watching the favourable moment for a wave to carry them over their difficulties; that I think this is one of the prettiest sights one can see. But no such thing was ever seen on the shore by the old Sea Castle, for there was no fishing there. People thought the sea was too rough and the landing too difficult, and so no fishing village had ever been built, and no boats ever attempted to come within many miles of the place.

Nobody cared to ask further, or try to account for the wildness of the sea on that coast; but I can tell you all about it, although it must be in a sort of half whisper—**The place was on the borders of Fairy Land!** that is to say, many many unknown numbers of miles out at sea, right

opposite to the Castle, there was a Fairy Island, and it was the Fairies who kept the sea so rough all round them, for fear some adventurous sailor should approach the island, or get near enough to fish up some of the pearls and precious stones they kept in a crystal palace underneath the water.

So now you know the reason why the sea was so rough, and there was no fishing going on at the Sea Castle Home.

If you want to know whether any body ever saw the Fairy Island, I must say, yes; but very seldom. And never but in the evening when the sun was setting, and that under particular circumstances—namely, when he went down into a dark red bank of clouds, or when there was a lurid crimson hue over the sky just above the horizon. Then occasionally you might see the dim hazy outline as of a beautiful mountainous island against the clouds, or the deep-coloured sky. There is an island sometimes seen from our western coast, under similar circumstances, but which you strain your eyes in vain to discern by the brighter light of day.[6]

[6] Isle of Man from Blackpool.

It is a very ticklish thing to live on the borders of Fairy Land; for though you cannot get to the Fairies, they can get to you, and it is not altogether a pleasant thing to have your private affairs overseen and interfered with by such beings as they are, though sometimes it may be most useful and agreeable. Besides which, there was a Fairy-secret connected with the family that lived at the Sea Castle. An Ancestress of the present Mistress had been a Fairy herself, and though she had accommodated herself to mortal manners, and lived with her husband quite quietly as well as happily, and so her origin had been in a great measure forgotten, it was not unknown to her descendant, the Lady Madeline, who now lived in the place. And, in fact, soon after Lady Madeline first came there, a Fairy named Eudora had appeared to her, declaring herself to be a sort of distant cousin, and offering and promising friendship and assistance, whenever asked or even wished for. In return, she only begged to be allowed to visit, and ramble at will about the old place which she had known for so many many long years, and had once had the unlimited run of; and she protested with tears that the family should never in any way be disturbed by her. Lady Madeline could not well refuse the request, but I cannot say she gave her fairy acquaintance any encouragement; and so poor Eudora never showed herself to them again. And Madeline never thought much about her, except now and then accidentally, when, if they were walking on the sands, some extraordinarily rare and beautiful shells would be thrown ashore by a wave at the children's feet, as if tossed up especially for their amusement. And it was only in some such kind little way as this they were ever reminded of the Fairy's existence.

Lady Madeline's eldest son, Roderick, always seemed most favoured by the Fairy in the pretty things she sent ashore, and certainly he was a very nice boy, and a very good one on the whole—cheerful and honest as the daylight, and very intelligent; but I cannot tell you, dear readers, that he had **no** faults, for that was not at all likely, and you would not believe it if I said so, even although he is to be the Hero of my tale.

Now I do not want to make you laugh at him, but the story requires that I should reveal to you one of his weak points. Well then, although he was six years old, he was afraid of being alone in the dark! Sometimes when he was in the large dining room with his Father and Mother at dinner time, she would perhaps ask him to fetch something for her from the drawing room which was close by; but, do you know, if there were no candles in the room, he would look very silly and refuse to go, even though there were a fire sufficient to see by. He was too honest to make any false excuses, so he used just to say that the room was so dark he could not go!

Poor Madeline was very sorry, for she wanted her little boy to be brave, but somehow or other he had got very silly about his fears of being in the dark, and she could not succeed in curing him

of his folly.

"My dear Roderick," she would say sometimes, "if I send in some candles, will you go into the drawing room?"

"O yes, Mamma."

"Then do you really mean to say you think **the Candles take care of you**?"

"No, Mamma."

"Then why won't you go into the room without; you know there is a fire?

"Because it is so dark, Mamma."

Here was a difficulty indeed; for you see he **would** come back to the old point, and would not listen to reason.

One day some conversation of this sort having passed between them, Madeline, as she was wont to do, asked him if God could not take care of him by night as well as by day; in the dark as well as in light, for "the darkness and light are both alike to him."

"Oh yes," cried poor Roderick, with great animation, "and I can tell you a story about that. There was, once upon a time, a little Boy and a Nurse who went out walking, and they walked so long they got benighted in a very dark wood, and because it was so dark the Nurse screamed and was very much frightened; and the little boy said, 'Nurse, why are you frightened? Don't be frightened; I am not frightened. God can take care of us in the dark as well as in the light,'"

"Oh Roderick! what a pretty story," cried his Mamma.

And so thought Roderick; for his eye glistened and his cheek flushed as he came to the conclusion.

And here, dear readers, was the worst difficulty of all; for though Roderick's reason was quite convinced that God could take care of him in the dark, he still could not bear to be in the dark without the help of candles besides, though he quite knew they could not take care of him at all. So you see by this that Reason, though it may convince a person he is wrong, cannot put him right. There wants some other help for that. And here let me just stop a moment to beg you to beware of **bad habits**; for you see they become at last more powerful than reason itself.

I do not know how Roderick first got into his foolish habit, and it does not much matter. I know he at one time had a fancy there was something unpleasant about the pipes that carried the water about the house, and he would not for a long time go by the pipes alone. Now, how you laugh! well, but he got out of that nonsense; and I hope to be able to tell you that he got out of the other too: but at the time I speak of, he made his Mamma full of sorrow for his want of sense and courage.

It must be admitted that there were one or two excuses to be made for the child. There was a great contrast between the Town House and the Sea Castle. The Town House was full of lights. All the sitting rooms were generally lighted, for a great deal of company came there, and there were always lights along the passages; and the nursery windows looked into a square, and the square was lighted up by lamps every night; and it was one of Roderick's greatest pleasures to watch the lamplighter running quickly up the tall ladder to the lamps to light them, and then popping down again equally hurriedly, and running along (ladder and all) to the next lamp post, and so on, till the square was brilliant all round; and very often, as Roderick lay in his little bed watching the glimmering thrown by these pretty lamps on the nursery wall, he used to think and

think of his friend the nimble lamplighter, till he dropped fast asleep. You see, therefore, he had very little to try his courage in the Town House, and there was seldom or never any fuss about his fears till the move to the Sea Castle took place; and then there were no more lamps and lamplighters, and no more comfortable glimmerings from his bright pets the lamps after he went to bed; and he used to get silly directly, and declare that he saw bears whenever he shut his eyes; and he seemed to expect to find lions and tigers under the sofas, by the fuss he made when he was asked to go into the rooms. Certainly there was a grand old fashioned lamp in the hall of the Sea Castle; but the hall itself was so big, and went up so high, that the light in one part only seemed to make the shadow and darkness of the other part look blacker still; so that I must confess there was something gloomy about the house. Then, too, there were those two turrets with the winding staircases, and as Roderick had never dared to do any thing more than peep in at the low entrance doors below, where he saw nothing but four or five steps going up into complete blackness, he had got a sort of notion there must be something horrid about them.

Well; it was soon after this little boy's sixth birthday, that the family arrived at the Sea-Castle, and it so happened, that, on the day after their arrival, there was some very stormy and dismal weather. The wind howled very loudly, and there was a good deal of rain; and Lady Madeline wished they had waited a week or two longer. The sky was so charged and heavy, too, that they found the house very dark, even by day-light; and Roderick, who was a little tired with his journey the day before, began to fancy all kinds of nonsense; talked more about seeing bears than ever; and finally cried tremendously at going to bed, declaring he was sure there was a tiger in the coal-pan. Now you know, my dears, this was a bit of great nonsense; for Roderick knew quite well that there are no wild beasts in England but what are kept in very strong cages; and that the men who take wild-beast shows round the country can by no means afford to let their tigers sleep in nursery coal-pans!

Poor Madeline never liked to see any of her children go to bed in tears. And Roderick was so gay and merry generally, it seemed quite unnatural in him; but though at last he left off crying, she could not persuade him to be cheerful, and smile; for he declared that as soon as ever she took her candle away, he could not help seeing those unlucky bears. Was there ever any thing so silly before! She reasoned with him, but to no purpose. He always said he quite believed in God's presence, and His being able to take care of him; but, as I said before, his bad habit had got the better of his good sense, and he finished off every thing that could be said, by seeing bears, and dreading a tiger in the coal-pan.

"What are we to do with that child?" cried Madeline to her husband, as they were going to bed. "He is beginning as foolishly as ever this year, in spite of being a year older. I really shall at last be inclined to think that in spite of all her fair promises of friendship and assistance, and of never injuring the family, the Fairy Eudora must secretly frighten the child in some way we don't know of."

