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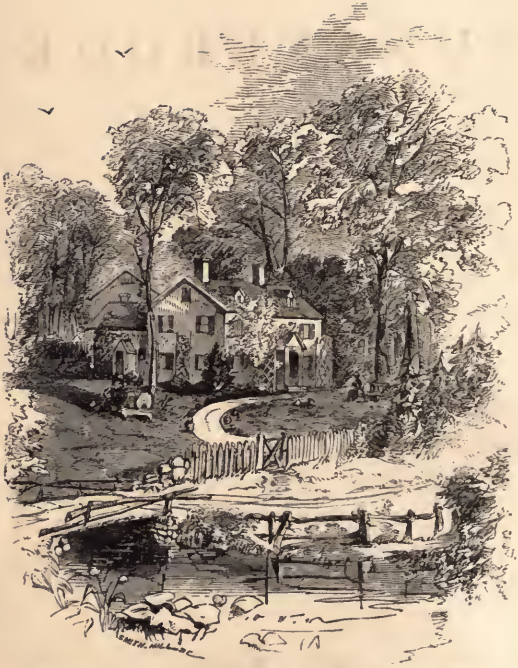
Saml D. Dunham

From Lizzie S. Lord



Frontispiece. OUR HOUSE AT SUNNY BROOK.

OUR SUMMER

AT

SUNNYBROOK,

AND

The Boys and Girls There.

BY MARY NOEL MEIGS,

AUTHOR OF "FANNY HERBERT," "COUSIN BERTHA'S STORIES," ETC.

NEW YORK:
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH,
No. 683 BROADWAY.
1862.

TO

Harry and Helen,

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS DEDICATED BY THEIR

Mother.

CONTENTS.

SUMMER AT SUNNY BROOK.

I.

New Friends.

IF you were riding or walking through the broad street of Sunny Brook, a pretty village about twenty miles from New York, you might perhaps notice a pretty white house, with green blinds and a piazza in front, covered over with honey-suckles and sweet-briar. If you were to ask me who lived there, I should tell you that Mr. and Mrs. Neland did, with their two children, Arthur and Mary. The house stands in the centre of a fine garden, in which are all sorts of vegetables, fruit-trees, and flower-beds; and here Arthur and his sister often worked or played when their lessons were

over. They did not go to school, because the teacher had suddenly left them, and no one had been found to take her place; and during the pleasant summer we shall write about, the children were glad to have only a short study-hour each day with their mother, and a great deal of time beside for their own amusement. They spent one hour in the morning, and another in the afternoon, in the sitting-room, where they learned and recited their lessons; and then they were up and away to the pleasant garden walks, weeding or watering the flowers, trundling their hoops, or sometimes nursing and conversing with Mary's large family of dolls. There was Fanny Fair the wax baby, and Miss Rose the wooden one, and two kid dolls with painted faces, who were called Julia Short and Lucy Long. Then there was the old rag baby, who always rode in the wheel-barrow, because it did not hurt her if she tumbled out; and though for a long time while Arthur was young he liked very well to help Mary in her care of all these babies, he now began to think himself too much

of a man for such plays, and to wish his sister had been a boy, that she might have joined him in more boyish sports. After the teacher left the village, several boys in the neighborhood had been sent to boarding-school, and so Arthur had seldom any companion except his sister and little Kitty Coleman, who lived in the next house, and was Mary's particular friend.

"Mother," said Arthur one day, as he looked up from the book he had been reading, "don't you think I am a very lonely boy?"

"Why, what has put that into your head, Arthur?" said Mrs. Neland, laughing. "I don't think you are *very* lonely."

"Don't you, ma'am?" said Arthur, "I think I am."

"How are you lonely?" asked his mother. "It seems to me you are seldom alone; you have Mary to play with constantly, or you sit with me, or ride out with father; and if none of these, there is merry little Frisk to run races with; so I cannot think you are *very* lonely."

"But, mother, I mean that I have no boys to

play with—real boys, mother, who can fly a kite, or shoot marbles, or spin a top; that is what I mean by being *lonely*. Mary plays with me, I know, but she likes to carry her dolls about, and she makes believe sometimes that I am the nurse, and calls me Jane; and I don't like to be called Jane, and nurse her babies; and she can't shoot a marble, though I've showed her how to do it, over and over again. I wish Sammy Green and George Roland hadn't gone away to school, and I *do* think I am very lonely."

"Well, really, Arthur," said his mother, smiling, "I must acknowledge you are much in want of a playmate; but how is it that you cannot be happy alone? I have known you to play by yourself for hours together, quite contentedly."

"Yes," said Arthur, "but then I was only a little boy."

"And what are you now, pray?"

"Why, I am ten years old *now*," said the young gentleman, straightening himself with a look of some importance, "and father says that I am growing quite tall. I didn't mind playing

with Mary's dolls last year, but I do, now; and I wish, mother, you would try and think of somebody for me."

"Well, Arthur, I will try," said Mrs. Neland, smoothing the boy's hair kindly; "I will see if I cannot help you out of this difficulty, and I believe I can. I was told yesterday that Mr. Murray is coming back with his family to live here, and has taken the new house just down the street. Perhaps you remember his two little boys."

"Not very well," said Arthur, trying to think.

"Fred and Willie—but probably you do not recollect, for it is three years since they left us."

"Yes—yes, I believe I do remember," said Arthur. "I remember one of them took away my cap and wouldn't give it back, and I cried about it."

"I am not sure they are exactly the sort of playmates I should choose for you," said his mother, gravely. "So we must not be too certain of liking them."

"Oh! I shall be sure to like them," said

Arthur, eagerly. "How glad I am they are coming! The weather is getting so pleasant now, that we can play out of doors and not plague you one bit."

"I am never plagued with you, my dear," said Mrs. Neland. "I rather like to have you with me."

"Yes, ma'am, I know that, but I thought may be you wouldn't like the noise of so many. When will Mr. Murray come, do you think?"

"I understand he will be here next week."

"And when may I go to see them?"

"As soon as it is proper; in a few days, probably."

"That will be a long time," said Arthur, thoughtfully.

"Not very long, and I hope you will wait patiently for it. But, Arthur, if these boys are bad boys, unruly or disobedient, I shall not like you to play with them very often; we must find out something about them."

"Certainly, but I don't suppose they are such very bad boys, mother."

"Perhaps not, but I am rather afraid of it because their father is often away from home, and their mother not well enough to attend to them."

"But we can't help *knowing* them, can we?" asked Arthur; "we can't help seeing them often, if they are so near; and besides, mother, if *they* are bad, I don't think I need be so too."

"Of course not," said his mother, "only the Bible tells us that "evil communications corrupt good manners," and so you might lose your good manners, and get their bad habits, by being with them too frequently. However, we must not judge them beforehand, but wait and see."

"And I must go and tell Mary they are coming," said Arthur, jumping from his chair and running to the door.

"First put away your slate and pencil," said his mother; and hastily slipping them into a drawer, Arthur flew off to find his sister and tell her the good news.

Mary did not seem particularly delighted at the prospect of seeing the young Murrays. Much

to Arthur's surprise, she said she did not want two rude boys running through the house and garden. She was afraid they would do mischief, and if they wanted company, it was much pleasanter to have Kitty Coleman, who was quiet and gentle. But Arthur insisted it would be grand fun, and he wished the week was over that he might see his new friends, for he had not *really* enjoyed himself since the school broke up, and all the boys left the village.

In a very few days Arthur was enchanted to see the windows of Mr. Murray's house thrown open, and soon after, the arrival of a great many loads of furniture, the unpacking of which he watched with great eagerness. After this he ran to the garden gate every time a carriage passed the door, in hopes of seeing the family; but a whole week elapsed before they came, and Arthur grew very impatient at the delay. At last, to his great joy the happy day arrived, and the long-expected carriage drove down the street, covered with trunks and baggage. Arthur and Mary had just finished their morning study-

hour in the sitting-room, and they ran eagerly to the window to see their new neighbors.

"That is Mr. Murray, I am sure," said Mary, as a tall gentleman stepped from the carriage.

"And there are Fred and William," cried Arthur, clapping his hands, as, with a hop, skip and jump, two boys about his own age sprang out and ran up the steps. "Now I am quite happy. Don't you feel happy, Mary?"

Mary did not answer immediately, for she was looking at Mrs. Murray, who was just going into the house, but at last she said she did not feel particularly happy.

"That is because you are a girl," said Arthur.

"That does not make any difference," said Mary. "I am sure I can be happy if I am a girl."

"Well, I mean," said Arthur, "you don't feel happy to see the boys, because you don't care to play with them."

"No," said Mary, "I don't like boys very much, except you."

"Why?" asked Arthur.

"Because, last summer when I went with Aunt Laura to the sea-side, there were some boys in the same house, who were always teasing the other children in the hotel, and tormenting the dogs, and screaming and whistling; and Aunt Laura said they were very disagreeable, and I've never liked boys since."

"But I know you will like Frederick and William Murray," said Arthur; "I am quite sure of that."

"Not as well as I do Kitty Coleman," said Mary.

"Oh! Kitty loves doll babies," said Arthur, contemptuously; "that is the reason. I hate the very sight of dolls; and now, thank fortune, I've done with them forever."

"You don't hate my wax baby, do you?" asked Mary, looking rather grave.

"Yes, I hate them all, every one—Fanny Fair, and Miss Rose, and all; but I love tops and marbles and kites, and I must run and tell mother that Mr. Murray has come, and ask her to take me there this afternoon."

When Arthur found his mother, she was very busy, and to his great disappointment she told him it would not be proper to call upon their neighbors so soon. "We must let them get settled a little," said she. "They are scarcely at home yet, and cannot wish to see company immediately."

"It will be so long to wait," said Arthur, looking vexed, and speaking very fretfully.

"You must be patient," said his mother. "I am the best judge of the matter. I would advise you to make yourself contented with your sister now, until I shall see fit to go."

"May I go too?" asked Mary.

"No," said Arthur, quickly, "you don't like boys, and there is no use of your going at all—is there, mother?"

"Mary shall go, certainly," said Mrs. Neland, "even if she does not like boys; it would be very unkind to leave her at home—don't you think so?"

"Why, there is nobody for *her* to see," said Arthur.

"No matter, she shall go if she wishes it."

"But when?" asked Arthur; "can't you say what day you will take us? I want to get acquainted with the boys so much."

"Well," said Mrs. Neland, "I will go on Saturday afternoon."

"Not till Saturday?"

"Not a moment sooner."

"Oh, dear! that is a long time to wait."

"If you are patient, it will not seem very long," said his mother. "So now go and make yourself as happy as you can till Saturday comes."

II.

The First Visit.

SATURDAY came at last, though Arthur had many fits of impatience during the week, particularly when he saw the two lads running about the door, and could not join them. The afternoon lessons were no sooner over, than he reminded his mother of her promise; and by the time he had put on his best suit of clothes and made himself neat, and Mary had dressed in her new frock and straw bonnet, Mrs. Neland was ready, and they set out. Mr. Murray's house was only a short distance below, on the opposite side of the street; so they were there in a few minutes, and found Mrs. Murray seated in the parlor with some other visitors. Arthur looked round for the two boys, but saw nothing of them, except a

hat lying upon one of the chairs, with a whip beside it. Mrs. Murray said they had only gone down the street, and would be back presently; and in about ten minutes, back they came.

But their voices were heard long before the boys themselves were seen. In at the front gate they ran, quarrelling and scolding, thumping up the steps like two young colts, and into the parlor, exclaiming—"Mother, make Fred give me my hat. He won't give it to me; won't you make Fred give me my hat?" while at the same time master Fred was bawling,—

"Ma, it isn't his hat, it's mine. I know it is mine. Won't you make him stop kicking me?"

"Hush, hush!" said Mrs. Murray. "For shame, children. Be quiet, both of you."

"I want my hat," cried William, regardless of his mother's injunctions to be quiet.

"Here is a hat, ma'am," said Mary Neland, taking the one from the chair and carrying it towards Mrs. Murray.

"There, William, is your hat, now," said his mother; "so don't make any more noise, for pity's

sake, or my poor head will go wild. I am quite ashamed of you both. Go and thank little Mary for bringing it to you."

But master Will turned sulkily away, and, with a look of defiance at his brother, they both walked out of the parlor.

"Did I ever see such boys!" said Mrs. Murray. "Why, they did not speak to Arthur Neland at all. "Boys! boys!" she called out,—"Frederick—William—come back, this moment."

The young gentlemen, however, either did not hear, or did not choose to obey, so Mrs. Murray desired Arthur to go and look for them. He did so, with his mother's permission, but it must be confessed his expected pleasure was somewhat damped by the rude behavior of the two boys, and he began to think, that after all he might not like them as well as he had imagined he should.

Arthur went out on the piazza at the back of the house, and at the foot of the long flight of steps which led down into the garden he found the boys, who, having each

gotten possession of his own hat again, had by this time become quiet, and were cutting sticks for their amusement, each being the owner of a good knife. Frederick was rather older than Arthur, and William a year younger, and they looked up at him, as he stood at the top of the steps, but did not speak.

"Mrs. Murray sent me to look for you," said Arthur, going down and seating himself beside them.

"What is your name?" asked Frederick, bluntly.

"Arthur Neland."

"I don't know where you live."

"Why, I live just across the street, in the white house with a green gate in front," replied Arthur.

The boys did not reply; they only looked at each other and smiled.

"That's a good knife you have got," said Arthur, determined to be friendly.

"I guess it is," said Fred, cutting more vigorously to show its excellence.

"Mine is the best," said Will; "see what a fine big blade!"

"Mine is every bit as good," growled Fred.

"I have one," said Arthur, pulling it from his pocket, "but it has only two blades."

"Ours have three," said Will; "we bought them in New York. You can't get good knives in this place."

"Mine came from New York, too," said Arthur. "My father bought it for me. He often brings me things from the city. Can you play marbles?"

"Yes," said both the boys, laughing at such a question.

"So can I," said Arthur, "but sister cannot."

"Girls can't play marbles," said Fred.

"I guess not," said Arthur, smiling good-humoredly, "for I've tried to teach Mary over and over again. See what a nice lot I have!" And he pulled a handful of colored marbles from his pocket. "Let us play a game. Shall we?"

"I had a good lot, too," said Fred, "but Will got 'em all away from me."

"I didn't," cried Will, indignantly. "You gave me two, and you lost all the others."

"I'll begin with my five, and win some," said Fred, making a ring on the gravel walk as he spoke; and William producing several more, the game began. Arthur certainly felt very well satisfied to find himself thus engaged, and much more important than when playing with his little sister at home. Rapid were the strokes, and merry the "click click" of the pretty balls, as they knocked each other out of the ring; but Arthur soon found the young Murrays with their small stock of marbles, more than a match for him with his "nice lot," and presently his own number was reduced to six, and he saw the two boys had swept the rest into their pockets as fairly won.

Arthur, however, was a manly boy, as well as a good-tempered one, and though he felt sorry to part with his marbles, for he had kept them a long while, yet he bore their loss with good humor,—and Fred and Will being tired of the game, Arthur went with them down the long

gravel walk, to look at a great hole they had been digging at the end of the garden. It was in the middle of a nice plot of ground where the two boys had been at work; they had already dug a hole two feet deep, and their little spades were lying by it, ready to be taken up at any moment,—for Fred and Will Murray never put away anything when they had done with it, nor were they at all particular what mischief they were doing, if they worked without leave. Some pretty flowers which they had uprooted, lay withering on the ground, and Arthur took them up, exclaiming,—

"Dear me! what a pity! these beautiful bells are almost dead."

"Poh," said Frederick. "Who cares for a few flowers?"

"We dug 'em up this morning," said William, "because they were in the way of our well. We are going to make a well when we have dug the hole deeper."

"They are just like the bells in our garden at home," said Arthur. "Mary and I have a garden

together, and we plant all kinds of flowers. Have you one?"

"No," said Frederick; "what do we want with a garden, when we can do as we please in this big one?"

"We can dig holes anywhere we like," said Will, in a boasting tone, "and pull up any of the flowers we have a mind to."

"What will your mother say?" asked Arthur, who was never allowed to disfigure their own garden, and had an especial dread of displeasing his mother. "Does she know you have dug up these?"

"We don't know, and we don't care, either," said Fred; "we never ask anybody if we want to do a thing. It's so babyish!"

"Don't you?" asked Arthur in surprise.

"No, indeed, not we," said Fred, laughing, as he seized one of the spades and jumped into the hole. "Stand out of the way there, or you'll get this dirt on you."

Arthur was so much astonished at the idea of any child doing "exactly as he pleased," or wil-

fully destroying a thing without permission, because he *chose* to, that he stood quite still a moment in silence, and was recalled to his recollection by the voice of Will Murray, who was now disputing with his brother about a place to dig.

"It's *my* turn to get in the hole," he cried; "get out, this minute."

"I sha'n't," said Fred.

"Yes, you shall."

"No, I won't."

"Then I'll go and tell father."

"Well, go," said Frederick, "I don't care."

Will ran off a few yards, but recollecting, probably, that his father was not at home, came back again crying out,—

"Now, Fred, its my turn, so come out." But Frederick continued to use his spade as if he did not hear. Will at this lost his temper completely: he cried and scolded, grew very red in the face, and at length, seizing his own little spade, dashed a quantity of the loose earth into his brother's face, and then ran with all his

might toward the house. Of course Fred also was violently angry. He jumped out of the hole in great haste, and wiping his eyes, which, being full of dirt, were consequently very painful, ran after Will in high chase, leaving Arthur Neland alone, who was almost stupefied with amazement at such rude behavior.

But Arthur did not stand alone more than a minute, for presently he heard a terrible crying, and knew that Fred had overtaken his little brother, though he could not see them, and was probably in the act of punishing master Will for his misconduct, while at the same time the gentle voice of his own little sister called to him from the piazza, and told him their mother was waiting. Arthur willingly obeyed the summons, not particularly sorry, as I should imagine, to exchange such quarrelsome company for that of a sweet-tempered little girl, though she *did* love dolls, and could not play at marbles.

At tea, that night, Arthur's father asked him how he liked his new friends.

"Pretty well, sir," replied Arthur.

"Only 'pretty well,' hey!" said Mr. Neland. "Well, my boy, I am glad you are honest enough to say exactly how far you like them."

Arthur looked up as if he did not entirely understand his father.

"Because," continued Mr. Neland, "you were so *sure* of liking them, that I feared the pleasure of making new acquaintances would render you blind to their faults."

"Do you think they *have* faults, Arthur?" asked his mother.

"Yes, ma'am," said Arthur, promptly.

"Then we shall not ask you what their faults are," said Mr. Neland, "since it is better not to speak of the misdeeds of our neighbors if we can help it; but we shall trust, my son, to your own good sense, and your own knowledge of right and wrong, to avoid them. Can we trust you?"

"Yes, sir," said Arthur, rather proudly.

"Take care," said his mother; "'Evil communications corrupt good manners,' you know, and if you are not careful and watchful, you

are as liable to get into bad habits as any one else."

"Well, I shall *try*," said Arthur, in a more humble tone.

"That is right," replied Mrs. Neland, "since if you try, you may with God's help succeed; and, indeed, I think you will do so."

III.

The Tool-House.

It was more than a week before Arthur saw the young Murrays again. Indeed, he did not feel quite as anxious about it as he had done at first, since they were not exactly the kind of boys he had expected to find them. But when he met them running across the road one morning, and they told him they were just coming to pay him a visit, and he observed that Frederick carried in his hand a new top, he joyfully welcomed them, and, opening the garden gate, the three boys went together into the house, because Mrs. Neland, who was standing at the parlor window, called to them.

When Mrs. Neland had inquired about Mrs. Murray, she told Arthur to go with Frederick and William into the garden, and play in the

walk at the end of it, but to be careful not to touch the strawberry beds, or trample on the young vegetables. Arthur promised, and they ran off in high glee; for by this time he had almost forgotten the events of his visit at Mr. Murray's, and was quite charmed at finding himself once more with the two boys; and when they passed the old root-house, and saw the wheel-barrow in which the kid dolls were comfortably seated, Arthur seized it in a thoughtless manner, and, hastily tilting the poor babies upon a heap of rubbish, ran laughingly away, quite ashamed to confess that he had been wheeling them about the garden with his little sister, an hour before.

When they reached the long walk, Frederick and William stood a few moments with their hands in their pockets, as if at a loss what to do, while Arthur drew out a nice piece of string, and asked William to play horse with him; and William said he would, if Arthur would be the horse and let him drive.

Now Arthur wanted to drive himself, but he

knew it was polite to do as his young visitor wished, and so he put the string around his own body, and giving William the ends, they scampered off. When they had run up and down the long walk half a dozen times, and Arthur had reared, and kicked, and capered, like a very fiery animal, he stopped and said, "Now it is *my* turn to drive."

"I don't want to play horse any longer," said William, throwing down the string; "let us do something else."

"Just let me drive you up and down *once*," said Arthur, coaxingly; "do, just once."

"No," replied William, "I don't want to. I want to get the wheel-barrow and carry stones in it."

"Well," said Arthur, good-naturedly yielding his own wishes to oblige his companion, "but there are not many stones in our garden except by the root-house, and you know we can't go there."

"Why not?" asked Frederick, who, while the other boys were running, had been cutting

the limbs from a young pear-tree with his pen-knife; "why can't we go there?"

"Because," said Arthur, "mother told us to play here."

"She will never know it," said Frederick. "She can't see you, and we won't tell. Come, get us the wheel-barrow and some stones to build a wall across this path."

"Oh, I can't, indeed," said Arthur, earnestly; "I would in a minute, if I could, but you know what mother said when we came out."

"*I* didn't hear her," said Frederick, in a sullen tone, "and I'm sure there is no harm in having a few stones. It's very stupid here, and there is nothing to play with, and if you don't get 'em, Will and I shall go directly home."

"I wish I could," was Arthur's reply, "and I'm very sorry about it, very, only you know I can't help it! Where's your top? can't we spin it?"

"It is a new top," said Frederick, drawing it from his pocket, and looking a little more pleased.

"I think it is a grand one," said Arthur, "and I have a new one, too, but mine is a humming-top; my uncle sent it to me, and it hums like a whole swarm of bees. I'll go and get it—shall I? and then I can ask if we may play by the root-house with the wheel-barrow."

Pleased with the idea of giving pleasure to others, for Arthur Neland was not a selfish boy, he ran off, and soon came back with his new red top. It would not spin well on the gravel walk, he said, and so his mother had given him permission to go to an old building in another corner of the garden, where the garden tools were usually, kept and there they could play very nicely.

To this the boys agreed, and master Will, taking possession of Arthur's top, while Fred retained his own, they went round through a different path, and so reached the old tool-house. And here the young Murrays looked about with infinite satisfaction, for there seemed no lack of just such playthings as they most fancied. Rakes, hoes, shovels, a basket of rough blocks,

a chisel and hammer, with some boards and other lumber which had been stored away in this shed till they might be wanted, were a perfect treasure; and what boy would not have exchanged a few painted toys for such a medley? Frederick crammed his own top into his pocket immediately, William threw down Arthur's, and each seizing the tool which came first, began knocking and pounding about, till it seemed likely they would bring the old building down upon their heads.

