

FINLEY MARTHA

ELSIE AND HER
NAMESAKES

Martha Finley
Elsie and Her Namesakes

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24728217

Elsie and Her Namesakes:

Содержание

CHAPTER I	4
CHAPTER II	10
CHAPTER III	20
CHAPTER IV	37
CHAPTER V	46
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	51

Martha Finley

Elsie and Her Namesakes

CHAPTER I

Things were going on blithely at Woodburn, everybody deeply interested in the preparations for the approaching wedding, as were all the relatives and connections on the neighboring estates and those on more southern plantations. Woodburn seemed a centre of attraction; relatives and friends were constantly coming and going, many consultations were held as to suitable gifts, especially for Grace and Harold. There was great interest shown by all in the preparation of the trousseau, and Alma and one or two assistants were very busy over it.

There were many shopping expeditions, in which Grace sometimes shared, though rather against Harold's wishes, so fearful was he that she might take cold or suffer from over-exertion. He had long been her careful physician, but now was not only that, but also her promised husband and ardent lover. And to please him Grace left the greater part of the shopping to the other members of the family, and made some of her selections by samples brought by them or the mails.

In the meantime, plans for the wedding and the honeymoon were discussed. Some one spoke of a trip to the North, but

Harold vetoed that promptly. "It was too late in the season now for Grace to try that. He must take her to a warmer climate."

"Then let us all go to Viamede for the winter," suggested his mother. "Would not that suit you, Gracie dear?"

"Yes, indeed, Grandma Elsie; I think there is no sweeter spot upon earth," was the pleased response.

"Then that is where we will go," Harold said with a happy laugh, "and I hope our mother and other dear ones will either accompany or follow us."

"Oh, I like that plan," exclaimed Violet, "but I think few of us will be quite ready to leave our homes here by the time the bridal party starts."

"Then suppose you go in relays," suggested Chester.

"Why not say we, instead of you, Brother Chester," laughed Elsie Raymond. "I'm sure grandma included you in her invitation."

"Certainly," said Grandma Elsie, giving Chester one of her sweet smiles. "May I not count you and Lucilla among my grandchildren?"

"Indeed, I am delighted to have you do so, and proud to be able to claim real blood relationship," returned Chester. "And but for the claims of business, I should be glad to accept your kind invitation. Those, however, will not permit it."

There were exclamations of regret from several of those present, Grandma Elsie among them.

"But Sister Lu can go, can't she?" asked Elsie Raymond.

"Go and leave my husband!" exclaimed Lucilla in mock indignation. "Who could suspect me of being so unfeeling a wife?"

"Oh, no, Lu dear, I didn't mean that," Elsie hastened to say. "I know you and Brother Chester are very fond of each other, but so are you and papa; and all the rest of us love you dearly; and we won't any of us like to do without you, even for a few weeks. Oh Brother Chester, can't you get somebody else to manage your business while you go along with us?"

"No, little sister; and seeing my wife does not want to leave me, I am not willing to do without her, either."

"And you are quite right about it, Chester," said the captain, sighing slightly and giving his eldest daughter a look of warm, fatherly affection; "much as I shall certainly miss her even for the few weeks of our separation, I must concede that she is right in putting your claim to her companionship first."

"And I know it's right when you say so, papa; so I'll try to be content," said Elsie cheerfully. "But you and Baby Mary will go with us, won't you, Eva?"

"And leave Lu alone all day while Chester is away at his office? Oh, I couldn't think of doing that! And, besides, I think home is the best place for baby and me for the present," returned Evelyn, gazing lovingly down at the cooing babe upon her knee.

"Oh, thank you, Eva," cried Lucilla, clapping her hands in delight; "the thought of having you and baby left half reconciles me to seeing the others go, leaving me behind; only – oh, father,"

with a pathetic look at him and a quiver of pain in her voice, "what shall I – what can I do without you?"

At that he stepped to her side and laid his hand tenderly on her head.

"We will comfort ourselves with the thought that the parting will be for but a brief season, daughter dear," he said in moved tones; "and with the prospect of the joyful reunion in store for us all in the spring."

"And you will help me with frequent letters, papa dear, won't you?" she asked, trying to speak lightly and cheerfully.

"I think there will be a daily bulletin, perhaps more than one – at least with Eva's share counted in," the captain replied with an affectionate look at his daughter-in-law and her babe.

"Oh, I hope so, father; and of course Lu will share with me the pleasure of mine," responded Evelyn with a bright, glad look up into his eyes.

"And though Viamede is ever so delightful, I think we will all soon be in haste to get home to see our dear little baby," Elsie exclaimed, hurrying to Eva's side to pet and fondle the little one.

"Yes; we will all sadly miss both her and her mother," said Violet.

"Indeed we will," added her mother, "and I sincerely wish we could take her and all the Sunnyside folk with us. We will hope to do so the next time we go to Viamede."

This was an afternoon chat in the library, where they had gathered for the time, some few of the cousins with them, and

little, feeble Ned asleep on a couch.