"No such thing, my dear Madeline; I cannot for a moment believe it;" said her husband. "I have a better opinion of your relations, the Fairies, than you have yourself. I am sure Eudora would not break her word for the world; and there is no mystery about Roderick's folly. He is full of fancies of all sorts,—some pretty, and some silly ones; and we must do every thing we can to cure him of the silly ones. It certainly is a very hard matter to accomplish, for I perceive he admits the truth of every thing you say, and yet is as silly as ever at the end. I heartily wish the Fairy Eudora **would** interfere to cure him of his nonsense!"

"And so do I, if she could, and would," sighed Madeline; "but she has quite deserted us. Besides, if she were to come, I don't see how she could possibly do any good. Fairies cannot change little boys' hearts; and I must confess I never yet got any good myself from having a Fairy ancestress, and I have no confidence in them.—Still," pursued the good lady, as she laid her head on her pillow, "I am not able, it appears, to convince Roderick myself; and therefore I feel, with you, that I wish the Fairy would come and try."

"I fear it is in vain to say so now, Madeline. We have wished the poor creature out of the way so often for the last ten years, that it is not very likely a single wish the other way will bring her to us."

"No, indeed," murmured the Fairy Eudora, who at that moment was standing on the shore of the Fairy Island; "you are a pretty pair, you two, to think of such a thing! I begged to be allowed to come about the place years ago, and you didn't refuse; but you always kept me away by **wishing** I mightn't come; and now, because you are puzzled to know what to do with your silly child, you want me with you for the first time these ten years! Oh, you selfish people, don't fancy I'll come near you!" And the justly angry Fairy stamped her foot in indignation, and retired into private apartments in the palace.

Do not be surprised at what you have just heard, my dear children; for though you may have never thought about the power and importance of **wishes**, there is, I assure you, a great deal of both one and the other belonging to them. Some people talk, indeed, of "mere wishes," as if they were trifles light as air; but it is not so. To prove this, first think what importance is attached to them in the Scriptures. Wishes are a sort of porch or doorway to actions. In the Tenth Commandment we are forbidden to **wish** for what belongs to our neighbour;—for who is so likely to break the Eighth Commandment, and steal, as the man who breaks the Tenth, and wishes for any thing that is not his?

And so, all the evil in the world begins by **wishing** something wrong; and if you can cure yourself of wishing wrongly, you will very seldom **do** wrong.

Now you see, I am sure, how important wishes are for evil; but they are equally strong for good. For, if you wish well to any one, you have opened the first door to doing him a kindness. And if you heartily wish to be good, you have opened the first gate on the road of becoming so. Of course, wishes will not do every thing; but they do a great deal.

And there is another thing. They never fall to the ground unnoticed. Though you and I cannot look into each other's hearts, or hear the wishes breathed there, there is One who hears them all. Good wishes, my dear children, all ascend upwards to the throne of Grace, like sweet perfume. They are all accepted and remembered; and, I fear I must add, that bad wishes go up too, and are noted in His book who takes account of all we do.

Be sure, therefore, that you encourage your hearts in a habit of good, and kind, and charitable wishes; and if ever the bad ones come into your head, pray against them, and drive them away.

Meanwhile do not be surprized that in Fairy tales, Fairies are supposed to hear wishes concerning themselves. And so Eudora heard those about her coming and curing the child of his folly; and as I have told you, she was very indignant at the selfishness of both Lady Madeline and her husband.

A few days after the family had taken up their residence in the Sea Castle, the weather began to improve; and, though the wind lasted, the sun came out; and all the children and the nurses went walking on the sands. As it was the first time that year, you may guess what shouting and delight there was; how the little spades dug away at holes for the sea-water to come up in, and how the children caught at the sea-weeds that were scattered on the lands to carry home to their Mamma; how they picked up shells, and gambolled about in all directions, declaring that they had never known the Sea Castle Home so delightful before. By degrees they had strayed to a considerable distance along the sands, with the nurses, when, alas! the latter perceived that a storm was coming on, and it caught them long before they reached home. A strong wind blew off the sea, and they had difficulty in keeping their feet, and at last two or three of the children were almost hidden in a cloud of sand, which a violent gust suddenly drove against them. All the little party cried lustily, because the sand had blown into their eyes, and made them smart, and sad

work there was in getting them home again. But they reached home at last, dripping with wet from hailstones, and their eyes all red and disfigured by the sand and wind. None, however, were so bad as those I have mentioned, who had been so covered over by the sand that it had even got down their necks, and made them uncomfortable all over. Among these was Roderick, who cried a great deal more than he ought to have done, as the nurses thought, and did not stop and declare himself comfortable as the rest did, after the sand had been washed out of his eyes with rose water. In fact he kept crying more or less all the afternoon, saying his eyes hurt him so, and at last he could get no relief but by holding them shut.

Now it is just possible you may have heard of a complaint of the eyes called Ophthalmia, which comes on sometimes in very hot countries, India for instance; and sometimes in travelling across the deserts of Arabia, where the sand gets into the eyes, and irritates them very much; it can very often be cured, but not always, and when it cannot, it ends in blindness. Lady Madeline knew all about the complaint; and, therefore, you will not be surprised to hear that when she found her little boy's eyes did not get better, and that he persisted in keeping them shut, because they then became easy, she thought it right to send to some miles' distance for a doctor, who accordingly arrived at the Sea Castle before nightfall. But when he came he shook his head very much, for he could not understand what was the matter; and when he persuaded Roderick to lift up his eyelids, to let him see his eyes, he could perceive nothing amiss but a little redness, which the wind and sand quite accounted for. Still the child was uneasy, and would keep his eyes shut; so the Doctor thought he must try something, and he used some lotions common in such cases; but, as they did no good, the kind old gentleman, at Madeline's request, consented to sit by the little boy's bedside at night; when, all at once, as he was carefully dabbing his eyes with rosewater, he perceived that the child was fast asleep.

The Doctor was delighted, and went to his mother, who was then with her husband, and said that as Roderick had gone to sleep so nicely, he had no doubt that his eyes would be well when he awoke in the morning, and so he took his leave, for he had other patients to visit.

It was then between twelve and one o'clock, and Lady Madeline, much comforted in heart, went to bed. At an early hour next morning, however, she went to Roderick's bedside, and perceived he was just waking.

To the question of "How are you, my darling?" his cheerful joyous voice made answer, "Oh, quite well, Mamma, and I've such a funny dream to tell you, and my eyes don't hurt me a bit, not a bit! but I'm afraid to open them for fear they should. I can tell you something so funny the Doctor said last night, Mamma." "Never mind about the doctor, you rogue," cried Madeline, "I see you are all right, only just open your dear old eyes, that I may tell Papa I have seen them when I go back to dress."

"Then I will, Mamma, to please you!" and up sat the pretty child in his bed, and opened wide his blue eyes. There was no redness—it was all gone—but

"Mamma! where are you," cried Roderick, "I have opened my eyes, and they don't hurt—but it is quite dark: **isn't the night over**?..."

Oh, my dear readers! there was a stream of sunshine on the lovely face and bright hair of little Roderick as he spoke, and the poor blue eyes were turned up to his mother, looking vainly for her face. You cannot wonder if I add that she sank down fainting on the bed; and when Roderick's scream of terror brought the nurses to them, she was carried away insensible from the room.

Her darling was utterly blind.

And now imagine to yourselves how the afflicted parents sent for the best doctors the country afforded, and how one thing after another was tried—but, alas! every thing in vain, for the medical men were all quite puzzled. Still some people gave them hopes, and in spite of many disappointments, they went on trying to hope for several months. At last they settled to leave the sea castle and go to the great town sooner than usual, thinking some of the doctors there might be cleverer than the country ones. But they had no better success. Perhaps now you would like to know how Roderick behaved. When his Mamma fell on his bed, at first he thought she was dead, and it was with the greatest difficulty he could be made to believe any thing else, and he cried, and cried, and was very sad till his Mamma was well enough for him to be taken to her, and then do you know, poor fellow, he was so much pleased to hear her speak, and be kissed by her, that he still had no time to think about himself. Only he begged to sit close to her, and have hold either of her hand or gown, and make her say something to him every now and then. And so it was that the fright and shock he had had about thinking she was dead, had made so strong an impression on him that for several days the making himself sure she was alive was a constant occupation and interest; and so much did he think about it that it was considered best for his little bed to be brought into the room where his Mamma slept, and put near hers, so that he could talk to her when he awoke and got frightened about her again. And thus passed many days in which every body thought a great deal more about his eyes than he did himself. Besides from the cheerful things they said to him he quite expected to be better some day; and so weeks and months passed, and by the time the hope of recovering his sight began to fade away, and nobody any longer dared to say they expected it, he was beginning to get used to his condition, and to find out amusements in new ways. Thus mercifully does a kind Providence temper people's minds to the afflictions He sends. They are often more dreadful to think of than to bear; for God can give patience and cheerfulness and comfort to those that do not grumble and repine.