To Arthur, however, all this was most familiar, since he and Mary frequently amused themselves among the garden tools in bad weather, or when they were tired with running through the walks; and Arthur thought it would be much more pleasant to spin the tops now, than to do anything else. He had spun his own so often, that he had grown a little tired of it, and so he asked Frederick to lend him his, not doubting that Fred would do so.

But Frederick, like a great many other selfish people, though he was not using the toy, refused,

and went on with his hammering, while Arthur, after a little coaxing which proved quite useless, as Fred persisted in keeping his top, was forced to take up something else. He had been trying to make a box for his sister, the day before, and his father had given him a nice piece of board for that purpose, and told him how to shape it; and as the boys would not play with him, Arthur thought he might as well go on with his work, particularly as Mary had told him she was in great want of the box to keep her new set of cups and saucers in. So Arthur got out his board and fastened it on the work-bench, and, taking a sharp plane from a nail behind the door, set about his task. The moment he did so, both Fred and William stopped.

"Here," said Frederick, throwing down the hammer, "let me do that, won't you? I'm tired of this."

"No," said William, "let me do it, won't you?"

But Arthur, though a good-natured boy, did not feel inclined to be thus imposed on, and without

hesitation refused to relinquish his favorite tool to either of them.

"I could do it a great deal better than you, because I know how, and I am stronger," said Frederick. "Come, I'll give it to you again in a minute."

"Don't give it to Fred—give it to me," said William, from the other side.

Still Arthur shook his head, and went on with his work.

"I think you might," said Frederick. "I'll go straight home, if you don't."

"But you would not lend me your top when I asked you for it," said Arthur, "and so you ought not to expect me to give up my nice plane."

"Oh! I'll lend it to you now though," said Fred, eagerly drawing it from his pocket, "and it's a first rate top to spin. "Come, won't you try it? and here is the string, too."

"I don't care much about it *now*," said Arthur, resolved to make a great favor of giving up the plane. "Besides, I want to finish Mary's

box to-morrow, and so I must work at it to-day."

"I'll make you an excellent one, if you like," said Frederick. "I'm a capital hand at making boxes."

"Oh, what a story!" exclaimed William; "ain't you ashamed? you never made a box in your life."

"I did!" cried Frederick, angrily; "what do you know about it?"

"This is a very particular box," said Arthur, quietly, "and my father will not like to have it spoiled."

"I won't spoil it," said Fred. "I'll do it just right. Come!" and he attempted to take the plane from Arthur as he spoke. "I'll go straight home, if you don't."

"Well, I'll lend it to you for five minutes, and no longer," said Arthur. Remember, only five minutes, while I spin the top once. Mary won't like the box, unless I do it all myself."

"Poh! she'll never know it," said Fred. "How should she, if you don't tell her? This is a

grand plane: just see how well I can do it—much better than you. I mean to plane all the way to the end of the board."

"No," said Arthur, "I shall want it myself, presently."

"You'll lend it to me next, won't you?" asked William; "*I* want to do a little, too."

"Perhaps so," replied Arthur, in rather an important tone; "I'll see about it." He took up Frederick's top as he spoke, and tried to spin it, but either he was not very expert, or it was out of order, for the top would not spin.

"I can't think what is the matter with it," said Frederick, as he continued to amuse himself at Arthur's work-bench. "I guess you don't hold it right. Will,—you show him how."

"Show him yourself," said William. "You've had that plane long enough, now, and I want to try. It's my turn now, isn't it, Arthur?"

"Yes," said Arthur, "you may try it for a minute."

"But I haven't done yet, I tell you," cried Frederick. "I'm going to finish all this board;

so go away," and he pushed William from him, who was attempting to take possession of the plane, with such violence, that the boy fell against a few loose boards, and, whether he was hurt or not, began to cry as loudly as he could.

Poor Arthur was so unused to noisy broils, or indeed to quarrelling of any sort, that he felt half frightened; and forgetting his own rights, or trying to regain the disputed tool himself, he threw down the top, and tried to comfort William for his brother's unkindness.

"Never mind," said the good-natured little fellow. "You and I can play at see-saw—shall we? Here is a nice long board, and we may put it over this wooden horse, and get a fine ride. Mary and I do it sometimes, but not very often, because mother is afraid Mary may be hurt; but she won't object to my riding with you. Come—help me." And Will, wiping his eyes, though still looking angrily at his brother, and promising to "tell mamma" the moment they reached home, at last consented. The board was properly arranged, the boys mounted

each end, and peace was restored for a short time, during which Frederick continued to plane the wood for the box; and William and Arthur played at see-saw.

But by and by, Fred grew tired of his employment. His arms ached, and the perspiration stood upon his forehead; he thought he had done enough, he said, and now William could have the plane and let him ride: but William would by no means consent to this. Then Fred insisted that he *should*, and at last undertook to displace him by force, which was easily accomplished, as Will was not half so strong as his brother. Frederick dragged him from his seat, and got upon the board himself; but Arthur, who was really angry at such selfishness, and seemed to have caught a little of his companion's ill humor beside, said he would not ride with such a mean fellow; and Fred was left on the board to see-saw as best he might, alone.

In the mean time, however, William had seized the plane, and Arthur felt quite willing to lend it to him; but Fred was so much vexed

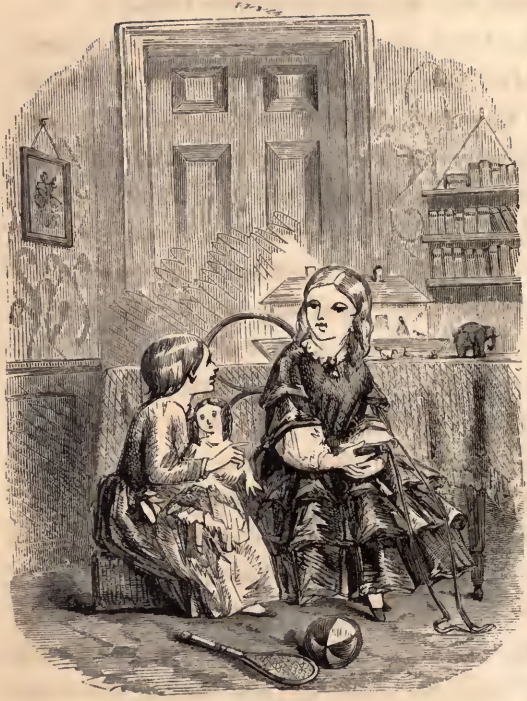
at being defeated, that he declared Will should not have it if Arthur would not ride with *him*. A regular battle immediately began between the brothers, which ended in Frederick's hand being terribly cut with the sharp instrument, and he ran off crying, toward his own home, William slowly following; and Arthur returned to the quiet enjoyment of his work-bench and tools, saying to himself as he did so, "Fred Murray is a very selfish boy, and I don't like him at all."

IV.

Kitty Coleman.

I THINK it will be quite agreeable to turn from such a noisy scene as that described in the last chapter, to a warm, sun-shiny morning soon afterward, when the garden gate was quietly opened, and little Kitty Coleman, in her clean apron and white bonnet, came to spend the day with Mary Neland. Kitty was eight years old, and a few months older than Mary; a quiet, sweet-tempered child, whom Mrs. Neland was always glad to see, because she knew that Kitty was well taught at home, and would not be rude or noisy when she came to visit them.

Arthur and his sister were in the parlor with their mother, when Kitty came; and when they heard the gate open, and looked out and saw



THE PLAY-ROOM.

who it was, they ran eagerly to the front door to meet and welcome their little friend.

And first, Kitty went into the parlor to speak to Mrs. Neland, as it was proper she should do, and then they all three went up stairs to a snug little room in the attic, which was called the play-room,—because it held all the toys, and the children were accustomed to amuse themselves there in bad or cold weather. There were a few bright pictures upon the walls, which Mrs. Neland had painted when she was quite a little girl; but for that reason Arthur and Mary loved to see them, and often tried to do something of the kind themselves.

There in one corner was a doll's bedstead, with white curtains, counterpane and pillows, and a small bureau, and a little low table, with a set of china cups and saucers on it, and a small chair, which had been given to Mary when she was only three years old, and was always called the "yellow chair," because it was painted yellow. Then there was an old trunk, with the hair nearly worn off, in which were a variety of bits

of muslin, and silk, and ends of lace, and some half-worn doll's clothes, and a few old books without covers.

Next to this was a very shabby rocking-horse, without his ears, and a piece of cord for a bridle; but, poor fellow! his best days were over now, and Arthur cared more for a scamper round the garden on his father's cane, than he did for a long ride on his once pretty pony, who, besides his ears, had had the misfortune to lose his tail also.

But it would take a long time to mention everything in this pleasant play-room,—for Mary had at least half a dozen babies scattered about it; and Arthur had a drum and broken sword to play soldier with, and an old wooden dog, who had only three legs now, and scarcely a bit of paint on his body, but who had once been a beauty, and was called Tray. There was a great chest, too, in one corner, full of papers, which served as a table sometimes, and held a couple of paint-boxes, and innumerable quantities of old pictures and drawings, and over it hung an old-

fashioned portrait of a strange gentleman whom the children did not know, with a very pleasant face, and eyes which seemed to watch them while they were at play; and Mary said he looked as if he wanted to come down from the wall and join them. I think there were some other things in the room, but I cannot recollect them all now, and must proceed to tell you how Arthur and Mary, with Kitty Coleman, went up stairs, and sat down for a nice play, with the old toys about them.

If you had seen how glad Arthur was to meet Kitty, you would never have supposed he had been so anxious for other companions. He brought out the yellow chair for her to sit on, the moment they entered the room, and then ran down stairs again to bring up the wax dolly, Miss Fanny Fair, from his mother's pantry, where it was generally kept, and really appeared to have forgotten that there were such things in the world as tops and marbles.

"I know you like Fanny better than the rest," he said, as he laid the doll on Kitty's lap,

"and she can be *your* child, to-day. Mary has made a new frock for her, and the old rag-baby has had her face painted, and looks a great deal prettier now, and cleaner, too."

Kitty thanked him, and asked where the rag-baby was.

Mary said she had left her on the parlor sofa, and Arthur, without waiting to be asked, ran down again to bring it. The new frock and the clean face were duly admired, and then the two little girls set about "playing house" in good earnest.

There were no cross words between them, and Mary did not say, as some children I have known do, "I must have *this* doll because I like it best, and it is mine, and so I *ought* to have it," but she good-naturedly allowed Kitty Coleman to choose; and when Kitty said "I would like Fanny Fair best," Mary replied, "Well, you can have her to-day, because I can play with her when you are not here."

Then Kitty took one corner and Mary another, and they made up their little beds for the dol-

lies; and Kitty had the table and tea-cups in *her* corner, and sent Arthur to invite "Mrs. Thompson," as Mary chose to be called, to drink tea with her; and when Mary said, "Jane, tell Mrs. Hammond I'll come with pleasure and bring all my children," you will scarcely believe that Arthur quite forgot his dislike of being called "Jane," and carried back the message as he was requested to do, and nursed Fanny Fair while Mrs. Hammond prepared the tea, and in fact was as useful as if he had worn petticoats all his life, and had never seen a top or shot a marble.

At length, when Mary had taken tea with Kitty, and Kitty with Mary; and the dolls had each been dressed and undressed several times, and all the cups and saucers washed and put aside,—the children grew tired of the play-room, and went down stairs to amuse themselves in the garden till dinner-time. It was a delightful morning early in June; the air was sweet with the smell of roses, which were blooming on every side, and beneath the trees which shaded the house they found a pleasant spot for their

enjoyment. Arthur showed Kitty how to spin his humming-top, though the gravel walk was not a good place for it; and then he drew, first one of the little girls, and then the other, up and down, and picked sweet clover for them to make wreaths for the dollies; and in this way an hour passed very pleasantly till they were summoned to dinner.

When dinner was over, Mrs. Neland told them it was too warm to play in the garden any longer, as the sun was quite hot in the middle of the day; she therefore proposed they should sit in the piazza under the shadow of the honeysuckles, and read. Arthur, she said, might read aloud while the girls sewed a little, as Mary had a doll's dress partly made, and Kitty would no doubt be willing to help her.

To this the children readily assented, and in a few minutes the girls were seated with their work, and two or three of the babies in little chairs beside them; and then Arthur opened the book his mother had lent him, and read the story of

The Generous Little Squirrel.

In the centre of a thick wood, and in the hollow trunk of an old oak tree, there once lived a family of Squirrels. There was Father Squirrel, and Mother Squirrel, and Bright-eye, the oldest of their children, and Sharp-tooth, and Bushy-tail, and Soft-skin, and little Nimble-foot the youngest,—and a very happy family they were, I can tell you. Early in the morning, before the sun came through the tall tree-tops, Father Squirrel was awake, and, rousing up his wife and children, told them it was time to be stirring, for it was a fine day, and they had plenty of work to do, and a great many nuts to gather in for their winter store; so Mother Squirrel opened her eyes and shook herself, and was wide awake in a minute; and one by one the little Squirrels got awake also, and were popping up to the top of their nest, to see for themselves how things looked outside.

It was a fine autumn morning, when the nuts

were just ripening, and the chestnut burs bursting open to show their brown fruit, when the father thus awoke them all. "We will go down to the foot of our own tree," he said, "and there we shall find a nice breakfast of acorns, which the wind blew down in the night; for it blew so hard, that I could not sleep for the noise."

"We shall find plenty of nuts in the woods to-day," said Mother Squirrel.

"I know of a chestnut-tree that is full of fine nuts," said Bright-eye; "and it is not far from home, either."

"You can show us the way," said his mother.

"And I know a tree of walnuts," said Soft-skin; "Bushy-tail and I found it out yesterday."

"We shall have a good winter store," said Father Squirrel, if we are industrious, and start early, before the wood is filled with people who come to gather nuts as well as we."

"I think they should all belong to us," said little Nimble-foot, for the whole wood is ours."

"Oh, no!" said Sharp-tooth. "Mrs. Robin, in

the Elm tree, says it all belongs to her, and she can build a nest just where she likes."

"Mrs. Robin is a greedy bird," said Nimble-foot; "she has no more right to it than we, nor so much."

"Come," said Father Squirrel, "let us go to breakfast, and then to our work. No matter to whom the wood belongs, while we can live safely in our old tree, where my father lived before me, and his father before that." So the whole family descended from their nest, and there was a fine breakfast of acorns spread upon the ground, and a hearty meal they made, for everybody was hungry; after which, they set off on their ramble among the nut trees.

As she had promised, Soft-skin led them to the tree of walnuts,—and they soon ran to the topmost boughs, and regaled themselves on the ripe nuts to their hearts' content, though they had just finished breakfast; but Squirrels, I believe, can eat nuts all day long if they try, just as boys and girls can eat sugar-plums. Presently, however, they heard a great squeaking at the foot

of the tree, and Father Squirrel, running down, saw a poor Wood-mouse lying on the ground, who seemed to be in great pain.

"Oh! neighbor Squirrel," said the Wood-mouse, "won't you help me? for I am in great trouble. Two of my little mice were last night put to death by one of those dreadful Owls, who fly through the wood when it is dark; and this morning I came out to find something for my other children,—for I was afraid to let them stir from the nest,—and have been so unlucky as to pull a large stone upon my leg, while trying to get some of the moss for my bed."

"What can I do for you, neighbor Mouse?" said the Squirrel.

"If you will go to my nest under the old log," said the poor Mouse, "and carry a nut to my little ones, and tell them I will be at home as soon as possible, I shall be so much obliged to you."

Father Squirrel replied that he would go with pleasure; so he ran up the tree, and soon brought down his wife to comfort Mrs. Mouse, while he

went to feed her young ones; and Mother Squirrel, after putting some damp clay on the injured leg of the poor animal, called Bright-eye to help her, and together they managed to assist the Mouse to her nest, where the two young mice looked very glad to see their mother come back again.

When the Mouse was safe, and Mother Squirrel had done all in her power to make them comfortable, the whole family returned to their work in the wood, and by night they had gathered quite a number of nuts to add to their winter store; for you know, when the snow is on the ground, and the leaves are all dead, the poor Squirrels would starve if they did not lay by something for winter use, and which serves them till the cold weather and their long naps are over.

Well, day after day the young Squirrels and their father and mother scampered through the trees, up and down, in and out, as merry as could be, gathering food, and enjoying the bright autumn weather, and making acquaintance with

all the other Squirrels, and a great many of the birds beside.

Sometimes they were frightened by the nutting parties, who came with bags and baskets, and long poles with which they beat the trees; and then Father Squirrel kept them in the nest for fear of accidents. Now and then they went to pay Mrs. Mouse a visit, but the poor thing did not get on well; she had hurt her leg so badly that she could only hop a little way from her nest, and the young mice just managed to find enough for themselves, and so Mrs. Mouse had rather a starving time.

One day, when the nuts were nearly all gone, and the family lived chiefly on acorns, Bushy-tail found several very fine walnuts among the roots of a large tree, at some distance from home. Now, it was a rule among them, to divide with each other anything that was particularly nice; so Bushy-tail, like a good Squirrel as he was, scampered off to call his brothers and sisters to the feast.

"My father and mother do not wish any,"

said Bushy-tail, "and here are just five nuts, so that we may each have one. This is the smallest, so I will take it myself; Bright-eye and Sharp-tooth are each active boys,—they shall have the next size; and these two large nuts shall belong to my sisters, Soft-skin and little Nimble-foot. You look hungry, my dear Nimble-foot, so pray take this and crack it at once. I am sure it is full of delicious meat."

Little Nimble-foot thanked her kind brother, and quickly breaking the nut, said it was very nice indeed.

"And why not eat yours, dear Soft-skin?" asked Bright-eye.

"I will keep it till by and by," said Soft-skin. So they finished their repast, and telling Bushy-tail he was a good fellow, and they would come to his feast again, soon ran off in different directions on their way home.

When all were gone, Soft-skin took the nut in her mouth and sprang away by herself, to a distant part of the wood. Good little Soft-skin! on she went over the rough ground, and through

the rustling leaves, till she reached the old log under which Mrs. Mouse had made her nest.

"Are you at home, Mrs. Mouse?" said she.

"Yes, my dear," said the poor lame Wood-mouse. "I am always glad to see any of your family, you have all been so kind to me; I wish my house was large enough for you to come in."

"I can only stay a moment," said the little Squirrel, "for my mother may want me. I came to bring you this nut, which I hope will make you a small supper; there are so few left now, that I thought you would like it."

"Thank you, my dear child," said the Mouse. "You are very good to think of me, and I am very hungry, for I have eaten nothing all day: my two children, Snip and Sly, went away yesterday, and have not come back, and I cannot tell when I shall see them; and I am so lame and so old, that I dare not go far from my nest, lest I could not get home again."

Soft-skin said she was sorry to find her so ailing, and would come and see her very soon, with

Mother Squirrel; and then, placing the nut upon the ground, she bade the Wood-mouse good evening, and returned with a feeling of great satisfaction to her own nest in the old oak tree.

Little Soft-skin never told any one what became of the nice nut. Like all good people when they act rightly, she did not talk about her generosity, or boast of what she had done. But she felt a great deal happier that night, when she went to sleep and thought of poor Mrs. Mouse, than if Bright-eye had given her all the nuts, and she had eaten them every one.

When Arthur had finished his story, Kitty said she liked it very much, and wished she was a squirrel, to scamper through the woods and get as many nuts as she liked. And so they went on talking about squirrels and their funny ways, for some time. Then Mary, who had taken the book out of Arthur's hand, and was turning the leaves, said she would read them a little piece of poetry,—and afterward, they would

go into the garden again. Then Mary read as follows:—

"Bessie's Promise.

"Mother, may I go this evening
Down the lane with cousin Anne?
For the lane is full of berries
I will gather, if I can.

"I will bring them in a basket,
Ripe and fresh for father's tea;
There will be enough for Charlie,
And perhaps a few for me.

"May I go, then, dearest mother,
With my cousin down the lane?"
"Yes, my Bessie, if you promise
Quickly to return again.

"Evening hours are often chilly;
Dews are heavy—and you know
How the sickness came upon you
From the dews, a year ago.

"Half an hour may serve to get them,
If the berries stand so thick;
You may get a brimming basket,
Bessie—if you will be quick."

Off the child in gayest transport
Flew, the treasured store to gain;
Promised to be home at sunset,
And went gayly down the lane.

Surely, there were berries plenty,
But beyond her reach they grew;
Standing here and there on tip-toe,
She could gather but a few.

Cousin Annie, somewhat taller,
Gained a basketful with ease;
"Come a little farther, Bessie,
There are plenty, past the trees."

Past the trees indeed she found them,
But the sun was getting low;—
With a handful in the basket,
Bessie knew 'twas time to go.

"Nonsense!" Annie cried, with laughter,
"Do not go with such a few!"
"No, I promised," Bessie answered,
"Not to linger in the dew."

Still, by clustering berries tempted,
Annie urged a longer stay.
"No, 'tis sunset, and *I promised*,"
Little Bessie still would say.

Turning with a look of sadness,
Slow she wandered through the lane
Nor could Annie's earnest pleading
Serve to lure her back again.

Standing close beside her mother,
With the moisture in her eyes,
She is pointing to the berries,
And her trembling lip replies:—

"These are all that I could gather;
There were plenty, but they grew
Where I could not get them quickly,
So I only brought a few;
For you know that I had promised
Not to linger in the dew."

"Darling," said her mother, fondly,
Kissing lips with sorrow mute,
"You have brought me something dearer
Than a basket *filled* with fruit—

"Brought me your *unbroken* promise,
More to me than any store;
Gladly feeling, little daughter,
I may trust you evermore."

When Mary had finished reading, she carried the book back to her mother; and then the three children went to play in the garden. They built houses in the sand, rolled the dolls in the wheel-barrow, and amused themselves in the tool-house till tea-time; after which Kitty Coleman went home, and Arthur and his sister were glad to go to bed.

V.

The High Swing.

A FEW days after Kitty Coleman's visit, as Arthur was standing at the front gate he saw Fred and Will Murray coming down the street. When they came near the gate, Fred called out, "Hey, Arthur Neland! won't you go back to our house, and play awhile? Father has gone to the city, and mother says we make her head ache, playing in the hall, and we came to ask you to come into our garden."

"I'll see," said Arthur, "if my mother will let me go." So he ran in, and Mrs. Neland said he might stay two hours, but no longer; and so Arthur washed his hands, and brushed his hair smooth, and went with the two boys into Mr. Murray's garden.

"What shall we play?" asked Will.

"Marbles," said Arthur, naming his favorite game. "I've got a pocketful."

"Agreed," said Frederick. So they drew a ring in the sand, and began. But pretty soon the two Murrays began to quarrel. Fred called Will a cheat, and Will said, "you lie." So they gave up playing, and went at something else.

Then Fred harnessed Will and Arthur together for a pair of horses, and off they went at full speed. Will kicked and capered, and Arthur pranced along, and Fred flourished his whip, and a fine team they were. Up and down they ran, through the long walks, and past the house, and Fred fastened them to a tree, while he went to speak to his mother; and so they got on very well for half an hour. Then Will stood still.

"Stop that whip," he cried. "Don't hit a fellow so hard."

"Mind yourself, then, old black," said Fred, giving him another crack.

"I tell you it hurts," said Will. "I won't play." And he tore off his harness.

"Get away with you, then," said Fred; "Arthur will be my horse." And Arthur trotted off in fine style, leaving Will to himself on the front steps.

"Boys," said Mrs. Murray, coming to the door, "don't you want some gingerbread?"