Madeline only exacted one promise from her husband, namely, that he would not allow the doctors to use any very severe and violent measures with her little boy, and this being settled, she struggled to bear the trouble with resignation. After the first alternations of hopes and fears were over, the Mother's mind took a new turn. "It is our chief duty now," she said, "to make our child's life as happy as it is possible to be with blindness, and therefore," added she to the elder children, "we must try our best to teach him to do all the nice things he can without seeing." That day she asked him to come and hold worsted for her to wind, and he was quite delighted to find that with some blunders, and once or twice slipping it off his fingers, he could manage it very well. Then the children undertook to teach him how to play at ball, and you cannot think how clever he became. At first certainly they had always to pick up his ball for him when it fell, and who was not glad to do it for poor brother Roderick? but by degrees he could judge by the sound in what direction it had tumbled, and he would often succeed in finding it before any one could come up to it. Then there was laughing and scrambling without end. Reading aloud to him was the easiest thing of all, but the little folks were not satisfied with that alone. They made a sort of pet of the blind brother, and were as proud of teaching him to do any thing fresh, as you would be of teaching your dog to sit up and shake hands, or perform any wonderful feat. It was their constant amusement; and by degrees Roderick could play at all sorts of games with them, ay, and run after them, and catch them too as well as you could do, for he soon got to remember how the furniture in the great hall and all the rooms stood, and he could run about without hurting himself in a wonderful manner. And when it was evening and grew dark, he got on better than they did, for, if they couldn't see, they were clumsy, whereas he was learning to do without seeing at all.

Such of my readers as have seen one of those excellent institutions called "blind schools," will not wonder at any thing I have said, but on the contrary, will know that I have not told half or a quarter of what may be done to teach blind children a variety of employments. At those schools you may see children making beautiful baskets of various-coloured strips of osier arranged in patterns; and they never forget on which side of them the different colours are laid, and this work

they can go on with quite fast, even while you stand talking to them—and they learn to do many many other nice things also besides basket making.

Of late years too they have begun to read in books made on purpose for them, with the letters raised above the rest of the paper, so that they can **feel** the shapes with their fingers. Is not this wonderful? And they can be taught all these things much more easily than you would imagine, for it is really true that when one of the senses has been taken away, the others by having all the exercise thrown upon them, become so sharp and acute, they do twice their usual work, if I may so express it. This is a merciful dispensation of Providence, which renders the loss of the one that is gone much less hard to bear. And does it not teach us also, what a valuable thing constant practice is? Neither you nor I can feel or hear half so clearly as blind people can, who practise feeling and hearing on so many occasions where we save ourselves the trouble, by using sight instead.

To return to Roderick. You perhaps expected to hear that he fretted and petted very much after he was first blind, but really it was not so; and though occasionally he may have grumbled a little, it was only when he was slightly peevish, as children will sometimes be, and I believe he would have found something to grumble about then, even if he had seen as well as you do.

Besides, as I said before, the knowledge of his misfortune came upon him by degrees; and after he had got used to it, he did not think much about it. When the family moved to the great town, Roderick had as it were to begin his blind lessons over again, for he had to learn to remember all about the rooms and the furniture there; but with a kind little brother or sister always at hand to help him he soon became expert in the town house too, and could run up and down the long flights of stairs with the nimblest of them. I believe the only melancholy wish he ever uttered was heard on the first day he reached the town house. When his Mamma came to see him in the nursery that evening, she found him kneeling in a chair against one of the windows—and on going up to him he threw his arms round her neck and said, "Oh, Mamma, if I could but see the lamplighters!" Do not laugh, dear readers, if I add that the tears trickled over his cheeks as he spoke. His mother was much distressed, as she always was when she saw him thinking of his affliction, but she sat down and said, "Never mind, dear Roderick, I will tell you all they do to-night." And so she did, and she made her account so droll, of how the lamplighter ran, and how he seized his ladder in such a hurry, and all the whole business, that by the time she got to the end, and said, "and now he has come to the last lamp-post,—ah, he's up before I can tell you! and pop! the lamp is lit, and down he runs, and off with his ladder to the next street—and now the lamps are shining bright all round the square, and I must go to dinner,"—Roderick was clapping his hands and laughing as merrily as ever, and he got down from the chair quite satisfied. Still for a few weeks he used always to get one of the children to tell him of the lamps lighting, and this was the only sad little fancy the poor child ever indulged in.

The great town gave him various new amusements. His Parents used every now and then to take him to some fine conservatory, where flowers are shown even in winter, and where he could smell various new and rare ones, and be told all about their beautiful colours. Then sometimes in the parks and gardens there was a band playing, which was a great delight. And besides that, they took him occasionally to morning concerts for an hour or so; for though it is not usual to take children to those places, he was deprived of so many enjoyments, they let him have all they could: and especially musical ones, for it is a very common thing for blind people to become very fond of music, and Roderick was so, and among other employments learnt to play. I cannot, however, I am sorry to say, add that the great doctors in the town were able to do him any good, though they tried very much, and some of them were so much charmed and interested by his cheerful manner and sweet disposition, that they got quite fond of him, and would often have him come and see them, and play with their children, who were instructed to amuse him in every possible way, and as children are naturally kindhearted, this was generally a pleasant task, and many of them quite looked forward to the visits of the little blind boy.

And so passed on a long and rather severe winter, and presently Roderick's birthday came round, and there was great wondering as to what Mamma could do to keep it. And when the time came it turned out that she had got a band of musicians to come and play—and the children danced, and Roderick among them, for some sister was always ready to take him under her especial charge. And then some older children acted a little play, which he could hear and understand, and his Mamma described to him who came in and went out, and in this manner he enjoyed it nearly as much as the others.

Well, the spring-time came once more, and with it the season for returning to the old Sea Castle, and the children went through their usual round of impatience, and I cannot say that Roderick at all forbore, for his Papa had promised to teach him to climb a ladder like the lamplighter when he got back, and he was by that means to go up one of the very old elm trees, and get on to a great branch there was, which was curled into a sort of easy chair, and there he was to sit and play at being judge, and hold trials, and I know not what. There were besides so many schemes for his instruction and amusement, and among other things, there was to be a band established in the neighbouring village, which should come and play to them in the old Sea Castle—that the child was more wild with hurry and impatience than ever, and said more absurd things than the rest, for he used every day to declare the **flies** were becoming so numerous and troublesome he was plagued out of his life by their walking over his face and nose! But as none of his brothers and sisters ever saw the flies, we are obliged to conclude the tickling he talked of was only an effect of his excited imagination.

At last, however, they went, and in compliment to Roderick's wishes it was a week or two sooner than usual. The return to the Sea Castle home rather oppressed poor Lady Madeline's spirits. The doctors in the great town had failed—it was now clear that nothing could be done, and in spite of all her sincere endeavours to be resigned, she could not help feeling this coming back to the original scene of her misfortune very much. One day—it was the anniversary of the day on which her poor child became blind, the Lady Madeline was working in her sitting-room that faced the Sea,—Mothers' memories are very acute about anniversaries, and days, and even hours marked by particular events. They may not talk much about them perhaps, but they recollect times and circumstances connected with their children very keenly, and therefore it is not surprizing that on this day the poor lady was sitting in her room working, or trying to work, but thinking of nothing in the world but of that day year and her blind child. It was a beautiful evening, and the window was thrown wide open, and the fresh but soft breeze from the Sea blew pleasantly on her face as she sat at her work-table by the casement—but lovely as the scene outside was, she seldom lifted up her eyes to look at it. She had been all her life a great admirer of beautiful scenes, and of all the varieties the changes of day and night produce—but now the sight of any thing particularly lovely brought so painfully before her mind the fact that her child's eyes were closed to all these things, that she often forbore to look again, and so spared herself a repetition of the pang. Madeline's eyes therefore remained upon her work, or on her knee when she ceased working,—for ever and anon there was a burst of noise and merriment about the old house, which startled her from her painful thoughts. It was, however, the happy voices of her children, and again and again she sank into her melancholy mood, and so continued till the red hue of a very red sunset burst as it were suddenly into the room, and lighted up the portrait of Roderick, which hung over the mantel-piece. Involuntarily Madeline's eyes glanced from the lovely countenance of her then bright-eyed boy, thus illuminated, to the sun beyond the Sea. She was too late, however. He had just descended behind the waves in a perfect flood of crimson glory, but as she gazed, (for she could not withdraw-her eyes,) a haze—yes, the softest and most etherial cloud-like haze, showing the outline of a beautiful mountainous island, rose in the far off distance, just on the verge of the horizon. It was the Fairy Island. It recalled to the mother's remembrance the existence of her Fairy cousin once more. "Cruel, cruel Eudora," she exclaimed, "you offered me friendship and assistance, and in the hour of trouble and affliction you have never been near to help or even to comfort me."

And Madeline, in the bitterness of her heart, closed the window hastily and angrily, and sat down. Soon, however, the noises she had several times heard of the children playing, became louder and louder, and the whole party burst at last into the room. "Mamma, Mamma," they cried, scarcely able to speak, "guess where Roderick has been." "I cannot." "Oh, but do, dear Mamma!" cried a little thing with fairy curls, "do guess." "I cannot." "I'll tell Mamma," cried a stout sturdy fellow, a little older; "Mamma! he's been up the winding staircase of one turret, and all along the leads and down the winding staircase of the other turret, and he has done it three times, and he has seen to do it better than I can."

Here there was a burst of laughter and a violent clapping of hands at the little fellow's **Irish** account.

"But why don't you do it as well?" asked an elder girl, "you that are going to be a soldier too!"

"Yes; I know I'm going to be a soldier; and I'll try and do it as well as Roderick;" and off ran the eager child, followed by the rest of the party, all but Roderick. He lingered behind, and edging his way easily and quietly as usual to his Mother, having asked her where she was, he sat down on a footstool at her feet. The slight answer she had occasion to make, revealed by its tone, to the now acute blind child, that his Mother's mood was serious, and therefore he did not talk and laugh of what he had accomplished, as he otherwise might have done. There was a silence of some minutes: at last, "Mamma," said Roderick gravely, "a light has broken in upon me to-day."

Lady Madeline started, and with difficulty suppressed a groan. Roderick felt the start: "Oh Mamma, Mamma," cried he more cheerfully, "you must not do that! I wasn't thinking about earthly light in the least, but of a light which I know, when you come to hear of it, you will say is a great deal better."

"Indeed! dear Roderick," said Lady Madeline, trying to seem interested.

"Yes **indeed**. Mamma. Why, do **you** remember, (**I** had never thought about it till it came into my head to-day;) but do **you** remember the silly time when I wouldn't fetch you any thing from the drawing room, unless there were candles in the room?"

"I recollect something about it," said his Mother.

"Oh, I'm so glad you do; because now you can laugh with me over the nonsense I used to talk and feel then: I remember I used to tell you I saw **Bears** when I shut my eyes, and wouldn't go by the pipes in the passage, and more such foolish stuff! How odd it seems that I should never have thought about this before, but I never did, and it never came into my head distinctly till to-day." And here Roderick fell into a kind of dream for a few minutes, but he soon began again. "You know what I have done to-day, Mamma. They told you quite right; but they forgot to tell you I have been practising walking across the leads for two or three days, that I might be able to go the great round to-day on purpose to tell you of it; because I thought you would be so much pleased to know I could go alone all over the house on the day year when I was first blind. So now, Mamma, if ever, when I am grown up to be a man, an enemy comes and attacks the old Sea Castle, I shall be able to run about and give the alarm, for you know I could hear them, if I could do nothing else."

There was another pause, for Madeline could not speak: the often restrained tears for her son's misfortune had this day burst forth, and could not be kept back; but Roderick did not know, and went on.

"Certainly those old foolish fears were very wrong, Mamma. And I can't think how it was, for you used to remind me always that God could take care of us by night as well as by day, in darkness as well as in light; and still somehow, though I knew it was true, I didn't believe it,—at

least, not so as not to be afraid in the dark: how very wrong it was! Still I had quite forgotten all about it till this evening. But, as I was going the last of the three rounds, I sat down on the leads for a few minutes to enjoy the air. The sun was just setting, I am sure, for it felt so fresh and cool; and it was, as I sat there, that it came into my head how strange it was that, since the day I was first blind, I had never thought any more about being afraid in the dark! or by night any more than by day! Indeed it has been quite a play to me ever since to do different things, and find my way about in all the rooms and all over the house, without seeing; and I have only known night from day by getting up and going to bed. So that you see, Mamma, being always in the dark, has quite cured me of being afraid of it: and is not this a very good thing indeed?"

"Very," murmured Madeline.

"I knew you would say so! But that isn't all I have got to say. A great deal more than that came into my head when I was out upon the leads."

And Roderick nestled closer to his Mother, and laid his arms across her lap.

"Something to comfort you still more, Mamma."

She could not speak.

"Mamma, you are crying! I feel your tears on my hand. Do not cry about me."

"Go on, dear Roderick."

"Don't you think," continued the child, "that people who wont listen to what is told them, and wont be cured of being foolish and wicked, are very like the old Jews you told us about yesterday, who had God among them, and Moses teaching them what God wished them to do, and still were as disobedient as ever?"

"It is true, Roderick, we are all apt to resemble the Jews in their journey through the wilderness."

"Yes, Mamma; and particularly people who can't trust in God, though they know He is everywhere. The Jews knew He was in the cloud and the pillar, and still were always afraid He couldn't take care of them. And what came into my head was, that I used to be as bad as those old Jews once; knowing that God was present everywhere to take care of me, and still not **feeling** it so as really to believe it, and not be afraid. But the blindness has quite cured me, and is it not very likely that it came on purpose to do so, and to make me trust in God; for I have done so more and more, dear Mamma, as I groped about this year, for I have all along hoped He would take care of me, and keep me from falling; and, therefore, I think the blindness has done me a great deal of good, and I hope I shall never be like the naughty old Jews again! This is what I had to say; and I hope you will be as glad as I am."

"I will try, my darling," cried poor Madeline.

The tenderest love, the bitterest grief, mixed with earnest struggles for resignation to the will of Heaven, contended in the Mother's bosom, as she clasped her innocent child to her heart. He was almost frightened. She lifted him on to her knees, and buried her face on his shoulder. He put his young arms round her neck, and almost wondered why she sobbed so bitterly; but he felt he must not speak.

There was a painful pause. Suddenly, however, a strange faint light began to creep into the room, which had hitherto been gradually darkening in the twilight. It was a mysterious gleam,

like nothing that is ever seen. It increased in strength and brilliancy, till at length the whole place became illuminated.

Roderick's head was against his Mother's breast; and, besides, **he** could not see.

She, however, suddenly started up; the light had become so powerful, it had forced her from her grief. She sprung up in terror, and a faint shriek burst from her lips.

"Mamma, what is the matter?" cried Roderick, holding her fast.

"Oh, the light—the light, my child! there is such a light!" answered Madeline.

"Mother, you are not afraid of **Light**!" exclaimed the bewildered Roderick.

"Oh, but **this** light! it is like no other;—it is awful!"

"Mother,—it is not the light of **Fire**, is it," cried poor Roderick, now at last turning pale. "But even if it is, remember that I can help you **now**; I can go everywhere,—all over, and fear nothing. I can go and fetch my brothers and sisters, one by one! Oh, send me; send me, Mamma! I shall be less afraid than any of you, for I cannot see the horrid light that frightens you!"

As he finished, a gentle, prolonged "Hush!" resounded through the room; like the soothing, quieting sound of lullaby to an infant. And in the midst of the beaming light, the form of the long-forgotten Fairy Eudora appeared before the eyes of the astonished Madeline.

"The Sea Castle is not on Fire, you dear, brave child," cried the Fairy; "and your Mother has no cause for fear. I am a friend."

"Cousin!" cried the bewildered Madeline, "why are you here?" and a terrible suspicion flashed through her mind: and she pointed to her boy, and added, trembling with agony—

"Is that **your** doing?"

"What if I say it **is**, Cousin Madeline. There is a long story about that, but we shall have time for it hereafter.—Dear little Cousin Roderick," pursued the Fairy, seating herself, and drawing Roderick to her. "You have been a good boy, and got **light out of darkness**. Mind you hold it fast. You did not use the light well, though, when you had it, Cousin Roderick."

"I know I didn't," was his answer.

"If you could live the light time over again, you would be wiser, Roderick."

"I hope I should indeed," he murmured fervently; "but it is not likely I shall ever see the light again."

"Little boys shouldn't say things are not likely, when they don't know any thing about them," cried the Fairy gaily, to cheer them up.

"I dare say, if I were to ask you, you would tell me it was a bit of sand that got into your eyes last year, that made you blind; but it was no such thing, clever Master Roderick. Your naughty Cousin Eudora had something to do with that; but, luckily, she can put her own work straight again. Cousin Madeline, what do you think of my pretty light?"

"Eudora, it is dreadful."

"Then shut your eyes, poor thing, we don't want to blind you. But Roderick and I have not done talking yet. Come, little boy, lift up your face towards me, and open those pretty eyes wide, that I may see if I can't do them some good. Why, they are as blue as the water round our island! There, now, they are looking at my face. Mind you tell me if you think me pretty."

"Eudora!" exclaimed Madeline.

"Sit down, sit down, and shut your eyes, good woman. Now, Roderick, wont even my Fairy light break through your darkness?"

"I think it will," sighed Roderick; "there is a white light all round me, as if I had gone up into a bright white cloud. You frighten me, Fairy! Take away the light, and put me back into the darkness again."

"Not so, my pretty Roderick; but I will soften it a little;" and she waved her wand, and the brilliancy subsided.

"Fairy, I see you now," screamed Roderick, springing up, for he was sitting at her feet; "and oh, how beautiful you are!"