"Yes, yes," cried both the boys in a breath.

"You've got the biggest bit," said Fred, trying to snatch the piece from Will's hand.

"For shame! children," said their mother. "How can you act so? I dare say Arthur Neland never saw such rude boys before in his life."

Fred and Will both laughed, and said, "Who cares?" while they crammed the gingerbread into their mouths until it nearly choked them; and Arthur could not help saying, "No, ma'am, I never did."

"Take another piece, my dear," said Mrs. Murray, handing him the plate. But Arthur was not very hungry, so he replied, "No, ma'am,"

and the other boys greedily snatched at the remainder, and devoured it in a moment.

"Come," said Fred, as he swallowed the last bit, and Mrs. Murray went into the house again, "let's do something."

"I'm tired of playing horse," said Arthur; "I wonder how late it is. I must go home at twelve o'clock."

"Oh, it won't be twelve this long time," said Will. "We've scarcely had any fun, yet. Fred, let us make a swing with that rope in the barn."

"That will be first-rate," said Fred; and they all scampered off to the barn at the bottom of the garden. When the boys went in, they found a man rubbing down Mr. Murray's horse.

"John, where's that rope we had yesterday?" cried Will.

John said he did not know.

"Then find it for us," said Fred.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked John.

"You'll see—just get it," said Will. So John good-naturedly left his work, and looked for the

rope. "It's a pretty old one," said he, as he found it in a dark corner of the barn and handed it to the boys.

"It will do," said Fred; "now, where shall we put it up?"

"If you mean to make a swing," said John, "I'm afraid it won't bear you."

"Poh! not bear us!" said Fred. "Why, it would carry a dozen such boys as we are."

"But your father told you, the other day, not to swing with it," said John.

"He did not," cried Will.

"Yes, he did, master Will, for I heard him myself."

"He won't mind, I know," said Fred; "so just stand out of the way, Arthur, while I throw the end over that beam."

"Hadn't you better wait, and ask your father?" inquired Arthur, who had been taught to permission of his parents, before he did anything.

"Wait! no," said Fred, "what should we wait for? He won't be at home till night. Here goes,"

and he threw the rope over the beam. Then he made a slip-noose, and fastened one end; and, as John would not help him, he put a ladder up to the beam, and tied the other end of the rope to it. "Hurrah!" cried he, as he jumped down upon the barn floor. "I've done it, Mr. John, and no thanks to you. Now for a swing!" Fred jumped into the seat as he spoke, and swung several times across the barn. Will ran to push him.

"Higher! higher!" cried Fred, delighted with his success; "up she goes; give us another, Will—it's grand, I tell you."

"Now it's my turn," said Will, after swinging Frederick for some time, and Fred got out and gave it up to him. After a while they gave Arthur a chance; and though there was something which seemed to whisper in Arthur's ear that they were disobeying Mr. Murray, yet he found as much pleasure in the swing as the two brothers had done, and they continued to amuse themselves a long while with it without quarrelling. At last, Fred said,—

"Suppose we all get in at once—it will be such fun!"

"May-be the rope will break," said Arthur, "and the swing is so high, we might fall."

"It won't break," said Will; "don't you see how strong it is? Come, Fred, you get in, and I will sit in your lap; and if Arthur's afraid, he can push us." So the two boys climbed into the swing.

Now the old rope had been strained a great deal by the weight of the boys, and when they were both upon it, it began to crack. But Fred and Will did not notice that one of the strands had parted, and calling out to Arthur to "swing higher! swing higher!" were soon tossing up and down as far and as fast as Arthur's strength would push them.

"Once more," cried Will; "give us a good one, now, and I'll touch my feet to the top of that door." Arthur pushed with all his might; the boys went up, up, as far as the rope would allow;—as they came down, it suddenly gave way; they were dashed on the barn floor in a

moment, and with such force that Fred, who was below, was completely stunned by the fall, the back of his head striking first, and he lay quite senseless; while Will screamed with all his power, and soon brought John, and Mrs. Murray herself, into the barn, to see what was the matter.

They picked Frederick up, and John carried him into the house; and Mrs. Murray, who was terribly frightened, and very angry, gave William a box on the ear, and sent him crying after his brother, telling him she hoped his father would whip them both, for they were the most troublesome boys in the world, and always in mischief. Arthur could not help being very much ashamed, and rather frightened, though it was not his fault that the boys put up the swing. Mrs. Murray seemed to think he was to blame too, but she did not say so exactly; she only looked at him sternly, and said, "Arthur, you had better go home now," which he was not slow in obeying, and scampered back as fast as possible, to tell the whole story to his mother and Mary.

VI.

The Broken Window.

"ARTHUR," said Mary, one day, "if you will do something for me, I will do something for you."

"Well," said Arthur, "what is it?"

"But will you promise to do it?"

"Yes, if I *can*," said Arthur. "I cannot promise certainly, you know, because it might be something that I could not do at all, and then I should break my promise."

"What a wise boy you are," said Mary, laughing. "Of course you couldn't do it, if you *couldn't*, and I wouldn't be so silly as to ask you."

"Oh, yes, you might ask me to do a great many things I could not," persisted Arthur.

"Yes," said Mary, "I might ask you to creep up the chimney; or walk through the village on your head; or put a ladder to the moon, and climb up;—of course you couldn't do either of these."

"No, but you might ask me to disobey mother, or tell an untruth, or try and hurt some one," said Arthur.

"I'm sure I couldn't ask you to do those," said Mary.

"Well, what is it?" said Arthur. "I will if I can."

"You can," said Mary, "because I only want you to help me weed one of my flower-beds. Mother said yesterday my garden was quite overrun with weeds, and she was ashamed to see it; and I worked all the morning, and got everything nice but one bed."

"It is such hot work," said Arthur; "and look, I have just washed my hands!"

"But you can easily wash them again, and we can do it now, while the garden is shady. Come, be a good boy. You know you said you

would if you could," said little Mary, in a coaxing tone.

"And what will you do for me?" asked Arthur, getting up slowly from his seat on the piazza, and stretching himself.

"Oh! anything you wish," said Mary, eagerly.

"Well, I want this covered," said Arthur, drawing a worsted ball from his pocket.

Mary took it from him, and turned it round and round in her hands. "I guess I can do it," she said, "if I try, and mother will show me how. I never did one before."

"It is very easy," said Arthur; "just take an old glove and sew it round."

"Is it as easy as weeding," asked Mary, laughing.

"To be sure it is, and a great deal easier," said Arthur, "for it won't make you so hot, nor soil your hands."

Mary slipped the ball into her pocket, saying again she would try, and, tying on her sun-bonnet, went with Arthur to the garden-bed; and

though it was dirty work, and tiresome too, yet they were so industrious that all the weeds were removed in an hour,—and when they came back to the house, Mary sat down by her mother's work-table to cover the ball as she had promised. Arthur looked on.

"I don't think it is *very* easy to do this," said Mary at last, as the covering slipped from side to side, and once or twice the ball rolled on the floor; "it is harder than I thought."

"I will help you, Mary," said her mother. "It is rather a difficult job for your little fingers."

Mrs. Neland took the ball as she spoke, and after pinning on the kid, and fitting it nicely with her scissors, she gave Mary a needleful of strong thread, and showed her how to sew it on.

"How easy it is to do things when we know how," said Mary, as she finished the ball. "See how smooth it is! but I could not have done it by myself, without help."

"It is capital!" said Arthur, as he bounced it on the floor. "There is a bit of India-rubber

inside, and it goes up like a cork. Thank you, Mary,—I am very much obliged to you."

"You had better take it out of doors if you mean to play with it now," said his mother. "You may do mischief with it here."

"I think I will," said Arthur, and he ran out.

Just as he reached the gate he heard some one trying to open it, and saw William Murray peeping through. "I can't open this plaguey thing," said Will, pulling impatiently at the lock. "Why don't your father get a better one?"

Arthur instantly unfastened it, and William walked in, looking at the palm of his hand, and saying the skin was almost off.

"Why didn't you call me?" asked Arthur. "I was only in the parlor."

"I did call till I was tired," said Will. "I came here to play with you a little; Fred has gone to the city with father, and I am all alone."

"Do you like ball?" said Arthur. "My sister has just covered this for me, and we can play.

I'll get my bat," and he threw up the ball, and Will caught it.

"It is not as good as mine," he said, "but we can use it. Get the bat quick, and let's begin."

Arthur went to look for it; "I'm sorry I can't find it," said he, coming back. "I can't think what I did with it yesterday. I had it in the walk at the end of the house."

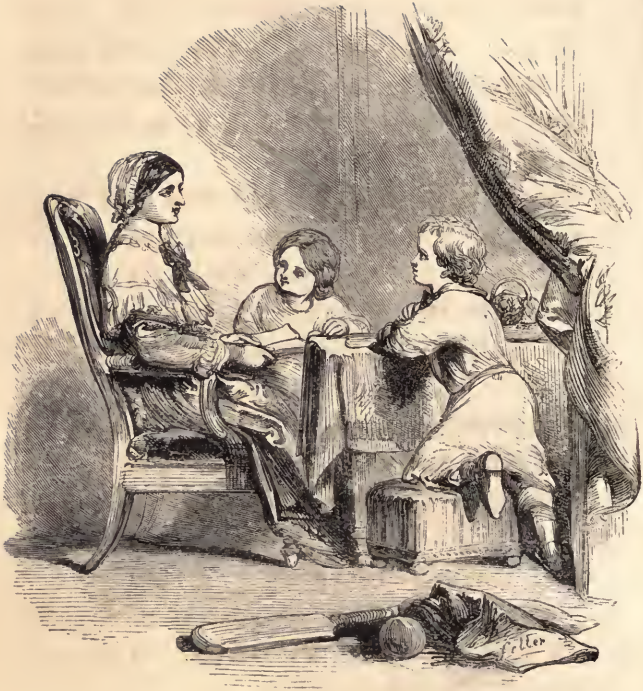
"May-be I can find it," said Will, and they went to the end of the house together.

But though Will Murray had such sharp eyes, and both he and Arthur looked in every direction, the bat could not be found. "Plague on it!" said Will, "don't look any longer; make a bat of this stick,—it will do pretty well,—and let us begin. I can't stay long."

"It will answer pretty well," said Arthur, "but we can't strike even with it I'm afraid."

"Try it," said Will, and he tossed the ball towards Arthur, as he spoke.

Arthur tried, but missed, and the ball fell at his feet. "This stick is no good at all," he said. "I guess we shall not be able to use it."



BROKEN WINDOW.

"Hand it here," said Will, proudly. "I'll show you how; give us a fair chance now. There she goes," and he knocked the ball over the fence.

Arthur ran for it. "That was a capital hit," said he; "I wonder if I shall do as well, this time."

"*You* can't strike it," said Will. "I'll bet you a cent you don't, once in ten times."

"Give us a good throw, now," said Arthur, and as the ball came toward him, he gave it a knock with all his might, and sent it—not over the fence, but pop through the side window of the best parlor.

"There! Master Arthur Neland, you've done it," cried Will, as the glass jingled down upon the ground. "What will your mother say now, old fellow? You'll get it."

Arthur gazed up at the window in dismay. "It was this crooked stick," he said. "I thought it would not strike even."

"What will you do?" asked Will.

"Do!" said Arthur, in surprise. "Why, go and tell my mother at once, to be sure."

"But you'll certainly get a whipping, if you tell," said William. "Can't you say the cat broke it?"

"No," said Arthur, indignantly; "do you think I would tell a lie about it?"

"But the whipping," said Will.

"I would rather be whipped than tell an untruth," said Arthur, proudly.

"I would not," said Will. "Why, I tell a dozen every day, if I get into a scrape, and so does Fred. We don't care, if we are not found out."

"Well, *I* care," said Arthur. "I never told a lie in my life, and I never will. My father says it is cowardly as well as wicked, and I don't want to be a coward."

He walked off as he spoke toward the door, and Will followed, to see what would be done to pay for the mischief, and if Arthur would really tell the truth, which he very much doubted. At the parlor door he stood still and listened. Arthur went in, and walked straight up to his mother.

"Mother," he said, "I have met with a great misfortune; I have broken a window in the next room."

"I am *very* sorry for it, Arthur," said his mother, gravely. "How did it happen?"

"I broke it with my ball," replied Arthur. "I could not find my bat, and I struck it with this crooked stick, and that sent it the wrong way, and it went through the glass."

"You did wrong in playing so near the house," said Mrs. Neland. "I sent you from this room, for fear of accident; and you should have gone to the bottom of the garden, quite out of the way."

"I am *very* sorry, mother," said Arthur. "I will try and remember next time, and not play so near the house."

"I see you are sorry," replied Mrs. Neland, "and am glad to find you so, although that will not mend my window. Put away your ball now, and ask Susan for a dust-pan and brush, and then go into the parlor and sweep all the broken glass very carefully into the pan, and put it into

the fire. Since you have done the mischief, you must clear it away yourself."

"Mother, William Murray is at the door," said Arthur, as he turned to leave the room.

"Come in, William," said Mrs. Neland, kindly. "I cannot let Arthur go out to play again, just now, but you may amuse yourself here with Mary."

Will hung down his head, and made no reply. He wanted to go in, but felt ashamed to do so. Mary went out, and took hold of his hand. "Won't you come and see my paint-box?" said the little girl; and she drew him into the parlor, and made a place for him at the table. Good little Mary, she was so kind to every one!

Will looked at the paint-box, and at some picture-books which Mary also showed him; and by the time Arthur had swept up the broken glass and came back into the sitting-room, Will began to feel a little less shy and uncomfortable.

"Now, Arthur," said Mrs. Neland, "you had better sit down in that corner, and finish your

sums; and William can have Mary's slate to draw on, while you are busy." And Arthur did as his mother desired. Mrs. Neland did not wish to punish her little boy for an accident, for she knew he did not intend to do mischief, and was, beside, very sorry for what had happened; but she wanted him to give up his play, in order that he might remember the next time he went out with his ball, not to throw it too near the house, and then the same misfortune would not occur again. And I think it was a good plan; for boys should not forget, when they put other people to inconvenience and trouble. I do not approve of whipping, either, if it can be helped, and a great many wrong things which children do, are just because they *forget* so often.

When Arthur had finished his sums, his mother said she would give him a short story to read aloud, as she thought William would like it as well as himself. So Arthur drew his chair to the table, beside his sister, and when his mother had given him the book, read the story of

Jack and his Penny.

Jack was a little boy just seven years old. His right name was John, but everybody—and I'm sure I can't tell why—called him Jack. It couldn't have been for shortness, because there are four letters in each name. J O H N—John, and J A C K—Jack; and I am equally sure it was not for beauty, since one name is quite as good as the other; but I suppose it was not of much consequence what they called him, as long as he was not called a bad boy.

Well, one day Jack was leaning over the gate in front of his father's house, doing nothing but whistling, and looking across the street at a drove of cows and oxen that a man was driving. Pretty soon one of the cows strayed away from the rest, and went down a lane, close beside the house where Jack lived. "Hey, there!" cried the man, "come back, I tell you;" and he would have run after the cow, if the other cattle had not gone down the same lane on the other side of the street, and he had to go after them first.

Now Jack was used to cows, and not at all afraid of them, for his father kept two in a field just out of the village; and sometimes Jack went with his brother to fetch them home. So he jumped off the gate, and ran down the lane after the man's cow, in a minute, and soon drove her back into the street, beside the others.

"Halloa, you're a smart chap for your size," said the man. "What's your name, General?"

"Jack."

"Jack, hey! Jack Frost, or Jack the Giant-Killer?"

"It's neither of those Jacks."

"Then I guess its 'Jack and the Bean-stalk.'"

"No, it ain't."

"Well, then, its Jack Sprat."

"No."

"May-be you haven't *any* name," said the man.

"Yes, I have, though; my name is Jack Jones."

"Well, Jack Jones, don't you want to help me drive these creatures to market?"

"Yes, I'd like to," said Jack, "only I can't."

"Why can't you?" said the man, as he walked slowly along after his drove, and little Jack walked with him.

"'Cause our folks wouldn't let me," replied Jack.

"Do you go to school?"

"Yes, just down the street."

"Can you read, General?"

"Yes, pretty well."

"I wonder if you can read what is on that," said the man, drawing a penny from his pocket, and handing it to Jack.

Jack looked at it a moment, and then said slowly, "One Cent."

"Right," said the man. "Now you may have that, as you can read it."

Jack looked much pleased, for he did not get money very often, and said, "Thank you, sir."

"Well, good-bye, Jack—I guess you've gone about far enough," said the man. "And now I must get on to market."

"Good-bye," said Jack; and the man went away down the street, and the little boy ran home.

When Jack got back to his place on the gate, he began thinking what he should do with his penny.

"I think I'll buy some marbles," said he. "I can get four with a cent, and I want some marbles dreadfully." And then he took the money from his pocket, and began tossing it up. It was a bright penny, and Jack as he looked at it thought it worth more than four marbles. "I guess candy would be better," said he. "Mint-stick is good. I'll buy mint-stick." So he got off the gate and walked away to the candy-shop, which was at some distance from home. When he reached the shop, Jack stopped outside to look in at the window; for Mrs. Giles, who sold candies, and a few toys, and some other little matters, had put a great many things there which were a sad temptation to the boys and girls who went by on their way to school. While Jack stood at the window, another boy came up and stopped, too.

"I wish I had some money," said the boy, after he had looked awhile; "I'd buy that top."

"I've got a penny," said Jack;" may-be I'll buy it."

"Have you?" said the boy; "well, that's a capital top."

"I wonder how much those whistles are?" said Jack.

"Poh! don't waste your money. You can make a whistle yourself, with a bit of willow," said the boy. "How would you like a kite—that green one?"

"Oh! yes, but there ain't much wind, this warm weather."

"Well, there's a tin trumpet, why don't you buy that?"

"I'll go and ask Mrs. Giles the price of it," said Jack, and he walked into the shop.

Mrs. Giles said the tin trumpet was a penny, and Jack had just decided to take it, when he saw a wooden horse poking his head out of a drawer; and when Mrs. Giles found that he wanted to look at that, she opened the drawer, and showed him a great many other penny toys, so that poor Jack got more and more puzzled

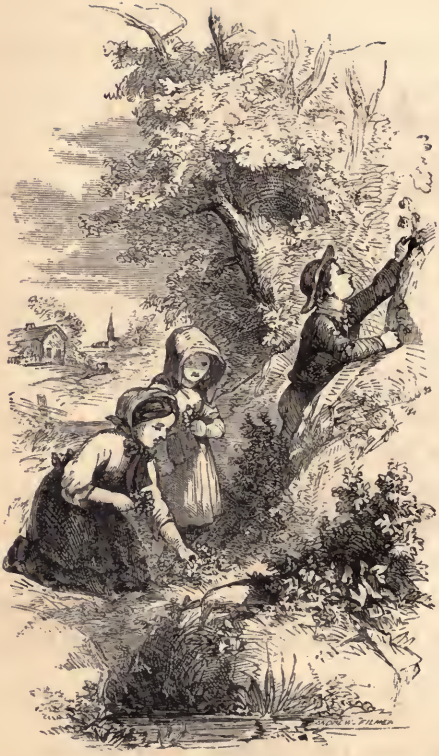
what to buy, among so many to choose from. At last, quite in despair, he went back to the tin trumpet, and said he would take that. So Mrs. Giles handed it to him, and he was just taking the penny out of his pocket, when—what do you think happened? Why, most unfortunately, the penny slipped out of his fingers, fell upon the floor, rolled down a dark crack between the boards, and was lost! Jack looked after it with a most woful face, and when he and Mrs. Giles had both searched in vain, and it could not be gotten out of the crack, Jack felt pretty badly, as you may think. He was a brave boy, however, and did not cry for trifles, as many children do, but as he came out of the shop, and walked slowly back towards home, he could not help shedding a few tears. Well, he had got almost home, when he heard somebody running behind him, and a little voice calling out, "Jacky Jones, Jacky Jones!" and turning round he saw Mrs. Giles' little daughter with the tin trumpet in her hand.

"Here. Jackey," said she, "my mother sends

you this trumpet, because she felt so sorry that you lost the penny under our shop."

Jack took the nice present of good Mrs. Giles, with a smiling face, and thanked the little girl; and then he trudged on to his own house, in excellent spirits, blowing as loud as he could upon his tin trumpet.

Just as Arthur finished the story, Mrs. Murray's girl came to call William home, and though he was greatly amused with Mary's paint-box, and liked to hear Arthur read, he was obliged to go.



IN THE WOODS.

VII.

A Day in the Woods.

MRS. Neland had promised the children for some time, to take them to spend a day in the woods, but somehow or other it had never been convenient for her to do so. One bright morning, however, about the beginning of September, she told Arthur she would go; and that he might put on a pair of stout shoes, and get a pair for Mary also, out of the shoe closet, while she finished washing the breakfast cups, and then they would set out on their walk.

"Shall we stay *all* day, mother?" asked Mary.

"Until four o'clock, I think," replied Mrs. Neland.

"And what shall we do for our dinner?"

"I will take care of that," said her mother, smiling.

So Mrs. Neland finished all she had to do within doors, and then she went into the pantry and began to fill a basket with some good things for their dinner. Mary went into the pantry too, and saw her mother put some bread and butter into the basket, and some very nice cake, and a small bowl of custard, and some tea-spoons, and cover it all over very carefully with a clean napkin; and then she said, "I wonder, Mary, if Kitty Coleman would not like to go with us to-day? Suppose you were to run and ask Mrs. Coleman if she may go."

Mary tied on her sun-bonnet and ran off in great glee, and was made quite happy by hearing Mrs. Coleman say, that Kitty should go with pleasure, if they could wait till she had put on a clean frock. Mary promised they would call at the door for her as they went by, and then ran home again to tell her mother. Arthur was sitting on the door-step with the basket beside him, and Mrs. Neland's parasol in his hand, waiting for her to come out. He was getting a little impatient.

"Mary, please ask mother to hurry, won't you?"

"She will be ready in time," replied Mary, as she ran past him.

"But it will soon be so hot," said Arthur, "if we do not make haste." And he got up and walked about the porch, and called little Frisk the dog, and played with him awhile, so as to shorten the time. In about fifteen minutes his mother and Mary came down stairs, and they set off. Arthur wanted to take Frisk with them, and Frisk wanted to go, too; but Mrs. Neland said she was afraid he would be troublesome, so they sent him back, and shut the gate.

"There is Kitty, quite ready for us!" exclaimed Mary, as they came out, and Kitty ran down the steps and joined them. Mrs. Coleman was standing at the door, and they stopped to speak to her.

"I hope you will have a pleasant walk," said Mrs. Coleman. "It is a lovely day. Kitty, dear, you will be a good girl."

"She is always good," said Mrs. Neland. "We

shall be at home between four and five o'clock this afternoon. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," called out all the children, and they started off in fine spirits. Kitty had a little basket in her hand, in which, she said, her mother had put some cold chicken and raspberry pie, to add to the dinner.

"That will be very nice," said Mrs. Neland. "And now let us turn down this street till we come to the lane, and then I will take the baskets, and you little folks can have a nice run."

So they walked on, Arthur close by the side of his mother, and Mary and Kitty hand in hand, before them. Pretty soon they came to the lane. "Now for a good race," said Arthur. "Take care you don't fall," cried Mrs. Neland, as they all started, while their mother walked along, more slowly. By and by they came to a beautiful tree, with wide-spreading branches, and sat down on a large stone beneath it to rest themselves, and wait for Mrs. Neland.