"Roderick!" cried a voice from behind him. He turned; and Mother and Son were locked in each other's arms.

Surely I need say no more about this? though perhaps nobody but a Mother can quite know how happy and thankful Lady Madeline was. And as to Roderick, he was delighted too! Not but what he had been very happy and contented before; but sight was a new pleasure to him now; a sort of treat, like a birthday or Christmas present, which puts every one into high spirits. It was so charming to him, poor fellow, (for he was very affectionate), to actually **see** his Mamma again; and this put something else into his head, and off he ran out of the room.

"Eudora," Madeline began, "how am I to thank you! Can you ever forgive my old unkindness?"

"Cousin Madeline," replied the Fairy, "I bear no malice to any one, least of all to you, who come of a race I love, and of a family I consider my own. No, no, good soul. I have never borne you ill-will, though my kindness has been severe. Look! I know you love me **now**. Love me always, Cousin Madeline, and let me ramble undisturbed about your earthly home; but, mind! no more unkind wishes, however slight. They come like evil winds to our Fairy island. You kept me away long enough by those; and when you wished me with you, to get your child out of his folly, I was very angry, and thought I wouldn't come; but your, and your husband's wish was so strong and earnest, it haunted me day and night; and I had no comfort till I had resolved to help you. And here, Madeline, you have something to forgive **me**. My remedy has been a harsh, a very harsh one for so slight a fault; but at first I intended it to last only a few days. Afterwards, however, seeing how it was acting upon him, and upon you all, for good, I let it work its full effect: and I think it has been greatly blessed! Now, farewell! Time is flying, and I must begone."

And thus the Fairy and Madeline walked to the window, which the latter reopened, and there was the full moon sailing in the cloudless sky, and lighting up the lovely, and, this evening, calm and unruffled sea.

The cousins embraced; and in a few minutes the Fairy had disappeared in the distance. Madeline lingered awhile at the casement, thinking tenderly of the gentle-hearted Fairy, and watching the horizon. At last the outline of the Fairy's home appeared clear and bright against the dark blue heaven, and then subsided gently by degrees. And Madeline closed the window, grateful and happy, and went after her boy. But she had not far to go; for he was coming along

the passages with all his brothers and sisters, wild with delight. And oh, how Roderick chattered and talked about all their faces, and how he loved to see the fat cheeks of one near his own age, and how some had grown, and their noses improved, and what beautiful curls another had! In short, if he had gone on long they would all have got quite conceited and fancy, and fancied themselves a set of downright beauties. But you see it was **love** that made poor Roderick admire them all so much; and, above all, he was charmed when they smiled. Ah, how little do brothers and sisters know how tender their recollections of each others' faces would become, were a separation to take place among them! Then all the sweet smiles and pretty looks would be recalled, that in every day life are seen with such indifference. "Little children, love one another," during the happy days when you live together in health and comfort.

Can you guess, dear readers, what a joyous evening it was, that day at the Sea Castle Home? How the poor Father rejoiced, and how the old Hall was lighted up for the Servants, to share in the joy by a merry dance; and how all the children danced too; and how a barrel of good ale was tapped, for every one to drink to the health and happiness of Master Roderick, and all the family. But you never **can** guess how Roderick teased all his brothers and sisters that evening, by constantly kissing them. In the midst of a country dance he would run right across to the ladies, when he ought to be standing still and polite, and kiss two or three of his sisters as they were waiting to dance in their turn, and tell them how nice they looked! Or he would actually run right away from his place, to his Papa and Mamma;—jump on their knees, and hug them very hard, and then run back again, perhaps, into the middle of the dance, and put every thing into confusion. But the happiest scene of all was, when the Father and Mother thanked God that night for the blessing that had returned to their little boy.

And do not ask me, I beg, if he ever was afraid of being in the dark again. No, dear Readers, his temporary misfortune had taught him the best of all lessons;—A LIVING FAITH AND TRUST IN THE PROTECTING OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Preamble (From Life.)

Van Artevelde. These are but words.
Elena. My lord, they're full of meaning!

Van Artevelde.

Grace had been said, and Mamma was busy carving for the large party of youngsters who sat around the comfortable dinner-table, when a little voice from among them called out,

"Mamma, do you think a giant could see a carraway seed?"

Now there was no sweet loaf on the table, nor even on the sideboard—neither had there been any plum cake in the house for some time—nor were there any carraway seeds in the biscuits

just then. —In short, there was nothing which could be supposed to have suggested the idea of carraway seeds to the little boy who made the enquiry. Still he did make it, and though he went on quietly with his dinner, he expected to receive an answer.

Had the good Lady at the head of the table not been the mother of a large family, she might possibly have dropt the carving knife and fork, in sheer astonishment at the unaccountableness of the question, but as it was, she had heard so many other odd ones before, that she did not by outward sign demonstrate the amusement she felt at this, but simply said,—"**Perhaps he could**"—for she knew that it was out of her power to speak positively as to whether a Giant could see a carraway seed or not.

Now dear little readers, what do **you** think about this very important affair? Do you think a Giant could see a carraway seed or not?—"Oh yes," you all cry,—"**of course he could!**"

Nay, my dears, there is no "of course" at all in the matter! Can any of you, for example, see the creatures that float about and fight in a drop of water from the Serpentine River? No, certainly not! except through a microscope. Well, but **why** not?—you do not know. That I can easily believe! But then you must never again say that "**of course**" a Giant could see a carraway seed.

It is entirely a question of **relative proportion**: so now you feel quite small, and admit your total ignorance, I hope. Yes! it all depends upon whether the giant is as much bigger than the carraway seed, as you are bigger than the curious little insects that float about and fight in the drop of water from the Serpentine river—for if he is, we may conclude from analogy that a giant could **not** see a carraway seed except through a microscope. You see it is a sort of rule of three sum, but as I cannot work it out, I tell you honestly that neither do I know whether a giant could see so small an object or not, and I advise you all to be as modest as I am myself, and never speak positively on so difficult a point.

But enough of this! Turn we now to another point, about which I **can** speak positively—namely, that in **one** sense the world is full of Giants who cannot see Carraway seeds.

"It must be in the sense of **Non**sense I should think then!" observes somewhat scornfully the young lady who is reading this story aloud—"as if we could believe in there being giants now!"

Very wittily remarked! my dear young lady, for your age.—I take you to be about seventeen, and I see by the compression of your pretty mouth that you consider yourself quite a judge and an authority. Only take care you don't grow up into one of those Giants yourself! There is something very suspicious to me in the glance of your eye. "Ridiculous!" murmurs the fair damsel in question.

Not at all so: only you travel too fast; by which I mean you speak too hastily. You learn Italian, I dare say? Oh yes, of course, for you sing. Well then, **Ombra adorata** that is "beloved shadow;" **aspetta** that is, "wait"—"wait, my beloved shadow" (of a charming young lady), give me breathing time, and I will explain myself. As you are an Italian student, I presume you have heard of the great Italian poet Dante. Now Dante in his **Convito** or "Banquet" tells his readers that writings may be understood, and therefore ought to be explained in four different senses or meanings. There is first the literal sense; secondly, the allegorical; thirdly, the moral; and fourthly, the **anagorical**. Now I know you can't explain this last word to me, for I would wager a large sum that you never tasted of Dante's Banquet—no, not so much as the smallest crumb from it; and therefore how **should** you know what he means by the anagorical sense? Give me leave to have the honour of enlightening you, then. The anagorical is what the dictionaries call the **anagogical** sense. A sense beyond this world; a sense above the senses; a spiritual sense making common things divine. It is hard to be arrived at and difficult of comprehension. Now in the matter of the nice little boy's question about the Giant and the carraway seed, (for none but a nice

little boy could have excogitated any thing so comical), I have set my heart upon talking to you about it in the four above mentioned senses. And having already descanted on the **literal** sense, I had just made an assertion which appertained to the **allegorical** sense, when you so inopportunely interrupted me, My Ombra Adorata, with your sharp observation about **non**sense: so now we will go on in peace and quietness, if you please.

In an allegorical sense the world is full of giants who cannot see carraway seeds.

For what are Giants but great men and great women? and the world abounds with people who consider themselves as belonging to that class. And a great many of them—Giants of Cleverness, Giants of Riches, Giants of Rank—Giants of I know not how many things besides, who are walking about the world every day, very often feel themselves to be quite raised above the point of attending to trifles; so that you see I may (in an allegorical sense) say strictly of them that they cannot see carraway seeds. Oh my dears, however elevated you may be, or may become; however great or rich or learned, beware, I pray you, of being a Giant who cannot see a carraway seed!

For, as my explanation of the **moral** sense now goes on to show you; it is so far from being, as these Giants suppose, a proof of their **superiority** that they cannot see or notice things they consider beneath them—that it is, in fact, an evidence of some imperfection or defect in either their moral or intellectual structure. Just as it is a proof of our eyes being imperfect, that we cannot see the little water insects as well as a great big elephant. I am sure you will allow there is nothing **to boast of** in this, and so if the contemplation of great things makes you incapable of attending to small ones, do remember that **'tis nothing to boast about or be proud of**. And take very great care you make no mistakes as to what is great and what is insignificant. With which warning I close my remarks on the moral lesson, and proceed to that **anagogical** or spiritual meaning, which will I hope be my justification for dwelling so long on the subject, and my best introduction to a story of a serious though not of a melancholy character. But first, my dear little readers, let me call upon you in the words which you hear in church:

"Lift up your hearts!"

and I would have you answer,

"We lift them up unto the Lord."

For it is indeed of Him—the Lord of all Lords, that I now wish to speak to you. He made the Sun and Stars and the great mountains of our earth; but He made also the smallest insects that crowd the air and water, and which are invisible to our imperfect eyes.

He rules the nations by His word, and "binds kings in chains, and nobles with links of iron," as the psalm expresses it; but also not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge and consent. Angels and Archangels worship around His throne, but His ears are equally open to the prayer of the youngest child who lifts up its little heart to Him!

The universe is at His feet, but the smallest events of our lives are under His especial superintendence and care. Yes! nothing, however small and insignificant, that is connected with the present or future welfare of the smallest and most insignificant of his creatures, is **beneath the notice of God**!

Ah! here is indeed a lesson for the fancied Giants of the world!—For, in this picture of Almighty greatness combined with infinite condescension, we see that real Perfection requires no Pride to elevate it.

But I said this anagogical sense was hard to be attained to and difficult of comprehension.

And is it not so? Is it not very difficult to believe thoroughly that the great God whom we hear about, really and truly cares how we behave and what we do—really and truly listens to our prayers—really and truly takes as much interest in us as our earthly Fathers and Mothers do?

Ah, I am sure it must be very difficult, because so few people do it, although we should all be both better and happier if we did. We should say our prayers so much more earnestly, try to keep out of sin and naughtiness so much more heartily, and, above all, always be contented with whatever happened; for who could be anxious, and discontented about their condition or circumstances, if they **quite** believed that every thing that happened to them was watched over and arranged for their good, by the wisest, kindest, and most powerful of Beings? If you, my dear children, who have been reading the fairy tales in this book, were to be told that a most wise, most kind, and most powerful Fairy had suddenly taken you for life under her particular care, and that she would never lose sight of you by night or by day, how delighted you would be!

Yet just so are you under the particular care and watchful concern of Almighty God!

But now, say you, you begin to feel the difficulty of believing it possible that the great God of the Universe takes this tender interest in such insignificant and sinful creatures as men and women.

Consider, then, that we are told that "God is Love;" and if He loves us, there is no difficulty in believing that He feels all this interest in us. Do not judge Him by earthly Kings and Potentates. These are Giants who cannot see carraway seeds. We do not blame them, for it is impossible they should be interested for every body. But very very different is both the power and the feeling of the King of Kings!

Still we have not got over the difficulty yet, for of all the wonderful truths we are commanded to believe, no one is so wonderful and so incomprehensible as **the Love of God** to the sinful human race.

And yet it is a truth, and of all truths the most important and most comfortable; and therefore it is much to be desired that we should thoroughly believe it: and **I think** I can make you understand that it is possible, **by something which you feel in your own hearts**. I think God has placed even in our own hearts a witness of the possibility of this great Truth.

My idea is this. We **know** that God has been merciful to us—(His very creation of man was an act of mercy), and **therefore** we know that He loves us. **He loves us because He has been merciful to us**. If you cannot see why this should be, I refer you to the following story, and advise you to **try for yourselves**. Only be kind to any living creature, whether a human being, or an irrational animal, and see if you can keep your heart from **loving** it! Certainly it does not become us to try to search out the unsearchable mind of God, but I think it is permitted us to hope, that the remarkable fast of **Kindness engendering Love**, which we experience in our own hearts, is intended to lead us upwards as by a holy guiding thread, to some comprehension of the Love of that God, who in Christ Jesus actually **gave Himself for us**.

THE TALE.

Lift up the curtain!

In a baronial hall, not of the size and grandeur of that at Warwick Castle, which those who have never seen should try to see before they die: but still in a hall as antique and interesting in style, fits a young man reading.

It is evening, though the sun has not yet set, but it is evening, and the young man is sitting at a small oak table in a recess in one of the ancient windows, and before him lies open a book, and on the book, which he touches not with his hands, but on which his eyes, blinded by tears, are fixed, there lies a faded primrose.

The book is the Bible, and the faded primrose lies on that verse in the Psalm, "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!" and some hand had placed a slight pencil mark before these words.

This scene brings before you a story of distress, and yet this young man is the possessor of a large estate;—the baronial hall and house are his own, and he is young and amiable, and till within the last few months had led a life of almost uninterrupted comfort and prosperity from his cradle upwards. Two years ago he became the betrothed lover of a young lady no less interesting than himself, and as no obstacle prevented their union, both had for these two years looked forward to it, as the one certain and sure event of their lives. The young man's parents had died when he was very young; but, in compliance with the wishes of his Guardians, he deferred his marriage till he should have come of age.

Meanwhile, as the time of probation drew near its close, it had been his delight to sit up the old place in such a manner as should become his bride, and the alterations had, in many cases, been made under her eye and according to her wishes, for she was already by anticipation, and in the heart of its owner, the mistress of the place.

At last the wedding day was fixed; but a few weeks before the time came, one of those sad diseases which steal mysteriously into the vitals of the young and wear away life long before its natural period, fell upon her:—and **now**, nothing remained to him, who had hoped to have her as his companion through life, but the Bible she had used during her sickness, and which was found on the table by her couch after her death, open and marked at the very place I have told you about; together with the faded primrose which he had gathered for her on the last morning of her life.

This was a very sad event for those who were left behind to lament the loss of one whom they had loved so dearly. The Mother indeed, who had known other trials of life, bent her head submissively to this one, and cherishing sweet recollections of her daughter's piety and goodness, looked forward to a time of reunion in a happier world. But the poor young man, whose name was Theodore, never having known a care or a sorrow before, was stupefied and overpowered by this sudden destruction of all his hopes and happiness. Seeing, however, that **her** last thought had been the mercy and goodness of God, he tried to make it **his** thought too; and he would sit for hours looking at the verse which she had marked in the Bible.

But unfortunately he made no effort besides, and having no kind relatives or friends near him to rouse him from his melancholy stupor to some of the active duties of life, he spent many many weeks in listless sorrow, not caring much what became either of himself, his dependents, or his property. And though he had become, by degrees, so far resigned as to believe that every thing was for the best —even **her** death—he now took up a strange and dismal fancy, that though the Almighty was a God of goodness and justice, it was quite impossible that He should **love** any beings so sinful and ungrateful as the human race. This vain

distinction of a morbid imagination was the result of that solitude, inactivity, and the constantly dwelling upon himself and his own troubles, to which he had unfortunately given himself up, and which had brought his mind into such an unhealthy state, that he could neither reason nor think properly.

In this condition of feeling, having one day wandered to a considerable distance from home, he sat down on the greensward to rest; when lo! after he had remained there for some little time musing, as usual, he saw approaching him two shining creatures, who looked like spirits or angels, and as they came up to him they looked at him very earnestly, and one said to the other,

"He is doubting the goodness of God!?"

Then Theodore shuddered, and said, "I am not! once perhaps I did, but not now: all things happen for the best." Yet the Spirit repeated, "He is doubting the goodness of God!" Theodore shuddered again, and cried out "I am **not!**" for he felt as if it was a heavy accusation. Whereupon the Spirit continued, "To disbelieve the love of God is to doubt His goodness."

"No, no," exclaimed Theodore eagerly, "it is not! I do not doubt His goodness —His compassion even for the wretched creatures whom He formed out of dust. But I—thoughtless in my youth; self-confident in prosperity; ungrateful and rebellious under affliction; how can such a wretch as **I** have been, believe in the **love** of God to me! God is good and just, but do not talk to me of His Love to man, as if it were possible He could feel for them the tenderness of kind affection! Who are you?"

Without noticing this question, the Spirit repeated, in emphatic tones, "To disbelieve the Love of God is to doubt His goodness, and deny the perfection of His nature!"

"I tell you, No!" shouted Theodore, wildly: "It is **because** of His goodness and **because** of the perfection of His nature, that I disbelieve the possibility of His Love to the wretched race of man!"

"Judge by your own heart!" exclaimed the Spirit who had not yet spoken.

But when Theodore raised his eyes to look upon her, both had disappeared. He felt grieved, he knew not why. "**My own heart!**" he murmured; "ah! my own heart has been the witness against me. It has taught me the dreadful truth."

"Truth never yet was found of him who leads a life of selfish misery," whispered a soft voice receding into the distance; "Theodore! Judge by your own heart. Even it may teach you better things!"