While they sat there they looked down the lane, and presently Arthur called out, "See that

dog running towards us—it looks just like Frisk!"

"I do believe it is Frisk," said Mary. "He wanted to go with us, poor fellow!"

"Yes, it is Frisk, I do declare. See how he jumps upon mother, and here he comes, as fast as his legs can carry him."

In a minute the dog was beside them, wagging his tail, jumping up to lick Arthur's face, and trying to show how glad he was.

"Poor fellow, poor fellow, good dog!" said Arthur. "You couldn't stay at home—could you, Frisk?"

"Frisk has been too sharp for us this time," said Mrs. Neland, as she joined them. "So we shall have to indulge him, and let him go with us, I think."

"Yes, don't send him home, mother," said Mary. "I am sure he will not be troublesome."

"Are you rested now?" said her mother.

"Quite rested," they all answered.

"Then let us walk on," said Mrs. Neland.

So they walked to the end of the lane, pick-

ing what flowers they could find, till they came to a high gate, which led into a beautiful, smooth meadow. The gate was very heavy, and Mrs. Neland could only open it a little way, and they had to squeeze through, which made them laugh, and wonder what they should do if one of them should stick fast.

They walked slowly over the meadow, for the soft grass was very pleasant to their feet. There was a flock of sheep feeding there, and Kitty and Mary were so delighted with two little lambs, that they could scarcely bear to leave them. There was a horse, too, with a colt frisking about, which pleased Arthur, exceedingly, and he would have liked to chase it round the meadow; but this his mother forbade, as the colt was not his property.

At the end of the meadow they climbed over a fence, and went down a little woody pathway, and crossed a pretty brook on a small stone bridge. There were plenty of hazel bushes here, but the nuts were not ripe yet; so they did not pick them off, but they asked their mother if

they might come and get some, when the nuts had turned brown.

"They do not belong to me," said Mrs. Neland.

"Whose are they?" asked Arthur.

"I believe they belong to the person who owns the wood we are going to," replied his mother.

"To Mr. Trim?"

"Yes."

"I dare say he will give us as many as we want," said Mary.

"That might depend upon how many would satisfy you," said Mrs. Neland.

"My father knows Mr. Trim," said Kitty; "and if father asks him, perhaps he will let us come here and get some."

"Oh! look, look!" cried Arthur, who had gone on a little before them, with Frisk. "See that squirrel!"

The girls looked, and saw a pretty grey squirrel, running up a tree, till he had nearly reached the top, and then suddenly disappear.

"I suppose his nest is in that tree," said Mrs. Neland.

"He looks like one of those squirrels we read about one day, on the piazza," said Kitty. "Don't you remember?"

"Yes," said Mary. "In the story of 'The Generous Little Squirrel.' I wonder what his name is?"

"Bushy-tail, perhaps," said Arthur.

"Nimble-foot, I should think, by the way he goes up the tree," said his mother.

"There he is again," cried Mary. "See how he peeps down at us from his high house!"

"Come down, little Nimble-foot, come down," called Kitty, as they stood at the foot of the tree, and looked up.

But Nimble-foot, or Soft-skin, or whatever his name was, paid no attention to Kitty's kind invitation. He ran about on the top-most boughs, or sat upon his hind legs, and ate something which he held in his paws; and did not seem to care at all for the little folks below him.

"Ah! he is a cunning fellow," said Mrs.

Neland. "He knows he is safest up in his sky-parlor."

"How I should like to catch him," said Mary. "He would be such a dear little pet."

"He would bite," said Kitty.

"We might tame him," said Arthur, as they walked on, following the little brook. It was a pretty little stream, and there were so many birds flying about among the bushes, that Mrs. Neland said it reminded her of a short story which she knew, and if they liked, she would repeat it to them, as they went up the hill; for they had to leave the pleasant path they were in, and go up to the high ground before them, from which they would see Mr. Trim's wood.

The children all said they would like to hear it,—so Mrs. Neland began:—

"The Brook and the Sparrow.

A FABLE.

"Oh, whither so fast, my Lady Brook,
Oh, whither so fast to-day?
Tarry awhile from your onward dance,
And peep out here with your merry glance,

To chat with a friend I pray."
And the Brook made answer—"I cannot stay,
Sweet Sparrow, to prate with you,
For the morning hours are flitting away,
And I have my tasks to do."

"And what may your work be, Lady Brook,
That you cannot stop to day?
Babbling over the stones you go,
And a noisy tongue you have, I trow—
But what are your tasks, I pray?
Nothing, I ween, but an idle song
To sing as you wander by—
Nothing, I ween, but to catch the gleam
Of the sun in the deep blue sky—
Nothing, but dimple and flirt with the bee,
Or the yellow butterfly."

"Friend Sparrow," replied the little Brook,
Mine are but humble tasks—
Yet a willing step, and a cheerful look,
My great Employer asks,
And gladly I fulfil them all,
Simple although they be,
And I sing, *for the very joy of my heart,*
To the butterfly and the bee."

"And what are these wondrous tasks, I pray?"
Quoth the Sparrow, in disdain;
And she laughed outright, while the little Brook
Made answer yet again:—

"I bathe the roots of the willow trees,
Beneath whose boughs I pass—
And the hazel bush, and the alders low,
And freshen the meadows through which I flow,
And strengthen the tender grass.
The sweet wild-flowers would droop and die,
If not for my nursing care;
And on my marge is the greenest moss
That groweth anywhere.

"The birds alight at the morning's prime,
To plash in my cooling breast—
And the weary oxen come down to drink,
At the noon-day hour of rest—
And the lowing kine from the meadows come,
And I give them a draught so clear,
You may believe they are loth to leave
A fount of such dainty cheer.

"Simple indeed, friend Sparrow, I know,
Are the tasks that I fulfil—
Yet methinks the *humblest work* should be
Performed with an *earnest will*,—
It giveth a feeling of such content,
To do in all things *our best.*
But now I must bid you a kind good-day."
Then the Rivulet hastened on its way,
And the Sparrow, with nothing else to say,
Flew back again to her nest,—
We may hope, a wiser and better bird,
From the useful lesson she had heard.

By the time Mrs. Neland had finished her story, they had nearly reached the top of the hill, and Arthur was just saying that he liked the fable, and what tiresome work it was to climb a hill, when his mother said, "Why, Arthur, what have you done with the basket?"

Arthur turned about, and looked rather frightened.

"Oh, I hope you have not lost our nice dinner!" cried Mary.

"I must have left it at the foot of the hill," said Arthur. "I set it down a moment to cut this stick, and forgot it."

"Then run back as fast as you can, and get it," said his mother. "You will be hungry enough by noon."

"Dear me, what a plague it is," said Arthur, as he ran down the hill. He found the basket just where he had left it, and came back panting and puffing.

"It was a lucky thing I missed it so soon," said Mrs. Neland, "or you might have had a longer walk. Now you may go and sit down

under this nut-tree, and look at the fine prospect while you rest a few minutes."

So the children sat down, and began to look about them, and were quite surprised to find how far they could see. Mrs. Neland pointed out the wood they were going to, nearly a quarter of a mile off; and looking back, they saw the village in which they all lived, and far away in the distance they had a glimpse of the river and some blue hills.

"Now when you are quite rested," said Mrs. Neland, "we will go down this hill, and then turn into that road by the white house, and go straight on a little, till we come to the wood."

"Oh! I see a sail," cried Arthur, starting from his seat, and pointing toward the river. "A boat! a boat!"

"Oh, what a tiny boat," said Mary. "Look, Kitty, quick—it is passing out of sight!"

"I wish we could see the river from our house," said Arthur. "I do so love to watch the boats. Could you take us to the river, some day, mother?"

"I can't *promise* to do so, my dear," replied Mrs. Neland, "but perhaps I may. Come, let us walk on now, and I will carry the basket. It is nearly eleven o'clock."

"You and Kitty be my horses," said Arthur to his sister. So the girls took hold of one end of his stick, and Arthur held the other, and they trotted off down the hill like two little ponies. When they reached the foot of the hill, they waited for Mrs. Neland to join them, and then went on to the turn of the road, by the white house. They were passing the house very quietly, when suddenly a large black dog jumped over the fence, and, rushing upon poor little Frisk, began barking in a furious manner. Mary and Kitty both screamed in affright, and ran close to Mrs. Neland, who tried to drive away the dog, while Arthur threw stones at him, and called out as loud as he could—"Out sir, out sir." Frisk looked very fierce, and barked and snarled quite bravely; but I fear the black dog, being so much larger, would have given him a terrible shaking, if Mrs. Trim herself had not

come from the house with a broom in her hand, and calling off the big dog, gave him a whack with the broom, to teach him better manners, and sent him into the house looking rather ashamed of himself.

Mrs. Neland stopped to thank her. She said the dog was a good-for-nothing fellow, and always tried to get into a fight if he could. "We chain him up almost every morning," said she, "and let him loose at night; but I was busy churning to-day, and forgot it, till I heard him bark, and the little girls screaming."

"*I* was not frightened," said Arthur, rather proudly; "it was Mary and Kitty who screamed."

"Oh, I didn't suppose it *was* you," said Mrs. Trim, laughing; "*boys* don't cry at the sight of a dog."

"I thought he was going to kill Frisk," said Mary.

"Frisk would have had the worst of it, I guess," said Mrs. Trim, "for our Watch is such a strong creature."

"I hope he won't come out again as we are coming back," said Kitty, who was still trembling. "Do you think he will, ma'am?"

"No, no, I'll chain him this minute," said Mrs. Trim; "so don't be afraid, my dear. You are Mr. Coleman's little girl, aren't you?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Kitty; "and I am going with Mrs. Neland and Arthur and Mary, to play in the wood till afternoon."

"Mr. Neland asked leave of Mr. Trim, last week," said Mrs. Neland.

"Oh, you are quite welcome to stay as long as you like," replied Mrs. Trim. "I go there myself, sometimes, it is so pleasant and shady in hot weather. But won't you come in, Mrs. Neland, and take a drink of nice fresh buttermilk before you go on? I've just finished my churning."

"I'm very thirsty," said Arthur, looking at his mother.

"Are you?" said Mrs. Neland; "well, then, as Mrs. Trim is so kind, you may go in."

"But that big dog," whispered Kitty, taking

hold of Mrs. Neland's dress, as Mrs. Trim opened the gate,—"I'm so afraid of him."

'He won't touch you, my dear, when I am by" said Mrs. Trim. "He knows what he is about, I can tell you. See how he sneaks away, when I shake my broom at him!"

Mrs. Neland would not let Frisk come through the gate, lest he should be troublesome, and Kitty felt quite comforted at the sight of Watch, trotting off to the barn very quietly. Kind Mrs. Trim led them to her neat kitchen door, and gave them all a tumbler of buttermilk, which they thought very nice and refreshing; and then they started once more for the wood, after thanking Mrs. Trim for her kindness and hospitality.

The remainder of their walk was through a pretty country road, with a green pathway on one side for the people who travelled on foot, and where Arthur and the little girls walked, one by one. Presently they came to a pair of high bars, and Mrs. Neland said that was the entrance to the wood. She told Arthur she

would help him to put down two or three of the lower bars, that they might creep through, as neither the girls nor herself could climb them, though it would be easy enough for a boy to do so. Arthur said he thought he could put them down without help, and his mother told him to try. So he tried, and tried very manfully, and soon succeeded in getting down the ends of three bars; and Mrs. Neland and Mary and Kitty stooped down, and crept through into the woody ground on the other side. Then Arthur tried to replace the bars again, as he had found them; but they were so heavy that he was unable to do it alone, and his mother had to go to his assistance. When they were all fixed in their places, then Arthur climbed over them himself, and jumping down, cried out,—

"Hurrah! hurrah! here we are in the wood, at last."

"Why, this is not like a wood," said Mary; "the trees are not thick enough."

"They stand closer together as we go on," said her mother. "Here is a foot-path; let us

follow it, and we shall soon come to the thick trees."

"I am *so* warm," said Kitty, taking off her sun-bonnet to fan herself. "Don't you feel so, Mary?"

"Yes, pretty warm, not *very*," answered Mary. "See, here we are getting into the wood, and then we shall be cool enough."

"Mother," cried Arthur, running on before them, and stopping suddenly at the edge of a little glen, which lay between them and the thicker part of the wood, "here is a brook; we must cross it, I suppose; there is a plank thrown over it."

"This is the same brook we saw before," replied his mother. "There is a spring of water up among the trees on the other side, and I fancy that the people in this neighborhood come here sometimes to get it, for the path seems to be well worn."

"Let us find the spring first," said Arthur; "it will be a capital place to dine."

"But we must find a rock for the table," cried

Mary and Kitty. "A nice smooth rock," said Mary, where the plates won't slip off."

"Certainly," said her mother, smiling. "We must try to find the one which the fairies sup from, when they come to frolic here in the moonlight."

"How I do wish there were really such things as fairies," said Arthur, as they crossed the little brook, one by one, and walked up among the trees. "It would be such fun to watch for them, and see them dance. Which way is the spring, mother? I want to find that, the first thing."

The wood was quite free from what is called underbrush—that is, wild tangled bushes and vines, which often grow beneath the tall trees. Mr. Trim had cut them all away, only leaving the young trees and saplings, which he wanted to grow into timber. So the children had no difficulty in following the path, and Mrs. Neland soon brought them to a small cluster of young oaks, at the foot of which there lay, in a small basin, the spring of water they wanted to see.

"I want a drink of it," said Mary. "How shall we get some?"

"Make a leaf cup," said Arthur. "Or, I'll take some in my hand, this way, and drink it so."

"But I shall wet my dress," said Kitty, as she tried to follow Arthur's example.

"See here," said Mrs. Neland, opening her basket. "I brought Mary's china mug with our dinner, because I knew we should come to this spot, and perhaps be very thirsty. Come, Arthur, you must be our little gentleman, and dip us each a cup of water."

Arthur did so.

"And now," said Mrs. Neland, "I shall sit down on this smooth rock, and read a book which I have in my pocket, and you may go and amuse yourselves as you like, till dinner time. But don't go too far off, or you may get lost in the wood."

"We shall take good care of that," said Mary, and they ran off.

For a long time the children enjoyed themselves, running about among the trees, picking

the tiny white flowers, and playing hide and seek. They chased the large toads that were hopping over the ground, and once Arthur thought he had caught one; but the toad was too spry, and soon got out of his reach. Then, Mary spied something at the foot of a tree, which proved to be an empty nest. She was quite disappointed because there were no eggs in it, but Arthur told her the young birds had been hatched in it long before, and had flown away. While they were looking at the nest, a bird flew over their heads, and alighted on the bough above. Kitty said she was sure it was the bird who had built the nest, and that he must feel very sorry to find it gone. So she called out,—

"Pretty Birdie, here is your nest! we don't mean to destroy it, Mister Birdie, we are only looking at it." But Mister Birdie did not seem to care a jot about it now; he just whistled a few low notes, and then stretched his wings and flew away far beyond the wood. Perhaps he was looking for his wife, to ask her what she

thought of taking a journey to the South, where the cold Winter would not come.

Whichever way he went, the children did not watch him long, for they heard Mrs. Neland calling them, and scampered off at once to see if their dinner was ready. Ready it was, sure enough, and they clapped their hands and laughed joyfully when they saw it, for Mrs. Neland had laid out their feast on a large flat rock, spreading a napkin on it first, to make it look like a dinner-table; and there was the chicken, and the custard, and the cake, and the raspberry pie, and the bread and butter, all in order, and the clear sweet spring of water close by; and though they had all those things very often at home, yet Arthur and the little girls declared they had never tasted anything so nice before, and said they would like to dine under the trees every day.

They were all very hungry, for they had taken a long walk and had a deal of play beside, and so they soon cleared the table of all the good things. Everybody, however, had enough; and

indeed, Arthur complained that he had eaten too much, and could not play again immediately His mother said she was sorry to hear him say so, for it sounded as if he were a glutton, and did not know when he had enough; but as he was not ready for play, they would pack the plates and napkins into the baskets again, and they could sit down on the rocks while she told them a story.

"Oh! that will be capital," cried Arthur.

"What shall it be?" asked his mother.

"Anything you like, mother," said Mary.

"I like fairy tales," said little Kitty.

"A fairy tale! a fairy tale! Oh, mother, do tell us a fairy tale," cried Arthur and Mary.

"I am not sure that I can remember one," said Mrs. Neland.

"Do try, mother, do try," cried all the children, and so Mrs. Neland, after stopping to consider a few minutes, said she would tell them the story of

The Fairy Contents.

Once on a time, in the happy days of the fairies, there lived an old couple in a little cottage by the side of a public road. They kept the toll-gate, and a young lad lived with them who was their grandson. Now it happened, one day, that little Hans was sitting by his grandfather's door, watching all the fine carriages and horsemen who went by on the public road. First, there came along an elegant coach and six, with footmen and out-riders, and Hans said to himself,—"Ah, I wish I had a coach and six: what an unlucky boy I am, for I have nothing to carry me but my legs, and I live in a poor cottage with my grandmother, and have to open the gate all day."

Pretty soon a horseman came galloping along on a fine prancing steed, with a beautiful arching neck, and a long flowing tail, and Hans said to himself,—"I wish I was a horseman, with such a noble steed to ride on; but I'm nothing but

poor little Hans, with only my legs to carry me, and I have to live in the cottage with my grandmother, and open the gate all day."

Here Mary interrupted her mother, to ask what a toll-gate was; and Mrs. Neland told her it was a place where people who travelled on a public road were obliged to pay something to the people who kept the road in good order. Then she went on with her story.

By and by there came two gentlemen in a gig, with a fine grey horse, riding as fast as they could go; and they told Hans to make haste and open the gate, for they were in a terrible hurry. "Ah," said Hans to himself, as they drove through, "what an unlucky fellow I am; I wish I had a gig with a grey horse, and could ride as they do; but I'm only little Hans, with nothing but my slim legs to carry me, and I have to wait here all day, and open the gate."

Hans sat there a long time, and opened the gate for a great many people; and every time he did so, he wished he was the person just going through. At last there came hobbling up to the

gate an old woman in a red cloak, with a pipe in her mouth and a basket in her hand.

"Here, you youngster, open the gate for me, just this minute,—do you hear?" cried the old woman, screaming to Hans through the bars.

"I guess I *ought* to hear you, goody," said Hans. "You brawl so loud the folks might know what you say ten miles off."

"Shut you mouth, Mr. Jackanapes, and use you hands more briskly," said the old woman. "I've got something in my basket you might like to get."

"Your basket won't hold all I want," said Hans. He opened the gate, and let the old woman pass, who sat down by the road-side, and slowly opened her basket. Presently she drew forth a pair of spectacles.

"Hans," said she, "you have been wishing for a great many things to-day," shaking her head as she spoke.

"How do you know my name?" said Hans; "I never saw you before."

"You wished for a coach and six," said the

old woman, looking at him with her two great staring eyes.

"You didn't hear me," said Hans.

"Never mind, I know it," said the old dame. "Now put on these glasses, and tell me what you see."

Hans laughed, but he took the glasses and put them on his nose. As he looked round, there stood close beside him an elegant coach, and six splendid horses to draw it. "Get in," said the old woman, "and take a ride."

The footman opened the coach door, and Hans jumped in. But when he sat down on the soft cushions, he was no longer little Hans, but an old sick nobleman, so sick he could scarcely move, and his coat, all covered with rich trimming, was so heavy and uncomfortable, he felt as if his arms were tied down. His legs were bound up in flannel, and he had such terrible pains in them that he almost cried out, so great was his distress. The motion of the carriage hurt him so much that he ordered the coachman to drive slower, and said he wished

they would let him alone, and not make him ride every day.

By and by the horses stopped, and an old woman, in a red cloak, came and looked in at the door.

"And how does your lordship feel to-day?" said she, "and how do you like your new coach?"

"Hang the coach!" said Hans; "I wish I was young and well, and could use my own legs. Stand out of the way, old woman, and let these fellows carry me into my house."

The footmen lifted him from the coach, but as they did so the fairy spectacles fell off his nose, and Hans found himself once more beside the toll-gate, with the old woman in the red cloak.

"Well," said she, "did you enjoy your ride?"

"What an awful pain I had in my legs," said Hans; and he jumped up and down, to be quite sure they were his own, and that they were entirely well. "I don't want a coach and six, after all."

"You wished for a prancing steed," said the

Fairy—for you must know, that the old woman was the good Fairy Contenta, who had come to pay Hans a visit. "Put on the spectacles again, and tell me what you see."

So Hans put them on, and there was a fine prancing steed, sure enough. A groom stood beside the horse, and he said, "Young sir, will you take a ride?"

"With all my heart," said Hans, and up he jumped. "Take care," said the groom, "he is a fiery creature."

"Never fear," said Hans, boldly; "I can manage him." And off he went like a shot.

Bless me, how they did go. Up hill and down dale, dashing and racing like wild creatures. Pretty soon Hans began to lose his breath, and cried out, "Whoa, whoa, stop—take me off—whoa, whoa;" and he bounced about, first on one side, then on the other. The horse, however, would not stop, till by and by they came up suddenly against a high wall,—the steed threw Hans over his head, the spectacles fell off his nose, and he found himself lying in the road

beside the old woman, who was laughing heartily.

"Hang that horse," said Hans, as he picked himself up. "I believe he has broken my neck."

"Not quite," said the Fairy, "but you have nearly broken my spectacles."

"I won't put them on my nose again," said Hans. "I don't want any more rides."

"Try again," said Contenta, holding the glasses towards him.

"I won't," said Hans.

"Then we are not always quite happy, though we *may* get all we wish for," said the Fairy.

"I'd rather use my legs, than ride so," said Hans.

"A boy who has good strong legs to carry him," said Contenta, "and good health, and a kind grandfather and grandmother to take care of him, ought to be contented without a coach and six. Now, Hans, you have been discontented to-day, very discontented; but my spectacles have shown you whata foolish fellow you are, to

wish for that which can neither make you better nor happier."

The Fairy then put the glasses into her pocket, and giving her basket to Hans, told him he might have all that was in it. Hans peeped in, and said it was empty.

"Empty!" said Contenta—"are you sure?"

"Yes," said Hans, "there is not a thing in it."

"Look again," said the Fairy, and she shook the basket several times. "Put your hand in and try."

Hans put in his hand, and drew forth a nice new coat.

"Bless me! here is a coat," said he.

The Fairy shook the basket again, and this time Hans pulled out a new pair of trowsers.

"Bless me!" said he, "here are trowsers, too."

"Try again," said Contenta; and Hans pulled out a new pair of shoes.

"Try again;" and out came a new cap.

"Is that all?" asked the old woman.

"Yes, the basket is empty," said Hans.

The Fairy shook it violently, and then putting in her own hand, she brought out a large cake.

"Here is something I know you love," said she, "and I hope you will have a nice time eating it. So good-bye, Hans; the next time you are discontented, call for me, and I will lend you my wonderful spectacles."

With that the old woman jumped into the basket, and before Hans could wink his eye, the basket had jumped over the gate and was out of sight. Hans put on his new clothes, ate up his cake, and went back to his work of opening the toll-gate, as happy as any lord who ever rode in a coach and six, and perhaps a little happier.

The children thanked their mother for the story, but Arthur said he did not think it so pretty as some she had told them before, and he wished she would try to remember "Little Prince Marabout." Mrs. Neland said she had forgotten Prince Marabout entirely, and she thought that one story was enough at a time.

So she took up her own book to read, and Arthur and the girls went to play again under the trees.

They played a number of pretty plays, and built a sort of summer-house with some loose branches which were scattered about. Then they ran up and down on a large log, pretending it was a dangerous bridge from which they might fall into the water and be drowned. This was great fun, but, unfortunately, they did not know that a hornet's nest was under the log, and while Arthur was jumping about on it, in high glee, an angry hornet flew out of the nest, and stung his hand.

It put him in great pain, and in a few minutes his hand was swollen very much, but he tried not to cry, and ran to show it to his mother. Mrs. Neland bound some wet earth on the place, and in a little while it felt better, so that Mary and Kitty thought they might go back to their play again; but Mrs. Neland looked at her watch, and said it was time to be getting home, and the children reluctantly consented to go.

Just as they got near the edge of the wood, they heard a chirping in the grass, and looking round them on the ground, they saw a poor bird trying to hop out of their way. Arthur soon caught it. "Look, mother, look!" said he, "it cannot fly; what is the matter with it?"

"Poor thing," said Mrs. Neland, "its wing is broken: handle it very carefully, Arthur. I think we must take it home and nurse it, for it will die if we leave it here."

"Oh, do take it home," cried Mary and Kitty.

"I will carry it," said Arthur.

But his mother said it would go much more safely, if they put it into the smallest basket, on a bunch of soft grass; and the little girls ran and gathered a few handfuls immediately, and Mrs. Neland fixed a nice bed, and put the sick bird very carefully upon it. Frisk seemed rather curious to know what was going on, and came jumping upon Arthur while he held the bird, but Mary boxed his ears, and told him to be quiet; and so he ran away to find something else to play with.

Mrs. Neland let the children carry the bird in turn, and they walked quite leisurely out of the wood. I believe nothing happened on their way home, of any consequence. When they passed Mrs. Trim's house, they felt a little afraid that Watch, the big black dog, would bark again at little Frisk, but fortunately he was nowhere to be seen. Probably Mrs. Trim had fastened him up in the yard. They walked past the gate quite safely, and reached home in good time, very merry, but rather tired with their walk. When they came to Mrs. Coleman's door, Kitty kissed them good-bye, and Mary and Arthur ran into their own house, to put the wounded bird to bed in a safe place, out of the way of Mrs. Pussy, and to relate to their father all the events of their pleasant day in the wood.

VIII.

Sunday Talks.

I AM sorry to say that Arthur did not altogether like Sunday. He thought it a dull day, and that going to church and listening to sermons, particularly in warm weather, was rather tiresome. He didn't mind reading at home, but he did not find much pleasure in church, unless he could sit near a window and look out upon some green fields beyond, where there were cattle feeding, and a white horse, who occasionally kicked up his legs, and trotted round the field, as if enjoying his rest and liberty, and Arthur thought he should like to do so too. His mother was sorry for this, because she wished her dear boy to think that God's day was the best of all the seven, and to

try and keep it holy, without feeling it was dull or melancholy. She always looked smiling and cheerful herself, though she did not like loud or noisy laughter on Sunday, and she took care that everything should be done, as far as possible, on Saturday, that Margaret and Susan might have a day of rest too. The children were glad of one thing, however,—for when Sunday came, their father was at home all day, and this they liked particularly; for he read, or talked, or walked with them, and their mother hoped, as they grew older and knew their duty better, that God's good Spirit would teach them to love His holy day as much as she did.

It so happened, that the day after their ramble in the wood was Sunday, and Arthur was perhaps rather tired, for he did not feel quite like getting up, when his father came to call him, and Mary, whose little blue eyes were always sure to fly open at the first sound, was quite ready to go down stairs before he was fairly dressed. She waited for him, however, with her usual good-nature, and they ran together down into

the dining-room, where Mr. and Mrs. Neland were reading, and Susan was arranging the breakfast table.

It was a beautiful day. The air was pure and sweet, and the birds were singing their morning hymns in the old cherry-trees by the door, as if they knew it was Sunday. The sunshine came in through the vines outside the window, and was all checkered upon the carpet and white table-cloth, and reflected upon the polished urn that was hissing upon the table. Everything looked calm, quiet and lovely, just as it should have done on God's holy day. Arthur and Mary kissed their father and mother, and then Mrs. Neland rang a small bell, and Margaret and Susan came in from the kitchen, and Mr. Neland said prayers. Then they sat down to breakfast.

Mr. Neland and his wife did not make Sunday one of those seasons when the children received long lectures upon their duty, and were obliged to learn a certain number of hymns and texts. They thought God should be remembered and

served and obeyed every day in the week, and loved too, because He is so good to us constantly; so they just chose some pleasant subject, and let the children talk of it in their own way, till they really became interested in it. They generally learned one text, to repeat at breakfast; and this morning, Mary said,—

"Father, this is my text,—I learned it yesterday: 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.'"

"That is a very sweet text," said Mr. Neland. "Where did you find it, darling?"

"In the twenty-third Psalm," replied Mary. "It is the first verse."

"My text is from the tenth chapter of St. John," said Arthur. "I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

"Very good; but how did you and Mary happen to think of the same subject?"

"I don't know, sir,—it was quite by chance."

"Did you learn a text, mamma?"

"No, but I can repeat one; it is what our

Saviour said to Peter, 'Feed my lambs;' and I was thinking this morning," continued Mrs. Neland, that although shepherds seem to be in a very humble state in life, yet we read of quite a number who came to stand before kings, and lived to be great themselves."

"In the East," said Mr. Neland, "the wealth of the people consisted mostly of their flocks and herds. Abel, we are told, was a keeper of sheep, and Abraham had many thousands of sheep and cattle, beside silver and gold. Then, you know, when Abraham wanted to choose a wife for his son Isaac, he sent him to Bethuel, and there he chose Isaac's cousin, the beautiful Rebecca, who met him at the well, where she came with her father's sheep,—for she kept them."

"She was a shepherdess then," said Arthur; "to think of the daughter of a rich man, tending sheep!"

"It was the custom of the country, and of those times," said his father; "and was not considered beneath the daughter of a rich man.

Rachel, also, the wife of Jacob, was a shepherdess."

"That is a pretty story about Rebecca, isn't it, father?" said Mary. "She must have been very much pleased with the ear-rings and bracelets, and other presents, which Abraham's servant gave her."

"It never seems to me," said Arthur, "as if the people we read of in the Bible had really lived in this same world that we live in."

"No," said Mary; "the Bible stories always seem to me like a great many pictures that we are looking at."

"Jacob was a shepherd," said Mrs. Neland, "and kept the sheep of Laban, his father-in-law."

"And Joseph," said Mary, eagerly.

"No, Joseph's brethren were," said Arthur; "but you know he was but a boy when he was sold into Egypt."

"Not so fast, Arthur," said Mr. Neland; "we are told that Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; so that his early years, at least, were so employed."

"And Moses," said Mrs. Neland.

"Oh, no, mother!" exclaimed Arthur; "Moses was the great law-giver, not a shepherd."

"Why, Arthur, you forget; what was Moses doing when he saw the burning bush?" Arthur thought a moment.

"Mary, do you remember?"

"Well, he was in the wilderness, somewhere," said Mary. "I know that."

"Come, papa, you must tell us."

"He was feeding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law," said Mr. Neland.

"Oh, yes, so he was,—I remember now," said Arthur.

"He had not always been a shepherd," said Mr. Neland, "for you know he was brought up at court, and called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, because she found him in the ark of bulrushes."

"How did he become a shepherd, then? I should think he would rather have stayed with the king."

"Why, don't you recollect that Pharaoh

sought to kill him, because he slew the Egyptian? Moses saw how much the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, who were his own people, and so when he saw one of them striking a Hebrew, he looked about, and finding himself unobserved, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. This made Pharaoh very angry; and so Moses left the court, and all the royal things he had been accustomed to, and went into the land of Midian, in order to escape from the angry king."

"I think I do remember, now," said Arthur, who was quite familiar with Bible stories. "By accident he met the daughters of—"

"Of the priest of Midian, who were also shepherdesses," said his mother,—"and married one of them."

"And then *he* kept the sheep, I suppose, instead of his wife," said Mary.

"Probably," replied Mrs. Neland, "but not for any long time; because we read, that God called him from that employment to lead His chosen people back to the promised land."

"Don't you like that part of the Bible, mother?" said Mary,—"about all the Plagues in Egypt, and crossing the Red Sea, and the Manna, and the Quails, and the Water coming from the Rock, and the Golden Calf?"

"Only it never seemed quite right to me," said Arthur, "that Moses shouldn't have gone over into the land of Canaan, after all his trouble with the people, and all his long journey through the wilderness. I always feel very sorry for Moses when I read that."

"So do I," said his mother, "but God knew best. You remember Moses was unfaithful at the rock in the wilderness, when the people were thirsty, and so was punished for it. But I think we were talking of shepherds; suppose we keep to that subject, because both your texts refer to it. I wonder if we can recollect any other person spoken of as a shepherd, and who afterward became very great."

The children tried to remember, running over in their minds most of those whom they had read of.

"There were shepherds at Bethlehem, when our Saviour was born," said Mary, doubtfully.

"Yes, and they were greatly honored in being those to whom the angels told the good news," replied Mrs. Neland; "but there was somebody who lived long before that day, and though he became a great king, was once a shepherd-boy, keeping his sheep in the wilderness, and singing sweet and holy songs while he played upon his harp."

"King David!" exclaimed Arthur and Mary, at the same moment. "To be sure, we forgot him."

"I think you like the story of David," said their mother.

"Yes, we do, very much," said Mary; "we both knew the part about his killing the great Philistine, long before we could read it ourselves."

"And all about Absalom, and Jonathan," said Arthur; "and the story of 'The Little Ewe Lamb.'"

"And David was called the sweet singer of

Israel," said Mrs. Neland,—"because he wrote and sung so many sweet songs in praise of God."

"He wrote the book of Psalms," said Arthur.

"Not all of them; some were written by Asaph, and some by unknown writers, but they are all called the Psalms of David. And we must not forget," said Mr. Neland, "that our Saviour, as God had promised, was descended from David, who was of the tribe of Judah,—that is, His mother, from whom He received His human nature, was a descendant of David."

"And that David was a prophet as well as a king, for he sang of the Messiah in some of his psalms," said Mrs. Neland.

"Mary's text is taken from one of his sweetest," said Mr. Neland; "and if the Lord is our Shepherd and takes care of us, we shall not want any good thing."

"And in Arthur's text, our Saviour calls Himself the Good Shepherd; and then tells Peter, in *my* text, to feed His lambs,—so we have come down at last to the kindest and best

Shepherd in our gracious Saviour." Mrs. Neland here began to speak of something else, for she saw that Mary's attention was diverted by the little grey kitten, who came into the room, and began mewing round the table for her accustomed breakfast of milk, and that Arthur had forgotten king David and what they were talking about, in his eagerness to help her.

When breakfast was over, the children dressed themselves, and went to church with their parents. Arthur thought the walk very dusty, and said it would be hot enough at noon when they came home. Mary, however, thought it quite pleasant, and that her new parasol would protect her very nicely from the sun. At church they were tolerably attentive, but Arthur took a short nap during the sermon, which he assured his mother he could not help; and Mary might have done the same, had she not been kept awake by the misconduct of some children in the next pew.

When they reached home again, dinner was ready, and our little friends were quite hungry

enough to enjoy it, after their walk,—the church being at the farther end of the village, and some distance from their own house. After dinner they went upon the piazza and sat by their father, who was smoking his cigar, and read their usual chapter for him. The chapter to-day was the raising of Lazarus, and they read in turn, Arthur one verse, and Mary the next. Mr. Neland talked to them about it for a little while, and then they walked together in the shadiest part of the garden, till they heard the far off sound of the bell, ringing for the afternoon service. Arthur did not go to sleep this afternoon, but he sat pretty still, and tried to listen to the sermon, employing his fingers meanwhile in turning his gloves on the wrong side, and drawing and undrawing the lining of his hat.

When church came out, Mrs. Neland stopped to speak with an old lady at the door, who had been very sick, and was at church for the first time since her illness. Then Mr. Neland said, as the evening was so pleasant they would walk

home another way, which would be an agreeable change for the children; so they turned from the main street, and chose a quiet green lane, where no sound was heard except their own voices, and a few low notes from the birds, who were beginning to think of going to bed. The children had often been in this lane, for the wild roses were always sweetest here in their season; and in blackberry time the berries were thickest in the vines which covered the fence on both sides; but it seemed particularly pleasant this evening. Their father was talking to them about the birds, and then a toad hopped across their path, and that was a new subject of conversation. Arthur picked up a beetle, too, with its green and gold wings, and speaking of that, led them to other insects; and finally Mrs. Neland mentioned the bee, and Mr. Neland gave them an account of its industrious life among the flowers and in the hive. Thus they sauntered on, the children asking all sorts of questions which their parents were most happy to answer, and the green lane brought them at

its termination to a retired road, rather new to them; and this they followed, until, crossing a a broad field, they climbed a hill, and sat down to rest upon the trunk of a fallen tree.

"What a beautiful sunset!" exclaimed Mrs. Neland.

"Beautiful, indeed," replied her husband; "we came here just in time to enjoy it."

"See that purple cloud all edged with gold," said Mary. "Oh, mother, isn't it lovely?"

"It seems like a rich mantle, in which the sun wraps himself as he goes to rest," said her mother.

"I should think he would need rest, after such a journey as he has made to-day," said Mr. Neland.

"I think he has very splendid curtains for his bed," said Arthur, looking at the sky; "gold, and purple, and crimson. We don't see the sunsets very well from our house."

"It would not be a very long walk to come *here* and see them occasionally," said his father.

"And we should get more than the sunset

by coming," said Mary. "Isn't there a pretty view of the village? I do really believe I can see our own chimneys!"

"Or fancy that you do, little sharp-eye," said her father.

"No, really; I really think I see them, peeping above those trees."

"But it so happens that our house does not stand in that direction."

"Doesn't it? well, now, father, are you sure?"

"Quite sure,—you must look for it this way."

"Must I? there are plenty of chimneys over there, then."

"Certainly, and no doubt our own are among them,—but my little sharp-eye could scarcely distinguish them at this distance."

"Mary often sees things that are not to be seen," said Arthur. "But I see the river without mistake. Father, I wish you would sell our place, and buy one close by the river, and keep a pleasure-boat."

"Do you? Well, we will talk of buying and selling, another day, Arthur. At present we will

just look about us upon the wonderful and beautiful works of God; for that should be our object in a Sunday walk. See, mamma and Mary! we have the glorious firmament 'showing His handy work,' and the river, and the woodlands, and the green fields, and the useful cattle, and a thousand things beside, which ought to make us very thankful and very joyful."

The children now began to enumerate the different works of Creation, which came beneath their eyes, and soon found enough to be thankful for. They then pursued their way, and, walking quite leisurely, reached home in season for the nice tea which Susan had prepared for them, and which they particularly enjoyed after their long walk. The usual family prayers concluded the day, and then Arthur and Mary went to bed.

IX.

Dining Out.

ONE morning, when Mrs. Neland and Arthur were returning from a long walk, they met Mrs. Murray and Frederick.

"I am glad to see you," said Mrs. Murray. "I am going to take Fred out with me, and William is not quite well, and would like Arthur to come and play with him. Can he go, Mrs. Neland?"

"I am afraid his sister will be disappointed, if he does not go back with me," said Mrs. Neland.

"Oh, his sister may see him every day," said Mrs. Murray, "so she won't mind, I fancy. Do let him go."

"You may do as you please, Arthur," said his mother.

"Well, ma'am, I'll go then for awhile," replied Arthur.

"Oh, you'll stay to dinner," said Mrs. Murray. "We shall be at home by dinner-time. Do let him stay."

"I don't like my little folks to dine out very often," replied Mrs. Neland; "but if Arthur wishes it very much, he may."

"Oh, certainly he will," said Mrs. Murray; "Now run in, Arthur, and play with William, that's a good boy, and we shall soon be at home. Good-bye, Mrs. Neland," and she and Frederick walked off in haste, while Arthur and his mother went on to Mr. Murray's house.

"I need not tell you to behave in a gentlemanly way, my dear," said Mrs. Neland, "for I am sure you will; and after dinner come home, without my being at the trouble to send for you."

Arthur promised to do so, and ran into the house. Will was lying on the sofa in the dining-room, and seemed delighted to see him. "Now," said he, "we can have a fine time by

ourselves, for Fred is out of the way, and we have nobody to plague us. See! I've got a lot of blocks here, and we can build a famous house."

"So we can," said Arthur, clapping his hands; "that will be grand fun. Let's build a tower ever so high,—will you? And here is the tea-bell,—we can fasten that in the top to ring for fire."

"Or a church," said William; "we might build a church with a steeple, and hang the bell in that."

"Yes, that would be capital," said Arthur. "Get the blocks quick, and we'll build it before Fred comes home."

William opened a closet, and Arthur helped him to bring out the large box which held the blocks, and empty them on the carpet, and then the boys set about building their church, in high glee. They did not, however, get on with the steeple very well, it would tumble down so often; and when at last they did get it up, they could not fix the bell in it,—so after a while they began to throw blocks at it.

First, Will threw a block, and knocked off the top of the steeple,—and that made Arthur laugh, and he threw one, and knocked off a little more; and so they went on, first one, and then the other, till they demolished the whole building, and nothing was left but a heap of ruins, all jumbled together in the middle of the room.

"Now," said Arthur, "let us make a railroad with them, all across the room. Won't that be fine, with bridges here and there for the carriages to pass over, you know!" So they set to work and made the railroad. They made a very long one, all through the dining-room, and out into the hall; and when they were tired of that, Master Will began to knock it to pieces with his feet, scattering the blocks all about, and littering the entire carpet with them in a shocking manner.

"For shame, William," said the girl, who was busy in the hall. "You had better pick them up before your mother comes home."

"I shall not," said Will. "You come and do it,—I've got the head-ache."

"No, indeed," said the girl, "I've something else to do, sir."

"Well, *I* won't," said William, "and if *you* don't, they will lay there till ma comes in, and then you'll catch it, Miss Becky."

Arthur tried to persuade Will to gather them up, and said he would pick up half, but Will was obstinate, and so Arthur set to work at them himself, for he was really ashamed that Mrs Murray should see them; and Becky, finding him trying to collect so many alone, at last came dowr and helped him get them all into the box,—telling William he was the most selfish child she had ever seen, and she wondered how Arthur could think of playing with him at all.

But Will only laughed at this, and lay upon the sofa kicking up his feet while they were at work, and thinking how nicely he was saved all the trouble.

Was Will doing unto others as he would have liked them to do to him?

When the blocks were put away in the closet, Arthur sat down by the window in the dining-

room, and began to read. He found a book of Fred's on the table, and thought he would read a story in it.

"Oh, come, don't read that stupid thing," said William; "let's play something."

"I'd rather read," said Arthur. "I like this story."

"You must not," said Will; "you came here to play with me because I was sick, and so you *must* play." Then he took the book very roughly out of Arthur's hand, and put it into the book-case.

"I don't know what to play, I'm sure," said Arthur, in a fretful tone, for he did not like to part with the book, and it made him feel angry.

"Here are my Jack-straws," said Will; and they played with those till William got tired, and wanted to try something else. Then he got the Backgammon box, and said he would teach Arthur to play Backgammon. But Arthur was so dull he could not learn, and Will lost his patience, and said it was no use to try any longer; so *that* game was put away.

I don't remember what they did afterwards, but Arthur was very glad when he saw Mrs. Murray and Fred coming through the gate, and heard the bell ring for dinner, because he was very hungry; and besides, he wanted to go home to his own gentle little sister, who was so good-natured and amiable, and did not quarrel with him all the time, as these boys did.

"Tie on the boys' aprons, Becky," said Mrs. Murray, as they sat down to dinner.

"No," said Fred, "I don't want an apron."

"Nor I," said Will.

"William, you *must* wear it," said his mother; "you will soil your new jacket."

"No, I'll be careful—I won't spill a thing," said Will, shaking himself away from Becky.

"Tie it on, Becky," said Mrs. Murray—"he *must* have it." And Becky put her strong arm round the young gentleman, and tied on his apron in spite of his struggles.

"Fred hasn't on his," snarled Will—"the nasty, plaguy thing! I wish there wasn't any aprons."

"Hold your tongue, sir," said his mother; "do you think I am going to have your clothes ruined, just for your nonsense? Becky, tie on Fred's."

"Ah, ma, mayn't I go without mine to-day?" whined Fred. "Ah, ma, just this once. I won't soil my jacket, indeed I won't; mayn't I, ma?"

"Frederick, behave yourself. I'm ashamed of you," said Mrs. Murray. "What must Arthur think of such boys!"

"Ah, ma, do let me go without it, to-day; say, ma, won't you let me, just this time? say, ma."

"No, sir," said his mother, in a decided tone; "let Becky put it on at once, and be quiet. I never saw such troublesome children in my life."

"Ah, ma, I think you might," Frederick was going on to say,—but Becky cut short all his whining by tying the apron round his neck, and pushing his chair up to the table. She then put a clean napkin before Arthur, and handed his plate for some chicken.

"Ma, give me the other wishing-bone, won't you?" asked Fred, as Mrs. Murray helped Arthur.

"No, ma, give it to me, won't you?" asked William.

"Ah, ma, let me have it; I want to make something particular," said Fred.

"Ah, ma, he had the last one, when we had chickens before," fretted Will. "I ought to have this."

"Ah, ma, give it to me; won't you, ma?" urged Fred.

"Hush! both of you," said Mrs. Murray. "I shall take it myself, and she put it on her own plate, while the boys scowled at each other across the table, and grumbled at their mother.

"Arthur, my dear, you mustn't mind these naughty boys," said Mrs. Murray, helping Arthur as she spoke to some vegetables. "I wish they would behave as well at the table as you do."

The boys both laughed at this, and said, "Oh, poh! we don't care if he does behave best;" and

then Will began to hum a tune, and Fred tilted his chair sideways, taking up the bits of chicken in his fingers, and stuffing them into his mouth; helping himself to salt with his knife, instead of using the salt-spoon, and then wiping his fingers on the table-cloth. Arthur really was astonished at such rude manners.

"I want some gravy," said Will, seizing his plate with both hands, and reaching over to his mother, his knife and fork sticking out from either side.

"Asking for gravy when you have been sick all day with headache!" said his mother. "Why, child, you must be crazy."

"It won't hurt me a bit," said Will, still holding out his plate.

"And you have butter, too," said Mrs. Murray; "the boy will kill himself! put down your plate, this minute. I shall not give you a drop of gravy."

Will began to cry. "I don't like this dinner," sobbed he; "my chicken is all dry, and I won't eat it without some gravy."

"Then you can go without it," said his mother.

Will pushed the plate from him, stuffed his apron into his mouth, and sat kicking his feet against the rungs of his chair. His mother ordered him to be quiet, and told Becky to take his plate away: but when Becky came, Will thought he had better get over his angry feelings, and eat his dinner, which he did, as fast and as carelessly as possible.

"Ma, is there any dessert?" asked Fred.