Theodore started up and looked hastily around. He felt as if he could have followed that soft receding voice into eternity. But there was no one near. That sound, however, had been like an echo from hopes buried in the grave; and the poor youth sank to the ground on his knees, and, hiding his face in his hands, wept bitterly. Suddenly one thought took possession of him out of what had been said. And it was one (as usual) of self-reproach. The Spirit had reproached him with leading a life of selfish misery! Vividly impressed by this idea, he started off hurriedly for his home, crying aloud—"Oh, the wasted time; the lost hours; the precious moments that might have been employed in usefulness!" And thus he pursued his way till he had left the outer country behind him, and had entered the

gates that bounded his extensive domain when, all at once, his course was stopped by something he struck against as he was walking quickly along.

Looking down, he perceived that a sickly, hungry-looking child was stretched across the road asleep, and that by its side sat a woman, the picture of misery and want. Theodore felt a strong sensation of compassion seize him as he gazed at the child, and he stooped and lifted it from the ground.

The woman observed Theodore's eye, and said, "Ay, without help we shall neither of us be here long!"

"I will help you," said Theodore, "tell me what I can do!"

"What can you or any one do, for a dying woman and a half-starved child?" groaned the poor creature. "Food, food! medicine and help!" These words burst from her in broken accents—I am dying!"

"Are you so **very** ill?" asked Theodore, turning deadly pale; and he murmured to himself—"Death again! I dare not see it again so soon! Here!" continued he, thrusting gold into her hand, "now you see that I will help you! Look, I will send you food, and you shall be brought to the house: but let me take the child, he cannot do you good, and I will see to him." "He must not see her die;" was Theodore's inward thought.

"Ay, take him," muttered the woman gloomily, "and send me cordials. No one wants to go even an hour before their time!"

Theodore obeyed almost mechanically, and lifting up the little boy, he made a shift to carry him to the house. On arriving there, he called for his housekeeper and desired her to take food and wine to the woman he had left, and to bring her to the house. Then he sent another servant for a doctor, and afterwards undertook himself the care of the forlorn child. He placed him on a sofa in his study and sat down by him.

"Are you ill?" was his first question.

"I don't know," was the answer.

"Are you hungry?"

"Very!"

Here Theodore got up and went to the next room, where preparations were being made for dinner, and fetched bread and gave it to the boy, who ate it greedily, without once lifting up his eyes. "Poor child," thought Theodore, "life has no **mental** troubles for him!"

"Are you sorry your mother is so ill?" was his next inquiry.

"She's not my mother," muttered the boy.

Theodore started—"What do you mean? Are you not that woman's **child**?"

"No! She told me I wasn't."

"Who are you, then?"

"I don't know. She told me she had stolen me to beg for her."

"And do you remember nothing about it?"

"No, its too long ago."

Theodore now fetched him more bread, but whilst he was eating it he no longer sat by him, but walked up and down the room. Every now and then as he stopped and looked at the thin, sickly looking object he had brought into the house, he was overtaken by a strong feeling of pity for his miserable condition.

This child was as desolate as himself, only in another way. Stolen from his parents to beg for the strange woman, he had lived with her so long that he had forgotten his real home altogether! Bound by no ties of kindred and comfort to this world. "He is more desolate than I am myself!" repeated Theodore, again and again.

After a time he approached the boy again.

"The woman will say you are her child, and make you go back and beg for her if she gets better, will she not?"

"She doesn't want me now."

"How so?"

"She says, I'm too hungry, and eat all the bread away from her, and don't get enough for us both."

A curious expression passed across Theodore's face as he turned away and sat down in his chair once more. It looked like a gleam of satisfaction. The boy, meanwhile, sat quite still, looking round the room. He had a grave and somewhat interesting face, but that the dark eyes looked a little too keen and restless to be quite pleasant. Still, when he smiled, and he had smiled brightly when he first saw the bread, his countenance improved; and there was, besides, something about his open forehead which redeemed the covert expression of his eye. He was about seven years old, and precocious in quickness of a particular kind, as is very often the case with vagrant children.

Theodore's reverie was broken at last by the arrival of his good old housekeeper, who came in, flurried and indignant, to inform him that the woman she had been in search of was no where to be found. She had been, "she was sure," up and down all the carriage roads, and made enquiries at all the lodges, and finally discovered that a beggar woman had passed out at one of them upwards of an hour before, very hurriedly, and indeed almost at a running pace.

Theodore glanced at the child, but his countenance never changed. Only he sat eying the housekeeper as she spoke, apparently indifferent to the result. The housekeeper now began to ejaculate in broken sentences, "The base creature! To think that you should have taken all this trouble, Sir! and had the child actually into the house! and—gracious me," added she in a half whisper, "hadn't I better call the butler, Sir; hadn't he" (nodding significantly towards the child) "better be taken to the workhouse at once, Sir?"

"I think not," answered Theodore slowly—"not yet, I think. The truth is, I find he's not her own child, but has been stolen; and—and—in fact, we can send him to the workhouse to-morrow. Perhaps, after all, the woman may come here for him. But, at any rate, there is time enough. You see this is an odd affair; and, as the boy is not **hers**, we don't know who he may not turn out to be some day." And, as Theodore thus concluded his sentence, he got up and looked at the old housekeeper with a smile—a melancholy one it is true, but still it was a smile—the first that had been seen on his face since his terrible bereavement.

And the faithful servant was so much pleased that she forgot every thing else in a desire to keep up the interest that had lured her young master so unaccountably from his misery.

"Well, to be sure, Sir, what you say's quite right, and we can make the poor thing comfortable for to-night, and then you can do as you please to-morrow. Shall I take him with me, Sir, and make him clean, while you dine? I can borrow some tidy clothes from the bailiff's wife, I dare say; and after he's made respectable, you can see him again, Sir, if you think proper."

This proposition was more grateful to Theodore's mind than he cared to acknowledge to himself. Indeed he had no clear ideas of his feelings about the little accident that had interrupted the dismal course of his life; and he studiously avoided questioning himself too closely. Only there came across him, every now and then, a sensation that there was some special providence about it all, and that there was some mysterious connection between this adventure and the words of the apparitions who had spoken to him in the morning.

But "let be, let us see what will happen," was the ruling feeling, and as he felt less miserable than usual, he did not wish to disturb the pleasing dream by enquiries, why?

After his solitary dinner, as he was seated alone in his arm chair, he was relapsing fast into his usual unhappy state of mind, for this was at all times the most trying part of the day to him, when a knock at the door aroused him.

Ah, it was the good old housekeeper again! She who, with the acute instinct of sorrow-soothing which women so eminently possess, had purposely come at this the young master's "dark hour," to try if it could be kept back by the charm she had seen working a short time before. "The little fellow is quite fit to come in now, Sir, if you'd wish to see him before he's put to bed." And her efforts were rewarded by seeing a look of interest light up poor Theodore's eye. The boy was now ushered in, and his improved appearance and cleanliness were very striking. Theodore took hold of his hand—"There, you need not be afraid; you may sit down upon that chair. Are you comfortable?" "Yes." "Have you had plenty to eat?" "Yes, plenty." And the child laughed a little.

"I hope you are a good boy."

He looked stupid. "Can you say your prayers?"

"What's that?"

"Ah! I was afraid not. You never heard about God?" "Yes; but the woman used to keep that to herself." "Keep what?"

"Why," **for God's sake**, when she begged. She didn't let me say it, but she always said it herself; and then, when people wouldn't give us any thing, she used to say—"

"No, no! I will not hear about that;" interrupted Theodore, "but I hope some day you will learn about God."

"In the begging? must I say it in the begging next time?"

"No, I don't mean that; not in begging bread of people in the road, but in praying."

"What's that?" "Begging." "Then I am to beg?" "No, not on the road, but of a great good Being, who will never refuse what you ask."

"Is that **you**?"

"No, my poor boy; not me, but the great Being, called God, who lives in the sky. You must beg all you want of Him."

"I don't know Him."

"No; but you will learn to know Him when you have listened to me and prayed to Him."

"I don't know praying; I know begging."

"Well, then, when you have begged Him—"

"What am I to say?"

"First, you must say, "Our Father—'"

"Father's dead," interrupted the boy;

"Ah, but I do not mean **that** father," answered Theodore; "and how do you know even that **that** father is dead?"

"The woman said so. One day she told me Father and Mother were both dead, and there was nobody left to love me, so I must mind her."

"The woman was wrong," cried Theodore compassionately. "You have another Father, who never dies, and who loves you always!—"

A knock at the door interrupted Theodore's **lesson on the Love of God**.

"It's about time the poor thing was put to bed," suggested the housekeeper, looking in. "I dare say he's tired."

"I dare say he is," said Theodore mechanically. "Good night, little boy. What used they to call you?"

"Reuben."

"Good night, little Reuben." And he was taken away.