"Wait—you will see," replied Mrs. Murray.

"Ah, say, is there, now? just tell me, won't you?" persisted Fred. But his mother would not answer him.

"Becky, what have you got?" asked Will.

"Tell us, Becky," whispered Fred, "because, if it is anything I don't like, I shall go away."

"Boys, do be still," said Mrs. Murray. "If your father was at home, you would not behave in this way. I suppose Arthur never saw such conduct in his life."

The boys laughed again, and Arthur did not exactly know what to say, for the truth was, he

never *had* met with such behavior before; so he sat very quietly, while Becky removed the dinner, and brushed the table, and wondering to himself what his mother and Mary would think, if they were there.

Becky at last brought on a rice pudding. Mrs. Murray helped Arthur, and gave William a small piece of it: but Frederick said he didn't love rice, and should not eat any. So while the others were eating, he crumbed up some bread and made balls to throw at Will and Arthur, when his mother did not see him; caught a fly on the edge of a tumbler, and pulled its wings off; and filled his mouth with water, which he spirted over the table by striking his cheeks with his fists. At this, Mrs. Murray bade him leave the room immediately, saying she would certainly tell his father, when he came home at night; and Arthur was very glad when he could leave the table also, and soon after said good-bye to the boys, and ran very eagerly to meet Mary, and Kitty Coleman, who were standing together inside their own gate.

X.

A Rainy Day.

YOU may think, perhaps, from what I have told you, that Arthur was always in a good humor, always obedient, and always amiable; but I am sorry to say, that although he was usually a good and pleasant child, yet there were times when he rather forgot himself, and was tempted to do wrong like many other children, and even to be cross and ill-natured to his little sister.

Now it happened that one evening Mr. Neland had been talking of printing-presses to a gentleman who was visiting them, and Arthur became so much interested, that he asked his father to take him to see one. Mr. Neland replied that he had no objections, and if the

weather was fine the next day, they would all go into the city for that purpose.

With this promise, Arthur went to bed in high spirits, and he and Mary talked of their ride into town, and of what they should see there, before they went to sleep. Mary was to have some new shoes bought for her, and Arthur had a little money of his own, which he intended to buy a book with. They had a great deal of pleasure in store as they hoped,—but when they awoke the next morning, it was pouring with rain, and there was an end of their enjoyments; for they knew their father would not take them if it was raining, as he had particularly said the weather must be fine.

"I declare, it is too bad, too provoking," said Arthur, fretfully, as he stood at the window with one shoe on, and the other in his hand; "it is always the way. When I want to go anywhere, it is sure to rain."

"Oh, not always, Arthur," said little Mary, in a more cheerful tone; "it did not rain last week, when we went with mother to Aunt Ju-

lia's, you remember. May-be it will clear by and by, and father will take us then."

"I know it won't clear; it never does when I want it to," replied Arthur, sulkily; "there isn't a bit of blue sky to be seen."

"I guess you don't look in the right place,' said Mary, who was brushing her hair. "Let us go and look out of mother's window,—shall we? And beside, we can go another day,—so don't fret about it."

"No, we can't go any day but this," persisted Arthur, who was resolved to be in a bad humor; and instead of dressing himself, he went and lay down on his bed again, and Mary saw him wipe his eyes, as if he had been crying a little.

Mary loved Arthur very dearly, and could not be quite contented if he was unhappy; so she went to him and said kindly, "Come, don't fret,—it won't do any good, you know. Get up and put on your shoe, and let us go down to breakfast. I feel bad, too, Arthur, but I don't fret—we can go another day."

Arthur got up and finished dressing, though

he did not look pleasant, and then he and Mary said their morning prayers together, and went down to the breakfast table.

"Well, children, no printing-press to-day for us," said their father, as they came in. "Well, never mind; next week we will try again, and see if we can get a clear day for our visit."

"I think it is too bad," said Arthur, taking his seat. "We don't want rain just now, I am sure."

"My son, are you the judge of such matters?" said his mother, gravely. While his father said, laughing, "Come, old fellow, cheer up, and don't despair entirely—we shall have a fine day yet, I have no doubt. Why, you look as if you had lost all your friends!"

Arthur laughed a little at the way in which his father said this, but he could not get over his disappointment as easily as Mary, and ate his breakfast nearly in silence. When the meal was over, Mr. Neland went away, and Mrs. Neland and Mary washed the breakfast things, while Arthur stood at the window, watching the

rain that was coming down so thick and fast, and thinking of the pleasant time they might have had, if it had only been clear. His mother did not say anything to him about it, for she thought he would forget his disappointment more easily if she did not notice it; nor did she ask him to go on with his usual morning lessons, because she knew he could not do his duty well, unless he did it cheerfully. So she and Mary talked of other things, and tried to divert his mind from the rain.

"What are you going to do to-day, mother?" asked Mary, when every thing was washed and put aside.

Mrs. Neland knew that they wanted some occupation entirely different from their usual employments, so she answered, "Why, to-day I thought of overlooking those old trunks in the attic. Should you and Arthur like to help me?"

"Oh, yes! I shall like that of all things," said Mary. "Will you be ready to go up pretty soon?"

"Yes, as soon as I have given some directions to Margaret," replied her mother.

"It will be real fun, Arthur, to rummage those old trunks," said Mary, when her mother had left the room. "I'm sure I forget what is in them, and I'd like to see."

"*I* don't want to look into old trunks," said Arthur, pevishly. "I wish it would be clear—that's what I wish."

"But you know we can't help the rain," said wise little Mary, looking with him up to the thick dark sky. "You know we don't make the rain, and we can't stop it, either."

"Well, I don't care. I didn't want it to rain to-day," grumbled Arthur. "The garden don't want rain, and *I* don't,—and I think it's real mean."

"Why, Arthur! aren't you ashamed of yourself, you wicked boy, to speak so," said Mary, holding up her little dimpled hand reprovingly, "when you know perfectly well that God sends the rain, and that He knows best about it."

"Well, it might have kept off till to-morrow,

anyhow," said Arthur, who seemed determined to be naughty.

Mary looked very much shocked.

"You ought not to say so, Arthur," she said. "You know it is wrong, and I shall tell mother if you do."

Arthur would not answer, but sat still, looking very sullenly out of the window, till his mother came back and told Mary she was going up stairs, and asked him if he would not go too. But Arthur was in a bad humor with himself, the weather, and everything else; so he said he didn't want to go, and Mrs. Neland and Mary went without him.

"Mother," said Mary, as they went up stairs, "Arthur is cross and naughty; and I am sure, if you knew how he talked about the rain while you were down stairs, you would punish him."

"I am sorry he is cross," said her mother,—"but he feels disappointed. I think he will get over it, by and by. You had better not notice it, my dear." Then she called out over the stairs,—"Arthur, you may come up to us when

you like, and I wish you would bring a book with you from the parlor table,—the new one wrapped in blue paper."

"Yes, ma'am," called Arthur. And Mrs. Neland heard him go into the parlor to look for the new book. She had given him something to think about, which she was sure would make him forget the rain. Then she and Mary went into the attic and opened the old trunks.

And how Mary's little tongue did chatter, and how eagerly she rummaged to the very bottom of each. "Oh, mother! look at this," and "Oh, mother! what is this? I never saw this before; what a queer old bag! where did you get it? Did my grandmother make it for you? —Oh, what a nice fan this is, all covered with spangles! where did you get it?—Here is a sweet little red cushion, and such a curious old box! did you have it when you were a little girl, mother?"

Her mother laughed, and said she asked so many questions at once, it was almost impossible to answer them; but if she really wanted to

know about the box, she would tell her how she came by it.

Mary said she would like to hear it very much, but may-be Arthur would come up presently, so she would wait for him. Her mother smiled, and said she was glad she remembered her brother's pleasure as well as her own, and though the story of the box was nothing remarkable, they would wait till he came.

So Mary went on with her search in the trunks, and it was quite wonderful how many things she found. Some of her old toys were there, which had been put away when she and Arthur had grown tired of them, and were quite forgotten by this time. There were even some playthings which her mother had used when a child; and Mary was almost crazy with delight to find at the very bottom of one trunk, snugly tucked away in a small basket, a tiny wax doll, which Mrs. Neland said she might have for her own, beside a bundle of pretty silks for dresses; and Mary felt quite rich as she put them aside with other things, to carry into the play-room.

Presently they heard Arthur coming slowly up stairs, step by step, and his mother knew he was reading the new book as he came along. On the top of the stairs he stood still for a minute, and then came into the attic. There was no trace of ill-humor in his face now, and he said quite cheerfully,—"This is a very nice book, mother,—when did you buy it? I've been reading a story in it."

"I am glad you like it, my dear," replied his mother. "I bought it last week in the city."

"Just look here, Arthur," cried Mary,—"what I have found! Your old humming-top, and the box of letters we used to spell with, and the old game of 'Fox and Geese.' And just look in this basket, what a darling little doll!—she shall be Fanny Fair's child, and I mean to buy her a cradle."

"Oh, what a lot of things!" said Arthur, and he laid down the book, and came and knelt beside Mary at the open trunk. "Why, mother, I didn't know you had so many stored away up here. Where did you get them all?"

"I hardly know, myself, Arthur," said his mother, laughing. "I have had them a very long while, some of them ever since I was a little girl."

"Now, mother, you might tell us about that curious box," said Mary. "See, Arthur! isn't it funny? and mother will tell us how she came by it."

"When I was a little girl," said Mrs. Neland, "about your age, Mary, I had a very bad habit of biting my nails. Whenever I was vexed, or if I was getting a lesson, or if I had nothing to do, one poor finger after another was put into my mouth, and the nails torn off with my sharp little teeth. I was often reproved for this, and my mother threatened to sew a bit of rag round each finger, if I persisted in doing it. But although I made many promises of amendment, I was constantly forgetting them, and my hands were frequently made to bleed by this naughty habit.

"One day I went with my mother to see my grand-mamma, and when I had taken off my

bonnet and gloves, and was sitting beside her, she said,—

"'What is the matter with this child's hand, my dear, that you have two fingers bound up?'

"'Oh,' said my mother, 'she bites her nails so sadly, that sometimes they are quite sore.'

"'Bites her nails!' said grand-mamma, in astonishment, looking at me through her spectacles. 'Oh, shocking! such an unlady-like habit!'

"I stood rather in awe of my grand-mamma, and felt very much ashamed to hear her speak so; but I did not say anything,—I only sat still and looked down at my poor little fingers.

"'Yes,' said my mother, 'it is a terrible thing, and I don't know how to break her of it.'

"'How old is she?' asked grand-mamma.

"'Eight years,' said my mother.

"'Eight years! and yet cannot keep her fingers out of her mouth,' said grand-mamma. 'I am quite surprised. I don't know what you will do, for she is too old to be whipped."

"'Of course,' said my mother. 'I only whip *little* children, who cannot be governed by reason.'

"Grand-mamma sat still for a minute, without replying, and seemed to be thinking very seriously. At last she said,—'Go to my dressing-table in the next room, Annie, and bring me from the upper drawer a small and curiously carved box.'

"I went immediately, wondering what would be said next, and wishing I had not come with my mother.

"My grand-mamma opened the box when I brought it to her, and emptied the contents into her lap.

"'Annie,' she said, very kindly, 'this box was given to me when I was young, by a very dear friend, and I value it very highly on that account. It is, beside, something of a curiosity, having been brought from China. Now, my dear child, as I wish to see you a good girl in all respects, I will give it to you, if you will try earnestly to cure yourself of this naughty trick,

and you may come and get it whenever you choose.'

"You may be sure I was very much pleased to hear this, and readily promised to try my best. My mother said she would give me a month's trial, and see if I could suffer my nails to grow in peace during that time, and if so, she thought I might then venture to come to my grandmamma's for the box."

"Did you get it in a month?" asked Mary.

"Not in three months," replied her mother. "I tried very hard, but I was constantly forgetting my good resolutions; and sometimes, after I had remembered for a week, I was sure to bite off two or three nails, at the end of that time, and have to start afresh. I found out that it is very easy to acquire a bad habit, but very hard to break through it; and, indeed, I began to despair of ever getting the box at all."

"But you did at last," said Arthur.

"Yes, I did at last, and my kind grand-mamma filled it with sugar-plums when she gave it to me."

"And you have never bitten your nails since?" said Mary.

"No, never; my father gave me a small pair of scissors to cut them with, and when I observed how much more nicely my hands looked, I saw that grand-mamma was right in being shocked at my disfigured fingers."

"Then this box belonged to my great-grandmother," said Mary, taking it up once more.

"Yes," said her mother; "and as you are just as old as I was when she gave it to me, I will now give it to you."

"Will you?" exclaimed Mary, joyfully. "Oh, thank you—what a dear good mother you are; I will take care of it, and keep it as long as I live."

"I suppose *you* would like to have something too, Arthur, out of the old trunk," said Mrs. Neland.

"May-be you haven't anything that will do for boys," said Arthur.

"I guess we can find something," said his mother.

She was glad to see her little boy good-humored again. "What do you say to this old-fashioned knife and pocket-book? They were your grandfather's, and I think you would like to have them."

Arthur was quite delighted. His face, which had been as cloudy as the sky, when Mary and his mother came up stairs, was now smiling and cheerful: his disappointed feelings had quite passed away, and he soon became as much interested in the contents of the trunks as his sister. He thanked his mother for the pocket-book, which particularly pleased him, and was still farther delighted to find in one corner of it a small silver coin, which had probably lain there for many years. He said he would put it among his curiosities, and keep it till he became a man.

To sort over and arrange the various articles which they had unpacked, occupied them for a long time, during which their mother amused them with stories of the different things they saw, and of the persons to whom they had belonged; and the morning passed so pleasantly, in spite of

the rain, that the children were surprised to hear the dinner-bell, and wondered how the time had slipped by so fast.

After dinner, as the rain still continued, and they could not go out to play, Arthur read a story aloud in the new book, while Mary did a little hemming for her doll. Afterward they went up to the play-room for an hour to paint some old pictures found in the trunk, and hang them on the walls; and by the time that was done, their father came home, and tea was ready —and so the rainy day ended.

That night when the children had gone to bed, their mother went up stairs to kiss them, for good-night, as she always did before they were asleep.

"Arthur," said she, going up to his little bed, and putting her soft hand on his rosy face,—"I think you have had a pleasant day, after all, —don't *you* think so?"

"Yes, ma'am," he answered,—"very pleasant."

"There was a little boy here this morning,"

said his mother, gravely, "who thought himself very unhappy because his kind Father in Heaven saw best to send rain upon the earth. He was a *silly* little boy to feel so, because his sorrow did not stop the rain; and he was guilty of a sin, too, in feeling angry about it, and speaking in a disrespectful way of his Heavenly Father's good pleasure. Don't you think he did very wrong, Arthur,—and ought to feel very sorry for it?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Arthur, in a low tone, and feeling very much ashamed.

"I think so, too," said his mother. "And before he goes to sleep, I would like him ask his kind Heavenly Father to forgive his sin and ingratitude."

So Arthur kneeled up in the bed, and his mother stood beside him, and took his hands in hers, and said this short prayer:—

"Our Father in Heaven, look down in thy mercy upon us. Forgive, we pray thee, the sinful thoughts and words of this dear child,—particularly those of this day, and give him thy

Holy Spirit, that he may not again offend thee, for our Saviour's sake. Amen."

Then she kissed him very tenderly, and said "God bless my darling boy:"—and then she went down stairs again.

XI.

Sights in the City.

THE rain lasted two whole days, and then the sun came out brightly, and everything looked fresh and cheerful,—just as a little child, after a long fit of crying, when his tears are dried, and he has come back to his usual good-humor again, looks bright and happy.

The children were glad enough to see the sun; for their father had told them they should go into the city on the first fair day, to visit the printing-press; so when Arthur awoke, and saw the golden light streaming upon the carpet of his little room, he sprang up in great glee, and ran to the window, calling to Mary to get up immediately, that they might be in time for the early cars. Mary heard him, though she was in

the next room, and rather sleepy. She was out of bed in a minute, and they were both ready to go down stairs, when their mother came to waken them.

Their father was on the piazza, and they ran out to join him. "How pleasant the garden looks, after the rain," said Mary. "And how sweet the air smells."

"You will take us to the city to-day, father, won't you?" asked Arthur. "I'm sure it is a fine day now."

"Very fine," replied his father. "But are you quite sure that you want to go?"

"Quite sure," and "Oh, yes, sir!" they both exclaimed.

"Then I think we *must* go to-day," said Mr. Neland. "We will take the cars at nine o'clock, if mamma can be ready."

"Oh, she will certainly be ready," cried Arthur. "I'll run and ask her this minute."

"There is the breakfast bell—let us go in at once," said Mary. "Don't stop to wash your hands, father,—they are not at all soiled."

"I *must* wash the garden dust off, before I eat," replied her father. "I have been weeding a little."

The children had scarcely patience to wait till this was done, though it was only seven o'clock then; and when they sat down at the table, they could not eat from eagerness to be off. They watched all their mother's movements, and were terribly afraid she would be too late for the nine o'clock cars, if she stopped to do so many little things before putting on her bonnet.

But at last, notwithstanding all their uneasiness, everything was done; Mrs. Neland came down stairs, quite ready, and Mr. Neland said it was time to walk to the cars, as it wanted fifteen minutes to nine. Arthur and Mary ran on before, and were at the station, just as they heard the loud steam whistle, a mile off.

Mary was in a terrible fidget, lest they should not get a nice seat, and did not feel quite contented till she was perched up at the car window, with Arthur close beside her, and her father and mother just behind them. "What a

fine day! What comfortable cars these are! How pleasant the country looks!" she repeated again and again as they rode along, and her father said,—

"Why, my little Mary, how happy you are to-day! I did not think you cared so much about a visit to town."

"Oh, yes, I care a great deal, sir," she answered. "And I expect to enjoy myself very much."

Her father and mother smiled, but told her not to expect *too much* pleasure, as she might be disappointed. Arthur said he was very glad they were really started at last, for he had been afraid all the morning that rain, or something else, would happen to keep them at home.

They had about twenty miles to ride, before they reached the city; and the railway ran through a very pretty country. They passed many fine houses, with beautiful gardens, and stopped several times to take in passengers at the villages they came too,—crossed a river on a covered bridge, and at last saw the steeples

and house-tops before them, and were soon at the depot in the city. Arthur wanted to go at once to the printing-office.

"Not quite yet," said his father; and he went into a large store filled with groceries, which was near the depot. Here Mr. Neland bought a number of things, and while he was selecting flour, and tea, and sugar, and coffee, and Mrs. Neland was choosing some spice and other nicetties, the children played with a fine black dog, at the store door; and a young man in the store asked them if they would like to be weighed. Mary thought he meant to weigh them in a pair of tin scales which hung above the counter, and could not help laughing at the idea; but she was told to stand upon a small square platform on the floor, and then the young man placed an iron weight upon a steel bar with figures on it, and told Mary she weighed just thirty-eight pounds.

Then Arthur stepped on the scale, and he weighed forty-five pounds; and while they were talking about it, Mr. and Mrs. Neland came

from the other end of the store, and gave the children each a nice bunch of raisins, which they found very sweet and good. Mr. Neland said he was now ready to go to the printing-office, and they left the store and walked down the street. The walk was a long one, and Mary began to think they would never get to the place, when they turned into a narrow street and stopped at a tall, dark, dingy building, which her father said was the printing-office.

They went up a long flight of stairs, and in a wide room they found a number of men with paper caps on their heads, who were at work at the large printing-presses. Arthur and his sister walked up to one of these, and their father explained to them how the paper was printed, the large sheets of which they saw taken off one by one, and laid together in a pile. Arthur could not exactly comprehend about the type; so they went up to another room, where another set of men, called compositors, were standing at high sort of desks, in which were little boxes or par-

titions with the letters of the alphabet, each in its separate box. These the compositors picked up one by one very rapidly, and put them in order to spell different words, and form long sentences. Then when these were properly arranged, and secured together, they were carried down and put upon the press, touched with ink by a long roller which passed over them, and the sheets of paper laid on and pressed down upon them; and so, the words were printed, and books and newspapers made.

I do not suppose Arthur understood all his father's explanations, and I am quite *sure* that little Mary did not, but they were both very much interested in watching the operation, and talked a great deal, and asked a great many questions, which a good-natured and intelligent workman very kindly answered.

They stayed at the printing-office nearly an hour, and Arthur would have stayed much longer had not his father reminded him of some other things to be done that day, which they would not have time to attend to if they did not go on.

Arthur went away very unwillingly, telling his father he would like to be a printer when he was old enough. Mary said, she thought it must be rather dirty work, and it would be a pity to soil his clean fingers with printers' ink, but Arthur declared he should not mind that a straw, as there was plenty of water in the world to make them clean again.

They had only walked a few squares, after leaving the printing-office, and turned into a wider and pleasanter street, when they heard the sound of music and loud beating of a drum. "Hark!" cried Arthur, standing still. "Father, they are soldiers, a company of soldiers. Look! they are coming this way. Don't you see the caps and feathers?"

"Let me see, too," cried Mary, clapping her hands. "Oh, mother, won't it be beautiful? How glad I am we came to-day!"

"Come and stand upon these steps, Mary, while they pass," said her father. "Now, you can see them over the heads of the people, you are such a little body."

Mary laughed, and ran up the steps beside Arthur, who was eagerly looking out for the soldiers. He was beating time with his foot, as the musicians played. "Don't they look grand?" said he. "See the captain, Mary, with his sword!"

"See those little fellows with flags!" exclaimed Mary. "They are boy soldiers."

"They are called markers," said her father. "The company is going to turn into the next street; see how one of the markers runs and plants his flag just at the point where they begin to turn."

"I wish I was a marker," said Arthur. "Father, can't I be a soldier, when I am old enough?"

"Why, just now you wanted to be a printer," said Mary.

"I think I would rather be a soldier, after all," said Arthur. "They look so splendid in their uniforms, and the feathers dance about so in the wind. I'd like to be the one on horseback, galloping along so bravely, only I

would have a white horse instead of a black one."

"You are just like Hans, at the toll-gate, in the story of 'Fairy Contenta,'" said Mary.

"But I don't think his wishes will be gratified quite so easily," said Mrs. Neland.

"I guess there are no fairies in this neighborhood," said Mr. Neland. "The city noises would frighten them away."

"I wish a fairy, or somebody else, would give me something to eat," said Mary. "I am as hungry as can be."

"Poor little girl," said her father, taking her hand in his as they walked on, the soldiers having all marched out of sight. "Really, we must see what the fairies can do for you. First, we will step into this store and buy some new shoes, and then we will go on a little farther, to one of those fairy houses where good things are sold to starving people."

Mary found it tiresome work to try on shoes, when she was so very hungry; and there were three pairs to be bought for her, and three for

Arthur, because they might not be in the city again for a long time. Arthur was a great while getting suited, complaining that one pair pinched his toes, and another pair were too large, and a third were too short; and poor little Mary sat waiting very patiently till he was ready, though she could not help thinking he was very hard to please. At last, however, the shoes were bought, and her father said,—

"Now, little hungry girl, we will go and see the fairies, and get something to eat."

So they went on a few squares, and came to a handsome store with large glass windows, in which were exhibited all sorts of tempting things. They went into this store, which was very elegant, and saw a number of small tables. Those near the wall had pretty crimson sofas behind them, and they sat down on one of these. Then their father asked what they would have, and Mrs. Neland said she would take some broiled chicken, and a nice roll. Mary chose the same, but Arthur preferred a plate of oysters, and Mr. Neland said he liked roast beef the best. Then

he called a waiter, who was passing round among the tables, helping all the people who sat beside them, and told him what to bring. The waiter stayed a long time, the children thought, but he came back at last with a nice dinner, which they enjoyed exceedingly, and Mary told her father he was the best fairy she had ever seen.

"And now, good Mr. Fairy," said their mother, "as I have eaten all my chicken, I will thank you to give me some ice-cream, and perhaps little Mary would like some too."

Little Mary smiled Yes—and the waiter was called again, and desired to bring some cream, and a glass of jelly for Arthur, and a plate of cake; and so they had a nice dessert, and felt quite refreshed and rested for the remainder of their business.

As they came out of the saloon, a boy at the door thrust a hand-bill toward Mr. Neland, crying, "Grand Menagerie, Sir! Largest Elephant in the world! Royal Bengal Tiger."

"Oh, father, do let us go and see them," cried Arthur.

"Do, do!" echoed Mary. "I never saw a live elephant in my life."

"And monkeys, father," exclaimed Arthur, looking over the hand-bill which Mr. Neland was reading,—"do go! Mother, don't you want to see them?"

"I am afraid it will take too long a time," said Mr. Neland. What do you say, my dear?"

Mrs. Neland smiled at the two little eager faces, which waited for her decision. "Is it very late?" said she. Mr. Neland looked at his watch, and answered, "A quarter past one. Not so late as I thought. Perhaps we might go for a short visit; what have you to do afterward?"

"Only to get Arthur a cap—and I should like to call and see Mrs. Robertson before we leave the city."

"And I must see a gentleman on business at three o'clock, and can meet you at the depot at five; so I think we may go and see the animals, since the children wish it so much."

"Well, I am quite willing," said Mrs. Neland;

"indeed, I think I shall like it very much, for I have not seen a collection of this kind since I was a little girl."

Arthur and Mary clapped their hands with delight, exclaiming, "Oh, I am so glad!" "Oh, how delightful it will be!"—and Mr. Neland stopping an omnibus, they got into it, and drove to the menagerie.

After purchasing their tickets, they entered a large hall, on each side of which the animals were placed in strong cages. Arthur walked boldly up to the first cage, which contained a huge black bear, but poor little Mary, when she found herself really face to face with these wild creatures, and heard their growling from different parts of the hall, became very much frightened, and drew her father back, saying,—

"I think I would rather not see them after all, father, they frighten me so."

"I will take care of you, my darling," said her father.

"Nonsense, Mary," exclaimed Arthur; "what are you afraid of, child?"

"You must remember that Mary is not as old nor as brave as you are, Arthur," replied Mr. Neland. "Keep hold of my hand, my dear, and nothing shall hurt you."

Thus reassured, Mary went on, grasping her father's hand very tightly, and having her mother close on the other side. Her little heart, however, went pit-a-pat very fast, and it was some time before she felt quite safe and easy. They made their way slowly round the hall, stopping at every cage. The royal Bengal tiger, the beautiful spotted leopard, and the large African lion and lioness, surprised and delighted Arthur. He said he should now like to read about them more than ever. They saw the wolf and hyena; the quiet, patient camel from the Arabian deserts; the striped zebra, the ostrich, and many other strange creatures from all parts of the world. But when they came to the cage of monkeys, their amusement and delight knew no bounds. The space in front of the cage was filled with children, and grown people too, who were laughing loud and heartily at the tricks

and grimaces of the mischievous little creatures, as they climbed about the cage on bars of iron. Arthur could scarcely make his way through the crowd to get a peep; but by and by they managed to squeeze in, and got a place where they could see very well. Mr. Neland bought an apple from a boy who was offering them for sale, and this the children bit into pieces and threw to the monkeys, which not only amused themselves, but the other people also. One monkey came down and took a bit from Arthur's hand, and then ran nimbly to the topmost bar, pursued by an active, long-tailed fellow, trying to get it from him.

While they were looking at the monkeys, they heard a shrill whistle, and presently a large elephant was led in by his keeper. "Oh, father!" exclaimed Mary, all in a tremble, "will he hurt us?"

"Not unless we hurt him," said Mr. Neland. "See how docile and obedient he is!" The crowd immediately collected about the huge animal, who went through a great many perform-

ances at the word of command: lay down when desired, picked up the smallest coins that were thrown to him, carried his keeper on his proboscis and back, and completely drew away the attention of everybody from the other inmates of the menagerie. Even the monkeys were quite neglected when the elephant appeared.

Arthur felt as if he could stay there all day; but after looking at the elephant some time, Mr. Neland said it was time to go, or he should be obliged to break his engagement at three o'clock, and the children knew that he would never do that.

When they left the menagerie, Mrs. Neland said she would buy Arthur's cap, and then go to Mrs. Robertson's; and Mr. Neland said he should go down town, and meet them at the depot at five o'clock, which Mrs. Neland thought a very good arrangement, as they would then reach home just at tea-time. Arthur's cap was purchased very satisfactorily to himself, and a new pair of gloves for Mary, and then they walked on to see Mrs. Robertson, who was an

old and dear friend of their mother's, just returned to New York, after living many years in New Orleans.

"Who shall we see at Mrs. Robertson's?" asked Mary.

"Herself, I hope," replied Mrs. Neland.

"Has she any children?"

"No, she has lost both her children."

"I am afraid it will be a very dull visit," said Arthur, who, after the excitement of the menagerie, felt as if nothing else could possibly amuse him. "*Must* you go, mother?"

"Not exactly *must*," replied Mrs. Neland, "but I wish to go, and I do not think it will be dull."

"Well," said Arthur, in a resigned tone, "I suppose we had better go, then."

"I think Mrs. Robertson will be glad to see us, and we will not stay long," replied Mrs. Neland.

Arthur and Mary ran up the steps of Mrs. Robertson's house rather reluctantly, hoping, as they rang the bell, that she would not be at

home; but, to their disappointment, the servant who opened the door said his mistress was in the parlor, and invited them to walk in, while Mary pressed her mother's hand, and whispered, "Don't stay long, please."

Mrs. Robertson was not at all the sort of person the children had expected to see. Somehow, Mary had imagined her very sad looking, and rather old; but instead of that, they were met by a cheerful, pleasant person, about the age of their own mother, who seemed delighted to meet them.

"My dear Annie," said she, kissing Mrs. Neland, "how glad I am to see you once more; and you have brought Arthur and Mary, too. That was very kind, for I have not seen them since they were tiny little things. How are you, my dears? Pray sit down, and tell me when you came into the city."

Mrs. Neland replied, that they were only passing the day in town, and were going home at five o'clock.

"I am sorry you did not come here sooner,"

said Mrs. Robertson,—"I might have helped you to amuse the children; they want all the pleasure to be gotten out of one day in town. Come, let me see what we can find for them now. It is stupid business for children to sit still and listen while grown people talk. Don't you think so, little folks?"

Mrs. Robertson rang the bell as she was speaking, and a neat little colored girl came into the room. "Sylvia," said Mrs. Robertson, "take my two little friends here, and show them the parrot. Make her say everything she can; and when they are tired, show them the Java sparrows."

Sylvia smiled very pleasantly, and the children followed her through a long hall, and out upon a balcony at the back of the house, where the parrot's cage was hanging.

"How do you do, Mrs. Poll," said Sylvia; "are you pretty well?"

"Pretty well, pretty well, Polly pretty well," replied the parrot.

"Have you had your breakfast, Polly?"

"Coffee, hot coffee, eggs, toast; cook get breakfast," screamed the parrot.

"No breakfast for naughty Polly, to-day," said Sylvia.

"Cook, get breakfast—please ma'am, please ma'am, poor Polly, Polly hungry, Polly very hungry."

Mary and Arthur laughed heartily at this, and then the parrot laughed too, "Ha! ha! ha! how funny! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Mr. Robertson can make her talk first-rate," said Sylvia.

"Mr. Robertson, Mr. Robertson," screamed the parrot, "come to dinner. Take a chair, pretty Polly, pretty Polly. Bring some sugar. Polly, where's the sugar?"

"I'll get her a lump," said Sylvia; and she ran for some. "Here, Mrs. Poll, what do you say for it?"

"Thank you, ma'am," said the parrot; and taking it in her claws, she bit it with her large crooked bill, and then called out again, "Sylvia, pretty Sylvia, good-bye, good-bye."

"She wants us to go," said Arthur,—"she is bidding us good-bye."

"Good-bye, ma'am," echoed the parrot; and when the children laughed, she laughed too, both loud and long. The bird had been given to Mr. Robertson by a foreign gentleman, and he had taken great pains to train and teach it. It spoke remarkably well. Arthur was anxious his mother should hear it as well as himself, and he ran back into the parlor to ask her to go upon the balcony.

"I thought you would like our Polly," said Mrs. Robertson, as they went out; "she is a great favorite with the young folks who come to see me. Well, Mrs. Poll, how do you do?"

"How do you, my dear," said the parrot.

"She says 'my dear,' because she hears my husband call me so," said Mrs. Robertson.

"Company in the parlor," cried the parrot. "Sylvia, bring some cake."

"That is a very good hint, Mrs. Poll," said Mrs. Robertson. "Do, Sylvia, get out the cake-basket; I dare say the children are hungry."

But Mrs. Neland said they had just been dining heartily, and could take nothing more.

"Polly hungry. Come to dinner, chicken-pie, poor Polly hungry," said the parrot.

"She always says she is hungry," said Sylvia.

"And I believe she can always eat," said Mrs. Robertson, giving the parrot a bit of cake from the basket. Polly ate it up in a minute.

"What beautiful green feathers she has," said Mary. "Oh, mother, I wish we had a parrot."

"They are very troublesome as well as noisy pets, my dear," said Mrs. Robertson.

"We should not care for that," said Arthur, eagerly. "It would be such fun to hear one talk, and teach it new words to say."

"Ah, Arthur!" said Mrs. Robertson, "I would rather have such little parrots as you and Mary to teach, than a poor senseless bird."

"Why, don't it understand, ma'am?" asked Mary.

"No. It repeats what it frequently hears, and is taught certain sentences which sound very amusing, but it does not understand them."

"And very wonderful," said Arthur, "to think of a bird's speaking as we do."

"They speak, but they do not think," said Mary.

"No, they have only instinct, not reason," replied her mother; "they cannot think."

"Is it because they have no souls?" whispered Mary to her mother.

"Yes, Mary, that is the difference between you and the parrot," said Mrs. Robertson, who had heard the whisper. "That part of you which thinks, and directs your actions, the bird has not."

"God gave it only to man," said Mrs. Neland. Here the parrot began to scream again, and the children became so diverted with it, that they did not care to walk with Mrs. Robertson and their mother round a pretty little garden at the back of the house, nor even to go into the parlor to see some fine pictures. They stayed with Sylvia on the balcony, who good-naturedly kept the parrot talking for their amusement, until Mrs. Neland called them, as it was time to go.

"Really, mother," said Arthur, as they went down the steps, "we have had a very pleasant visit. I did not find it dull at all. I should have liked to stay longer. Mary, don't you think it was pleasant?"

"Very pleasant," replied Mary; "I liked the parrot above all things, and Sylvia was so kind, too. Didn't you like Sylvia, Arthur?"

"Yes, she was so good-natured; and didn't you like Mrs. Robertson, Mary?"

"I thought she was delightful," replied Mary; "and then she was so young,—as young as you are, mother."

"Dear me! why, I am quite an old lady," said Mrs. Neland, smiling.

"No, indeed," Mary and Arthur cried in a breath. "You are very young. I don't believe you are more than twenty, now," added Arthur.

"What! not with such large children as you are? Why, I must soon be thinking of getting a pair of spectacles, and wearing caps, like grand-mamma Neland!"

"Caps! no, indeed!" cried Mary; "caps to

cover up your pretty brown curls, and spectacles to hide your blue eyes! You shall never wear them, mother—never!"

"Bless me! what queer children you are!" said their mother, laughing. "Why, caps and spectacles are very good things, and everybody wears them when they grow old."

"Well, you are not old yet, and it will be time enough to talk of them when you are," said Arthur.

"And beside," said Mary, "I want to ask you about Mrs. Robertson's children."

"And I want to ask you about going to a bookstore," said Arthur. "I've got three shillings of my own, and I want to buy a book with it."

"Yes, do go to a bookstore, mother," said Mary. "Only, if you please, just tell me first about those children."

"There is not much to tell," replied Mrs. Neland. "The eldest died when a baby, and the other, a little girl, lived to be three years old. Mrs. Robertson was in great sorrow for

the loss of her children; but they have been dead some years, and she is beginning to feel happier again."

"It seems to me," said Mary, gravely, "that I could never get over it at all. I should keep being sorry forever and ever."

"Mary, don't talk about dead babies now, and such gloomy things," said Arthur. "Let's be as happy as we can to-day. There is a book-store on the other side of the street. We can go over there, can't we?" "Yes," said his mother; and they went over to the store. And what heaps of new books they found. A great many which the children had read, and many more which they wanted to read. There were the Rollo, and Jonas books,—Arthur had read nearly all of them; and the Harpers' story books; and 'Harry and Bessie;' and the 'Lucy Books,' which Mary loved, and all the rest of good Mr. Abbot's stories. Indeed, the longer they looked the more delighted they were, and the more puzzled which to choose. Mrs. Neland left them to select one, while she was looking at

something else; but she could hear them talking all the while.

"Arthur, look here. This is 'Robinson Crusoe,'—wouldn't you like that?"

"'Robinson Crusoe,'—yes, but here is another, 'The Boy Hunters.' This looks pretty,—what is the price of this, sir?"

The price named was beyond Arthur's means, more than three shillings, and he laid the book aside very quietly.

"Here are 'Holidays at Home,' and 'Fireside Fairies,'" said Mary.

"I've read those," said Arthur.

"'Rollo in Europe,'" said the bookseller, placing another set of Mr. Abbot's charming works before them.

"Arthur hasn't money enough to buy those, I am afraid," said Mary.

"That is a pity," said the gentleman, smiling. "We must try and find something more suited to his means."

"Mother, do come and help us, won't you?" said Mary, pulling her mother's dress to attract

her attention. "We can't,—at least, Arthur can't,—get suited at all without you."

"Then I must come, I suppose, since you are so much in want;" and Mrs. Neland laid down the book she was reading, and went over to Arthur.

"The young gentleman appears to like this volume," said the bookseller; "but thinks he cannot afford to buy it."

"A book of Fairy Tales," said Arthur; "but the price is four shillings,—and I have only three."

"Quite unfortunate. People should have plenty of money when they get into a book-store," Mrs. Neland said.

"It is too bad, and I had four only last week; but I lent one of them to Fred Murray, and he has not paid me."

"Mother," whispered little Mary,—"I might give him one of mine to make it up, and when Frederick pays him, he can pay me."

"And suppose Frederick should never do so?"

"Well, I don't care if he does not,—I will

give Arthur a shilling and let him buy that book, because he likes it *so* much, and I can spare the money."

"Do as you choose, my darling;" and Mary, taking the silver from her own little purse, slipped it into her brother's hand, saying quietly,—"There, you can buy it now, and I know it is a pretty book."

"No, no," said Arthur,—"I won't take your shilling," and he tried to give it back again, but Mary insisted that she could spare it very well, and he *must* have it; and so at last Arthur drew out his own money, and bought the book of Fairy Tales.

The bookseller had seen the transaction about the shilling, and just as they were going away, he opened a drawer filled with some pretty colored prints. "I should like to give the young lady one of these, ma'am," he said, "if you have no objections."

"You are very kind, sir," replied Mrs. Neland. "Mary will be much obliged to you, I am sure."

Mary looked a little shy, but she smiled too, and said "Thank you," when the good gentleman rolled one of the prints in paper and gave it to her. She thought it would look very pretty hung up in her little bed-room, where the light could shine upon it.

"That was Mary's reward for being so good-natured as to give me her shilling,—don't you think so, mother?" said Arthur, when they got into the street.

"I am sure Mary did not think of being rewarded," answered Mrs. Neland. "I am glad the picture was given to her, for she deserved it; but I believe the pleasure of making you happy would have been a sufficient reward, without any other."

They now walked on more briskly, as it was getting near five o'clock,—going through many streets, and seeing many things that were new to them. They passed a boy who was selling balloons, and Arthur was extremely anxious to buy one, as they were only twenty-five cents, which he asked his mother to lend him for the

purpose. Mrs. Neland told him, however, that he had spent money enough for one day, and beside, the gas very soon escaped and they were quite useless. So Arthur very reluctantly went on without one. They met Mr. Neland near the depot. He said he had been waiting for them about fifteen minutes, and they were in good time for the cars. Their ride home was pleasant, but they were very tired, and glad to go to bed early, and dream of all they had seen during their day in the city.

XII.

The Grey Kitten.

ABOUT a month after their visit to the city, when it was getting a little cold, and the days were getting shorter, Arthur was sent by his mother to carry a few freshly laid eggs to a sick neighbor. Mrs. Neland put them into a small basket, and told Arthur to carry them very carefully, since the poor sick lady had quite set her heart upon them, and would be sadly disappointed if they were broken. It was rather a dark afternoon, and though it was only five o'clock, it looked later; so Arthur was told not to loiter by the way, but to walk briskly along, leave the basket and his mother's message at Mrs. Price's door, and come immediately home again.

When he was about half-way there, Arthur

saw Fred Murray, and an older boy, coming toward him, the latter of whom held in his arms a small grey kitten. They stopped as Arthur came up.

"What have you got there?" Fred asked. Arthur told him, and asked in turn where they had got the kitten, and what they were going to do with it.

"That is *our* business," said the larger boy, whom Arthur now recollected as the son of Mr. Bond, the carpenter.

"We're going to have some fun," said Fred, rubbing his hands, and pointing to the cat; "good fun, I tell you. Don't you want to see it?"

"See what?"

"Why, the kitten—we're going to swing her."

"Oh, don't!" said Arthur; "she is a pretty kitten, and it would be so cruel."

James Bond laughed a rude, coarse laugh, as Arthur spoke. "Where's the harm of hanging a useless cat?" said he. "There's five hundred

others in the village at this minute, I'll bet—so this will be no loss; besides, it's such sport!"

"Poor pussy!" said Arthur; "don't kill her, Fred,—give her to me, and I'll carry her home to Mary, she is so fond of kittens."

"No, we are going to hang her," said James; "come with us and see. You don't know how she will kick!"

"I wouldn't for the world!" said Arthur, earnestly.

"What a baby you are," said the carpenter's son, laughing again. "Can't bear to see such a dreadful sight, hey? Look here, little one—but don't cry about it, now!" and taking the unfortunate kitten by the tail, he swung it round and round, regardless of its screams.

"Poor thing!" said Arthur, pitifully, who had been early taught the sin of cruelty to animals.

"Poh! it doesn't hurt her much," said Fred, "and cats have nine lives, they say. Wait till she gets the string round her neck, and then you'll see fun!"

"Do give her to me," Arthur urged.

"Not a bit of it," answered Jim Bond, roughly; I got her on purpose to hang, and we'll do it, too."

"You're a terrible baby, Arthur," said Fred, putting his hands in his pockets, and trying to imitate the coarse tone and manner of his companion. "Why, our Will wouldn't look as you do now, though he is a year younger than you. Just as if cats were worth anything!"

"They can feel pain as well as we, I am sure," said Arthur, indignantly. "My mother says so."

"What does she know about cats?"

"A great deal—she knows about everything; and she told me it was a sin to torment any living creature, just for our own amusement. She told me so one day when Mary and I were catching flies."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed James Bond again; "you'll know better than that when you get as big as I am," and he thrust the kitten rudely into Arthur's face as he spoke, crying, "Scratch him, cat! scratch him!"

Arthur stepped back, attempting at the same time to seize the kitten, but in so doing his arm was caught by Fred, who stood laughing beside him,—and as Arthur struggled to get free, the basket he held was violently shaken; and presently the broken eggs came dripping through upon the ground, smearing his pantaloons, and driving from his thoughts, for the moment, poor pussy and her unlucky fate.

"There! see what you've done!" he cried, angrily. "You've broken all the eggs that I was taking to Mrs. Price!"

"You'll catch it, young man, when you get home," said James Bond, exultingly; "you'll catch it!"

"It was Fred's fault, and yours; what did you put the cat in my face for, and why did he pull my arm? You have broken all but one," and Arthur peeped into the basket with a rueful face.

"Your mother will take the price of them out of your pocket with a cat-o'nine-tails!"

"She will *not*, but I am as sorry as if she did.

They were for a sick lady, Mrs. Price, and mother told me to be careful."

"There, now, he is going to cry, I do believe," said Fred. And it must be confessed, Arthur did look very much like crying.

"Best get along home, and tell it's ma," said the carpenter's boy, patting Arthur's head. "Pick up your eggs, man, and stop your whining. One might take you for a sucking calf. Come, Fred." And laughing loudly, the two lads walked away, leaving Arthur to his own unpleasant reflections, and in some doubt what he should do next.

At first, he felt inclined to run directly home, and turned to do so; but then he recollected his mother had told him how anxious Mrs. Price was to get the eggs, and that sick people's fancies should always be gratified, if possible. So he thought that *one* egg would be better than none, and brushing back the tears, which *would* come into his eyes though he tried hard to help it, he walked on to Mrs. Price's house. Here he told his story to Mrs. Price's mother, who

opened the door. The old lady was very sorry to hear how it had all happened, but said he must not mind it, since her daughter could only eat one, even if he had brought a dozen; which assurance was very comforting to Arthur under the circumstances.

On his way back he was also glad to see the grey kitten scampering along, and jumping over a fence, having probably escaped from the boys before they could execute their cruel purpose, for it looked very much frightened, and ran very fast. Arrived at home, Arthur walked directly into the sitting-room, where his mother and Mary were at work.

"Mother," said he, "I met with a misfortune, and I want to tell you how it happened. All the eggs were accidentally broken, but it wasn't my fault, and I am determined never to speak with Fred Murray again as long as I live. He is a cruel, wicked boy, and was going to hang a pretty grey kitten, and I wanted to save its life; and Jim Bond,—you know Mr. Bond, the carpenter, mother,—well, his son, and he is an aw-

fully bad fellow,—he pushed the cat in my face, and then Fred caught my arm—"

"Mercy on us, Arthur! do stop and take breath," said Mrs. Neland, laughing. "The words come galloping out of your mouth so fast, they will choke you!"

"Well, I just wanted to tell you," said Arthur, in a calmer tone, "how it happened that the eggs were broken, and that it was Fred's fault, for he caught my arm, and the basket too, and they all knocked together somehow, and the yolks came dripping through upon my trowsers, and upon my word and honor, mother, I couldn't help it, and I am very sorry."

"I am sorry, too," said his mother, "for Mrs. Price, whose appetite is so small, was disappointed in not having them for her supper."

"No, ma'am, there was *one* left, and I carried it straight down to her. And I saw old Mrs. Green, and she said it was no matter, because Mrs. Price didn't want any more than one."

"That is fortunate, but I hoped she would have them for breakfast too."

"May-be Mary's white hen will lay one in the morning," said Arthur, eagerly, "and if she does, I'll run away with it at once."