You have another Father who never dies and who loves you always! founded like an echo through the room. Theodore arose and looked around, but there was no one there. He resumed his feat, and wondered how he had got involved in teaching the beggar boy religion. He lamented his awkwardness and unfitness for the talk; but still he thought he had done right. As to his last assertion, how else could he make the child comprehend God at all? Besides, how cruel it would be to infect him with his own miserable convictions. They would come time enough, perhaps!

Such was the current of his thoughts. The next morning he told the old housekeeper of the boy's ignorance and his difficulty with him, and engaged her to help him in his talk, which she readily undertook.

It is not my intention to describe the many endeavours Theodore made to impress the first great truths of Christianity upon Reuben's mind; but I can assure you he felt all the better for them himself. How it was that he never sent the little boy to the workhouse you can guess. For the first few days he kept him to see (as he said), if the woman would come back for him. Then he wished him to stay till he and the housekeeper had sufficiently impressed him by their lessons. And then —why then—by degrees, all mention of the workhouse ceased, and better clothes were bought for him; and the housekeeper, who was one of the by-gone generation of warm-hearted old family servants, became, for her master's sake, a perfect mother to him; and to Theodore he involuntarily proved an object of daily increasing interest, and finally, of strong personal affection.

And thus nearly a year passed over, during which time Theodore's health and activity in a measure returned; but the cheerfulness of a happy mind was still wanting. Reuben often lured him temporarily into it, but he would again relapse, and had never given up his unhappy theory, though now he dwelt upon it much less frequently than of old. At the end of the year, however, Theodore was much distressed by fancying that he detected Reuben in lying; and he was, besides, by no means sure that little trifles were not taken from him by the child for his own use and amusement. He communicated his suspicions to the housekeeper, and alas! found his worst fears confirmed. The pain and sorrow he felt at this discovery were of a kind totally new to him. But the strongest feeling of all was, that he would not give up the boy to vicious habits without a struggle (cost what it might) to save him! The housekeeper told him, with tears, that she had observed Reuben's habit of petty lying and taking any thing he fancied, very soon after his admission to the house; but she confessed that she had not had the heart to inform her young Master, lest he should send the boy away who had seemed to take him so out of his trouble! This was what she most thought about. So she had tried to correct the child herself, but not with the success she had desired. "How little she knows the heart," thought Theodore, "his evil propensities would have been an additional claim upon my kindness!"

I will pass over all that Theodore said to the boy himself. No father could have been more earnest, more solemn in his warnings, or more kind in his expostulations. Reuben, by this time, could understand all he said, and shame and repentance burnt in his face during a painful interview. It is right to remind you, dear children, of the many excuses that were to be made for him. He had been brought up, till seven years old, in total ignorance of God, and without ever having heard one duty commanded or one sin forbidden. The woman lied daily and hourly in his sight, and made him do the same; and she took all she could lay hold of in any way, and beat him if he did not follow her example; and although

Theodore's instructions had opened a new world on the child's mind, the **evil** HABITS were not so soon got rid of. So there the mischief was; and now the great difficulty Theodore felt, was to know what to do for the best. And, after much consideration, he decided to send him to school, as the likeliest means of eradicating the bad habits the boy had acquired. I say **habits**, rather than dispositions, for there was indeed nothing mean or sneaking about his character. On the contrary, he was both courageous and generous in the turn of his mind, and, after his health improved, his manners partook of the same freedom and candour.

To school therefore poor Reuben went; and Theodore was almost astonished himself at the blank which his absence created.

But having desired that continued reports should be sent to him of his conduct, he meanwhile began seriously to think what was to become of him hereafter. At last it occurred to him that he might employ him in some way or other about his property; and with a view to this, Theodore himself began to take more interest in his estate than he had had the energy to bestow before, and made himself more intimately acquainted with the wants and modes of life of those under his control.

Thus another year passed away in quiet but constant occupation; and the many opportunities Theodore now had of doing good, softened and cheered his mind. But he was not quite cured. For of all things in the world whims are the very hardest to cure, because, reason as you will, people still stick to their whims. Reuben was not allowed to return once during that year to the old hall. During the last few months, however, his progress had been most satisfactory, and the Master considered that the evil was overcome; and so, at the end of the year, Theodore wrote word to Reuben that he wished him to come "home" for his holidays. Poor Reuben cried bitterly again when he read the letter; for, as he said to the Master, "It is **not** my home, though he has been very good to me. I have no home!"

Theodore's heart overflowed with pleasure and almost pride when he saw the boy again. Every turn in the expression of his face was improved; and when Theodore first took his hand, the lad bent his face over it and sobbed out an entreaty for pardon for his dreadful wickedness. "Reuben," cried Theodore, "never say that again. All is forgotten since your conduct is changed. Forget the past as soon as possible. It will never be remembered by me."

Time went on during the holidays very happily on the whole. In fact there was no drawback; but that now and then Theodore, who would often sit looking at his adopted child's face, noticed a painful expression which he could not account for. His conduct was irreproachable and his respect for Theodore seemed, if possible, increased; but he would not be frank with him, and no encouragement beguiled him into the ease of trusted affection. Theodore did not choose to notice this for some weeks, but, as the time of Reuben's return to school drew near, he was unwilling to let him go without some expostulation.

"Reuben," said he one day, "you are going back to school. Your conduct has quite satisfied me: but tell me, before you go, why you so often look unhappy? It is a poor return (though I now touch on this subject for the first time in my life), it is a poor return for the interest I have taken in you; and for the real love you know I feel towards you!"

For a moment Reuben's large dark eyes glanced up at Theodore's face; but they sank again as quickly: his cheeks grew crimson, and tears rolled over them which he could not conceal.

"What is the matter, Reuben; what is the meaning of this? Am I loving one who does not love me in return?"

"You **cannot** love me, Sir!" ejaculated the boy so earnestly that it quite startled his companion.

"Reuben, what **can** you mean? Have you forgotten how I have taken you and acted by you as if I had been your Father. I **cannot love** you? What else but **love** for you has made me do what I have done?"

"That was all your goodness and the kindness of your heart, Sir. You couldn't love me when you picked me up in the road. It was pity and kindness, and it has been the same ever since; not **Love**—" and the tears again struggled to his eyes.

Theodore rushed suddenly from the room and into his private apartment, and falling on his knees, spread his hands over his head in prayer. "My Lord and my God!" cried he solemnly, "what means this echo from my own heart? Am I awake, or do I dream?" A profound silence was around him; but, as he arose and opened his eyes, he beheld before him, though fading rapidly from his sight, the angelic visions he had seen two years before.

He returned to Reuben, who was sitting at the table, his face buried in his arms.

Theodore laid his hand upon him. "Reuben, look up! You are under a great mistake. You are but a boy, and must not fancy you know the ins and outs of the human heart. Reuben, I do love you, and have always loved you."

"You cannot, Sir!"

"Again? and why not?"

"You are too much above me; I am an outcast, and was a beggar. It wasn't likely you could **love** me at any time. Besides, there has been something since."

"What?"

"You told me to forget it, Sir, but I cannot. After all your kindness and goodness, and trying to make me happy and do me every good, I was all along (during the first year), doing what was wrong, deceiving you and injuring you. I am not only an outcast, but I have been wicked and ungrateful, and made you unhappy by my misconduct. Indeed I cannot bear to think of it; but I dare not deceive myself about your **Love**, Sir! I know you **cannot** love me; but I am so grateful to you for your goodness, I hope you will not be angry with me for speaking the truth: only, though I am grateful and try to be contented, I cannot be as **happy** as if you **did** love me."

As Theodore gazed on poor Reuben's face, he saw standing behind him the beautiful visions once more.

"Now judge by your own heart!" murmured the Spirits, as smiling they disappeared.

And Theodore did so. Going up to Reuben, he put his arms around him, and wept over him tears of love and gratitude for the blessing which he felt stealing into his own mind. "Reuben," cried he, "my child Reuben! There have been but two human beings in the world on whom I have bestowed my love; for, like you, I lost my parents young. These two were—her I lost and yourself!"

"If I thought you **loved** me, I would die for you!" cried Reuben, springing up and gazing earnestly on Theodore's face.

"My God!" murmured Theodore, "may I be able to feel this to Thee!"

I think more words are unnecessary. You cannot doubt that Theodore soon convinced Reuben of his love, nor that Theodore took the lesson to himself, and now saw that God had placed in the human heart a witness of the possibility of His love to man. Yes, the clinging affection we feel for those we have been kind to; our own power of forgiving **any** thing to them; is an instinct which has been mercifully implanted in our hearts to teach us to believe in that Love of God, which is otherwise so incredible to human reason.

If you care to know what became of Theodore and Reuben, you must in fancy pass over a few years. Reuben soon had so strong a wish to go to sea, that he entered the merchant service; and by the time he became Master of his own vessel and revisited the hall when he came ashore, Theodore was to be found there with a kind and gentle wife by his side; and frolicking about the ancient hall were a parcel of noisy children, to whom the arrival from sea of him whom they always unaccountably would call "Uncle Reuben," was ever a gala treat. Dear readers, Farewell!

BENEDICITE

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