"I told you not to loiter by the way," said Mrs. Neland, gravely. "Perhaps if you had not stopped to talk with Fred, my eggs would not have been broken."

"It was Fred who stopped me, and did the mischief."

"And the grey kitten," said Mary.

"Why, that was the cause of it all."

"But how? tell us how. Begin at the beginning,"—a way which Mary always liked when anything was to be told.

So Arthur began at the beginning, and gave a plain account of his adventure. "And mother," he said as he concluded, "I have done with the Murrays for ever. Fred is a mean, cowardly fellow, and I have quite made up my mind never to go to their house again, or have anything to do with them."

"Dear me! that is quite a resolution," said Mrs. Neland, "if you should keep it."

"You'll see if I don't!" I shall never speak to them again."

"I do not wish you to play with rude boys, but then, you need not be impolite or unforgiving."

"I wish they had never come to Sunny brook —I know that!"

"Why, Arthur, what a child you are; you were delighted when mother told you they were coming," said Mary. "Don't you remember, mother, how he teased you to take him there?"

"Well, I've changed my mind since then," said Arthur. "I thought they were nice fellows to play with when they first came."

"I *never* liked them," said Mary, "*never!* The very first day we went there, I knew they were bad children, they quarrelled so dreadfully."

"Mary is a wise little woman, you know," said Mrs. Neland, smiling; "and I see another wise little lady coming in at the gate, with her mother, to drink tea with us; so run away, Arthur, and wash the egg from your fingers and

clothes, that you may be ready to play with some really *good* children."

Arthur went immediately off to make himself look neat, and Mary ran to open the door for Mrs. Coleman and Kitty, and Fanny Lee, Mrs. Coleman's neice, who had come to spend a sociable evening with them.

XIII.

An Evening at Home.

THIS evening, at Mrs. Neland's, was a very pleasant one, and, if I guess rightly, you would like to know what was said and done by the merry party who were there. And first they all said, "How do you do?" and "Come in—we are so glad to see you," and all that sort of thing; and Mary carried the hoods and shawls up stairs, and laid them on the bed in her mother's room, and then ran down again to the little girls, who, in the mean time, had discovered one of the dollies in its cradle in a corner of the sitting-room, and taken possession of it.

A small fire was burning on the hearth, which threw its cheerful light over the apartment. Mrs. Neland drew the arm-chair towards it for Mrs.

Coleman, who sat down, and pretty soon drew out her knitting. Mrs. Neland also took up the sewing she had laid aside when her guests arrived, and so they worked and chatted, while the little girls amused themselves with the dollies,—Mary having brought down Fanny Fair, too, as it was a special occasion.

Prsently Arthur came in, looking very fresh and neat; and, as it was getting dark, Mrs. Neland rang the bell for Susan to light the lamp, and when the light came there was a chattering of little voices, and questions of "What shall we play?" "Will you be the mother?" "May I have Fanny Fair for my child?" "May I have Miss Rose for mine?" and so on. Then Mary ran and whispered something in her mother's ear, and Mrs. Neland smiled, and said, "Yes, I suppose you can—I will see;" and calling Susan she whispered something to her, to which Susan replied, "Yes, ma'am, I guess I can fix it;" and Mary, clapping her hands, ran back to *her* side of the room, where Fanny Lee and herself had their house. Kitty had another corner, and

urged Arthur to play with her; but this the young gentleman entirely refused to do, and preferred reading by himself at the centre-table, than joining in any girls' play. So Kitty went on with her household arrangements without him.

At six o'clock Mr. Neland came from the city, and then there was another shaking of hands all round. In a minute Mary was in her accustomed seat on his knee, with both arms around his neck, taking what she called "a good kiss." Mr. Neland held her very tightly, and rubbed her cheeks with his rough beard, which made her squeal like a little pig. Kitty's turn came next, so they had a fine romp; but Mr. Neland did not play with Fanny in that way, because she was something of a stranger, her home being at some distance, and she came occasionally to pay a visit to her aunt and cousin.

By the time the fun was over, and the girls had gone back to their corners, the bell rang for tea, which was a joyful sound to all the party; and they walked into the dining-room, where Susan had spread the table with a delightful tea, such

as country folks know how to enjoy. Indeed, there were two tables, a small one on which Mary's pretty China tea-set was placed, and where the children were to drink tea by themselves, and Mary to pour out, of course; and this I suppose was the request she had whispered to her mother. So they all sat down, and when Mr. Neland had said grace the business of eating commenced. At first, Mary was rather awkward in presiding at her own tea-table, and even with Susan's help it was quite an affair to fill four cups, and put in the necessary quantity of milk and sugar; and Arthur was equally long in putting the preserves on each tiny plate, from the pretty little glass dish in the centre of the table, and helping the girls. Still, everything went on very nicely, and such a supper as they all made, it was quite surprising to behold. They had hot biscuits, buttered toast, two kinds of cake, preserves, cheese, tongue, and other things beside, I believe, so that Mrs. Coleman had to caution them many times not to eat more than was good for them. Then there was a deal of joking between Mary

and her father about housekeeping, and which was the best,—Mary or her mother; and Mr. Neland made believe he had forgotten, and sent his cup to Mary for more tea instead of Mrs. Neland, and this made them all laugh tremendously. When people get into a merry mood, the least trifle will set them laughing; and so the children were prepared for a general outburst ofmir that everything Mr. Neland said or did,—and Fanny Lee whispered to Kitty, that he was the funniest man she had ever seen.

At last, when they had all eaten enough, and more than enough, they went back into the parlor again. Here the lamp was burning brightly, and as Arthur saw his father's shadow on the wall, he cried out, "Oh, let us play shadow-buff!"

Now, in playing shadow-buff, one person sits with his face to the wall, and, as others in the room pass between him and the light, their shadows are thrown upon the wall, and he is to guess who it is as each one crosses behind his chair. Of course each tries to disguise himself, that the person guessing may not find him out. Mrs.

Neland said, as Arthur had proposed the game, he should be the first to guess. So they placed the light in such a way that a deep shadow might be thrown, and Arthur took his seat.

"That is Mary," he cried, as some one passed softly behind him.

"Wrong!" cried everybody.

"Then it was Fanny."

"Ah, you can only have one guess."

"That is Mrs. Coleman."

"No."

"That is Kitty."

"No."

"I am sure that was Kitty. Who is that?"

"Guess! guess!"

"Mother, that was you."

"No," laughed everybody. It was Mr. Neland, with his wife's shawl over his shoulders, and her head-dress on the back of his head.

"What in the world is that?" There was a scream of delight from all the girls. Placing one of the sofa pillows on his head, upon which Mrs. Neland put her work-basket, and stooping

to lessen his height, Mr. Neland again passed slowly behind the chair.

"Now, I *know* that was Mrs. Coleman."

"No, it was *not*."

"Fanny Lee," cried Arthur.

"No, it was me," laughed Mary.

A tall figure, with a man's hat on, is now seen upon the wall.

"Mother!" exclaimed Arthur.

"Mother is not so tall as that," said Mary.

"She walked on tip-toe, then; I know it was mother," said Arthur, springing up; and Mrs. Neland, thus detected, took her seat. Soon Kitty was discovered, and compelled to take Mrs. Neland's place; then Mary, then Mr. Neland, and each in turn became the guesser. Mr. Coleman came in while they were playing, and he joined them, and a merry time they had of it Such grotesque figures Mr. Neland and Mr. Coleman made, in order to deceive the person who guessed, as called forth continual shouts of laughter from the children; altogether it was a most amusing game.

At last they all grew tired, even of the fun, and when the older persons went back to the centre-table, and the ladies wanted the lamp in order to resume their work, the children followed, and Mary brought some pictures for them to look at. Arthur, however, thought this a very dull amusement.

"Where's the use, Mary," said he, "of poring over these stupid books. I'm sure there is no pleasure in such pictures. Let us do something!"

"There is nothing to do, is there?" answered Mary; "and besides, Fanny asked me for the book. She wanted to see the winter pictures."

"What are you reading, Fanny?" asked Mrs. Coleman.

"Ma'am?" answered Fanny, without looking up.

"That child never hears a word that is said to her, if she has a book," observed Mrs. Coleman.

"Did you speak to me, aunt Sarah?" asked Fanny, raising her head.

"I asked what you were reading."

"Oh, did you, ma'am? I didn't hear you. I was only reading a piece of poetry in this book."

"Read it to me, won't you," whispered Kitty, who did not read very well herself.

"Hush, I can't," replied Fanny, looking frightened at the thought of reading aloud before so many persons.

"Please do," urged the little girl.

"What is it you wish to hear, Kitty?" inquired Mrs. Neland, who had observed the whisper.

"What Fanny was reading."

"Give me the book and I will try;" and Mrs. Neland kindly read for Kitty and Mary,—

The Sick Child's Wish.

"Dear mother, draw the curtain close,
And shut the light away—
The sun glares in our little room
So terribly to-day,
I never felt his heat so much;
Dear mother, come and lay
Your hand upon my throbbing head,
And sit awhile beside my bed.

"Last night I scarcely slept at all,
My head was aching so;
Oh, how I wished 'twas winter-time,
That I might rise and go
Out by the door-step stealthily
To bathe it in the snow:
I called you, but you did not hear,
You were so weary, mother dear.

"How long it seemed to watch the hours,—
They crept so slowly by;
I heard them from the steeples toll,
And oh, how wearily,
How wearily I counted them,
Wishing they would but fly,
And the grey dawning I might see,
When you would rise and come to me.

"And yet I had *some* pleasant thoughts,—
I fancied that I lay
Beside the spring at our old home,
And heard its waters play,
And bathed my hot hands in the flood,
Or held them in the spray,
And plucked the lilies from its brink,
Or wove a leafy cup, to drink.

"Do you remember all the flowers,
The many flowers that grew
Beside that little silvery spring,—
The violets, white and blue,

That were so fresh and beautiful
At morning 'mid the dew?
Dear mother, shall we ever go
Again to where those violets blow?

"I long so often for a breath
Of that sweet mountain air,
I seem to feel it fan my cheek
And frolic with my hair,—
I am so weary of the town,
And it is *summer* there!
Mother, you shake your head and sigh,
And there's a tear-drop in your eye.

"You cannot go, for you must work
All day to buy us bread;
Could we not live at our old home
On fruits and herbs instead?
I think you would not sigh so much,
Nor press your aching head;
The very breeze would cure your pain,
And you might learn to smile again.

"But if we may not, must not go,
Dear mother, will you try
Some day a pot of summer flowers
For your sick child to buy,—
And place it on the window seat,
Where it will meet my eye?
And I will fancy that they grew
Among the violets, fresh and blue.

"And, mother, there is yet a wish
I've thought upon for hours;
If I should die, oh, bury me
Among the grass and flowers,—
Among the sweet blue violets,
Where fall the softest showers,
And the cool winds go wandering by—
There, dearest mother, let me lie."

"What a dismal story!" exclaimed Arthur, as his mother ceased reading. "I declare, Mary and Kitty are both crying. You know Mary always cries over her story books."

"It *is* rather a melancholy affair," said Mrs. Neland. "Let me see, my tender-hearted little lassie,—are you really crying?"

"Not quite, said Mary;" but her mother saw an unusual moisture in the pair of blue eyes that looked up at her from the opposite side of the table.

"Come, come, shut up the books, and let us have some more fun," cried Arthur, running away with several from the table and slipping them into the book-case. "Father, won't you show us the magic lantern?"

"Oh, father, do! do!" cried Mary. "We haven't seen it in *so* long!"

"Please do, Mr. Neland," echoed Kitty, while Fanny, though she did not utter a word, showed her wishes in her face.

"Well, I don't know exactly," said Mr. Neland, in a doubtful tone. "Do you want it *very* much? I am afraid it will take some time to fix it."

"Only a few minutes, sir, and we will help you," Arthur and Mary cried in a breath.

"I am afraid it is rather late for such an ehhibition," said Mr. Coleman, looking at his watch. "Half-past eight—little folks must not sit up too long, you know."

"Oh! it is not late at all—it is quite early. Do let us have the magic lantern!" the children all exclaimed.

"Well, well, then; come on, Master Arthur, into the dining-room, and we will set about it."

"I will ring the bell when we are ready," said Arthur. While they were gone, the girls went back to Mary's endless source of pleasure, the

dolls; but they were all so eager in listening for the bell, they could really fix their thoughts on nothing else. Presently there was a violent tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, and they all rushed to the door.

"Bah!" said Arthur, laughing, as their eager faces met his mischievous one. "Not ready yet!"

"You rogue!" said Mary, and they ran back into the parlor. After a few minutes, the bell again sounded, but thinking it another trick, the girls were afraid to venture out. This time, however, it was an actual summons, and they followed Mrs. Neland and Mrs. Coleman into the dining-room. The room was quite dark, except the round spot of light on a white table-cloth, against the opposite wall. The chairs were all arranged facing the light, and as they entered, Mr. Neland said, in a loud voice, as if addressing a large audience—"Ladies and gentlemen! pray, be seated, and we will proceed to show you the wonders of our celebrated magic lantern. This lantern, ladies and gentlemen, was a present from the Great Mogul, to Arthur

Neland, Esq., who has much pleasure in exhibiting it to this large and highly respectable assembly." At this, all the company clapped their hands very loudly.

"The first picture we propose to present to you this evening," continued Mr. Neland, "represents a party of banditti, exceedingly fierce and wild, at the sight of which, it is hoped, none of the ladies will either scream, or faint, as they are perfectly harmless, being only painted on glass."

"I hope you have some fans ready, Mr. Showman, in case of such a catastrophe," said Mrs. Neland.

"Plenty, ma'am—all sorts of conveniences for such occasions," replied the exhibitor; "we study to please everybody."

"Then we shall certainly come again," said Mrs. Coleman.

"Thank you, madam. Now, Arthur Neland, Esq., pray proceed," and the picture appeared upon the wall.

The girls were delighted, and the ladies exclaimed, "Dear me, what a splendid sight! well,

I never saw anything like it in all my life!" Picture after picture followed, and all were loudly applauded. Every one said, they were beautiful! wonderful! enchanting! Mary and Kitty wanted to see them all over again, but this could not be; and when it was all through, and they had gone back into the parlor, Mrs. Coleman said it was time to bid good-night. But just then Susan appeared at the door with a tray of nuts and apples, and they were obliged to stay for that, of course; and while they were eating, Mr. Neland told them a funny story, and Mr. Coleman sang a funny song,—and it was nearly ten o'clock when Mrs. Coleman said they *must* go, or Fanny and Kitty would not be up in time for the cars, as Fanny was going home the next day, and Kitty was to accompany her as far as the city. Arthur therefore brought the cloaks and hoods, and after a great many good-byes, and assurances that all had passed a pleasant evening, the guests departed, and Arthur and Mary, kissing their parents good-night, ran up to bed, and were soon fast asleep.

XIV.

School Again.

A DAY or two after the evening party at Mr. Neland's, the children walked with their mother into the farthest part of the village, to carry some work to a poor widow whom Mrs. Neland sometimes employed; and as they came back, and passed Mr. Murray's house, Frederick was standing at the gate. He said his mother was sick, so Mrs. Neland went in to see her. Mrs. Murray was lying on a sofa in the parlor, groaning, with pain in the head, and Becky stood beside her bathing it with vinegar, and trying to console and comfort the sick lady as much as possible.

"I'm sure you'll soon be better, ma'am, if you'll only let me put this on your head. Vin

egar is so good for the headache." As Becky spoke, she looked up and saw Mrs. Neland. "And here is Mrs. Neland come to see you, ma'am," she continued; "she'll do you good, I'll be bound."

"I am very sorry to find you suffering so much," said Mrs. Neland, sitting down in the chair which Becky placed for her. "What is the matter?"

"Oh, such a headache!" said Mrs. Murray.

"I've sent John for the doctor," said Becky, "and I wish to gracious he'd come."

"I think it is a nervous pain," said Mrs. Murray, faintly, "the children worried me so much this morning."

"Ah, them boys," said Becky,—"they are enough to set anybody crazy, I'm sure, especially your poor head, ma'am."

Mrs. Neland took off her gloves, and, sending Becky for some cold water, determined to stay herself with Mrs. Murray, at least until the doctor came, desiring Arthur and Mary to go home without her. Scarcely had they gone, however,

and Mrs. Murray begun to feel a little easier, from the cold water upon her forehead, when Frederick burst into the room exclaiming,—

"Ma, there's a man out here with oranges to sell, and I want one; just give me ten cents, quick."

"Oh, child, don't worry me now," said his mother.

"I can get it, if you'll just give me your purse."

"Do go away, Frederick—you sha'n't have it, I tell you, and my head is so bad."

"Well, I only want your purse," persisted the boy, rummaging in the work-basket, which stood upon the table.

"Let that basket alone," said Mrs. Murray, raising herself a moment, and then sinking back among the sofa pillows. "You must not touch my purse."

"Frederick," said Mrs. Neland, "you should not disturb your mother in this way," and she took the basket from him, but not in time to secure the purse.

"I only want ten cents," said the young gentleman, deliberately emptying the contents upon the table; and while his mother languidly forbade him, and Mrs. Neland expressed her surprise at such conduct, he coolly helped himself to the silver he wanted and ran out of the room, leaving his mother nearly crying, with pain and vexation, and Mrs. Neland utterly amazed at such bold disobedience.

"I don't know what I *shall* do with that boy," groaned Mrs. Murray.

"It is a pity you have not taught him to be more obedient," said Mrs. Neland.

"I wish I had, but then I am sick so often," sighed Mrs. Murray.

"Lie still, now, and be quiet," replied Mrs. Neland, "or your head will never get well."

"Ah, if I only knew how to manage them," again sighed the unhappy mother,—"but they have always been too much for me, and since we came here Fred has got into bad company, and is worse than ever."

I would not talk any more about it," said

Mrs. Neland, "and besides, here comes the doctor."

The doctor, however, proved to be only Master Will, who now ran in, loudly demanding another ten cents, to buy an orange for himself. Mrs. Murray at this put her hands to her head, crying out, "Oh, go away, or you will certainly kill me."

"Fred had one, and I ought to have one, too," said the boy, beginning to cry.

"I think that would be right," said Mrs. Neland, thinking it best for her to settle the matter; "so I will give William one, if you please."

"Just as you think about it," said Mrs. Murray, in a low tone. "I cannot attend to it now." Mrs. Neland accordingly took the purse from William who had found it on the table, saying,—

"You must be quiet, and ask properly for this, William, or I shall not give it to you. I am sorry to see how little either of you care for your sick mother."

Will looked ashamed, but he held down his

head and growled out again, "I don't care—Fred has one, and I ought to have one, too."

"So you shall, if you are polite and ask for it as you should, but not else," said Mrs. Neland, firmly. "You know I always say exactly what I mean."

"It is my mother's money, and not yours," said Will sulkily.

"So it is, but as your mother is sick, she wishes me to decide for her. Now I decide that you are to *ask* for it, or not to have it, just which you choose."

There was something in Mrs. Neland's tone and manner which showed Will she was resolute, and fearing the orange-man would be gone, he swallowed down his pride, and said, gruffly, "If you please, ma'am,"—then snatching the money from Mrs. Neland, ran hastily out of the room. Again Mrs. Murray sighed, and said she did not know what to do with them.

"Perhaps if you were not so indulgent, it would be better," said Mrs. Neland, gently.

"Perhaps so."

"Don't talk, it will make you worse."

"I am sure these children are enough to kill her outright," whispered Becky, coming in at the moment with some cologne water.

"Hush!" said Mrs. Neland, "you must not talk either, Becky. Look out, now, and see if the doctor is coming."

"Just driving up to the door, ma'am," and she ran to open it. Mrs. Neland stayed till the doctor was gone, and they had assisted Mrs. Murray to her own room, where she soon became easier, and fell asleep; and then, leaving her in Becky's care, Mrs. Neland hastened to her own house, and found her husband and children impatiently waiting for her.

As they gathered round the tea-table an hour afterward, Mr. Neland took a letter from his pocket. "Well, children," said he, "what do you say about school once more? Mamma, we are to have a new teacher, and this letter is from her."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Neland, "do read it for us. See how delighted the children are at the

thought of such a thing! why, Mary is quite beaming with joy, and Arthur cannot express his satisfaction."

Mrs. Neland spoke jestingly, for both Arthur and his sister looked rather grave at the idea of school again.

"Why can't we study at home all winter?" asked Mary.

"I am sure we learn quite as much," said Arthur.

"Not quite, I think," replied his mother, "and there are some other reasons why school is best. But let us hear the letter, if you please, papa;" and Mr. Neland read aloud:

"MR. CHARLES NELAND:—

"Dear Sir,—The letter from your committee I have received, and, after due consideration, have decided to accept the situation of teacher in your school at Sunnybrook. I shall be ready to enter upon my duties on the first of November, and hope to give satisfaction.

"Very respectfully yours,

"ELIZABETH ROSS."

"Miss Ross!" said Mrs. Neland; "well, I am very glad she is coming. She is so pleasant, and such an excellent teacher."

"Why, do you know her, mother?" asked Mary, in surprise.

"I have met her frequently," replied Mrs. Neland, "and am well acquainted with her sisters, who are all teaching in New York. You will find her very gentle; but with her, no means no, and yes means yes."

"Then she is firm, without being severe," said Mr. Neland.

"Exactly; and since she is really coming, suppose you were to write and invite her to make us a short visit first, that the children may not feel she is a stranger when they begin school."

"Oh, no, I would not do that," said Arthur.

"Oh, yes, mother, that would be so nice," said Mary, both speaking at the same moment.

"How shall I please you both, I wonder," said Mrs. Neland, laughing. "We will leave it to papa, I think, to do what he considers best. Come, Arthur, don't lose your appetite, my boy,

because you are going to school; let me give you something to eat.

"I wonder if Fred and Will are going," said Arthur, handing his plate.

"I should hope not, for the sake of the other Sunnybrook children," said Mrs. Neland.

"They are not going to school in Sunny brook," said Mr. Neland. "I came in the car with Mr. Murray, to-day, who told me he intends sending them to a boarding-school immediately. His wife's health is so delicate, and she has so little control over them, that he must send them where they will be more strictly managed."

"Poor boys!" said Mrs. Neland, "they are indeed most miserably governed. I was perfectly shocked this afternoon at their disregard of their sick mother; as Becky says, they are enough to kill her."

"Mr. Murray tells me," continued Mr. Neland, "that the carpenter's son has been with Fred a great deal lately, and taught him many wrong things. I shall speak with Mr. Bond myself about this boy, before our school commences."

"Yes, do, father," said Mary, earnestly; "we don't want such a boy in our school to torment Miss Ross, and may-be make Arthur bad, too,—do we, mother?"

"No, indeed, Mary; we want all our Sunnybrook children to be so good that they may be an example to all other little people in the world, and I especially wish this for Arthur and Mary Neland. Don't you?"

Mary smiled Yes; but Arthur sighed a little as he said, "I am sorry the summer is over."

Yes, the summer, the bright, beautiful summer, was ended, and with it our little book must also draw to a close. "Just one more chapter," pleads a little voice at our elbow; but if we say more, at present, it must be to start afresh with a new volume, and tell what Arthur and Mary did in the winter-time. Perhaps we *may* do this, should God give us health and leisure for the task. In the mean time, we can only hope that our young readers may like the present book so well as to insure another; and, with many kind wishes, bid them all GOOD-BYE.