"Go to Viamede? When will we go?" he asked feebly, rousing just in time to catch his grandmother's concluding words.

"We hope to do so in the afternoon of the wedding day, carrying my pet patient along," replied Harold, taking the small, white hand in his and patting it affectionately.

"Papa and mamma, too?" queried Ned, rather anxiously.

"We are going in your papa's yacht, and they are to follow us in a few days by rail, join us on the Florida coast; and from there we expect to go on together to Viamede."

"Oh, that's nice – but – oh, what can I do without papa and mamma? Will you and Gracie take care of me?"

"Some of the time, I think, but your grandma still more; and your sister Elsie, and some of the cousins who will be with us, will help entertain you."

"And with all those you can do without papa and mamma for a few days, can't you, sonny boy?" queried Violet, leaning over him and patting his cheek caressingly.

"Yes, mamma; I love my dear grandma and uncle and Sister Elsie – the cousins, too – but I'll miss you and papa."

"Then you must try to be patient and happy thinking it will be only a few days before we may hope to be together again," returned his mother, repeating her caresses.

"And show yourself a manly little man of whom we can all be proud as well as fond," added his father, standing by his side, smoothing his hair and looking down smilingly into his face.

"I'll try, papa," responded the little fellow, "and I do believe we will have a nice time if – if I can keep on getting well."

"We will hope for that, and you will have your good doctor with you. And you must keep up your spirits with the thought that we expect to be all together again in a few days."

Grandma Elsie had been taking part in some of the business visits to the neighboring city, but now she decided to leave all that to the younger ladies and devote herself to the entertainment of Ned, Elsie and any other of the young people of the family connection who might care to share with them in listening to the interesting facts and stories which she would relate for Ned's enjoyment and instruction. She presently announced this determination, which was gladly received by all the children present, and asked if any of them could suggest a subject for to-morrow's discourse. Elsie responded with an eager look of delight and entreaty.

"Well, dear child, what is it?" asked her grandma.

"Something about Washington, grandma, beginning with what he did when he was a very young man. I'd like to hear all you can tell us about Braddock's defeat."

"Then that shall be our subject to-morrow, if all my audience should be pleased to have it so," was the kindly reply; to which several young voices responded with expressions of pleasure in the prospect.

CHAPTER II

The next day Grandma Elsie, true to her promise, remained with the children at Woodburn, while the younger ladies went on their shopping expedition to the city. Ned had been carried down to the library, and lay there on a sofa, his pale face bright with expectation; for he dearly loved grandma's stories, especially now when it seemed too great an exertion to hold a book and read for himself; his sister Elsie was there, too, and so were several of the young cousins from Ion and Fairview, who had come riding in on their bicycles, full of joyful expectation, for grandma's stories were to them a great delight.

They gathered about her, and she began.

"I am going to tell you of our Washington and some of his deeds and experiences. He has been called the Father of his Country. Some one once gave the toast, 'Washington: Providence left him childless that his country might call him father.'"

"Had he never any children at all, grandma?" asked Ned.

"None of his very own; only some step-children. He married a widow who had some by a former husband.

"Washington was very young when he left school and began life as a surveyor. At sixteen he was public surveyor of Culpeper County, and he continued there at that work for three years. Then, at nineteen, he was made adjutant-general, with the rank of major, in one of the four military districts into which Virginia

was divided.

"In 1753 Great Britain instructed her governors of the American colonies to serve notice on the French that their forts built on western lands claimed by the English were an encroachment on her colonies; and if the French resisted, they were instructed to use force to drive them away.

"Washington was then twenty-one – a tall, grave, handsome young man, and one with the talents and information required; he had courage, experience in the woods, knowledge about forts and tact with savages. The governor offered the dangerous and difficult mission to him, and he accepted it.

"This was in the summer. In October the governor resolved to enlarge his army to ten companies of one hundred men each, and no officer in that Virginia regiment was to rank higher than captain. Indignant at that, Washington resigned and left the army.

"The next February Braddock came from England with two regiments of troops, supplies and artillery. He landed in Virginia, and Washington sent him a congratulatory letter. Shortly afterward Braddock invited him to become his aide-de-camp, and he willingly accepted the invitation. He joined Braddock at Frederickstown, feeling much displeased that the army should pass through Maryland instead of Virginia.

"Braddock – proud Englishman – despised all colonials except Franklin and Washington, but from the beginning he was pleased with them."

"Colonial, grandma?" said Ned, inquiringly.

"Yes, dear; you must remember that at that time there were no United States of America; instead, just thirteen colonies subject to Great Britain, and all on or near the Atlantic coast. Our country has grown very much since then."

"And in more ways than one, hasn't it, grandma?" remarked Elsie Raymond with a look of joy and pride.

"Yes, dear; it is many times as large, as wealthy and full of comforts and conveniences. Indeed, I think we may safely say that we are the richest and most powerful nation in the world. God has been wonderfully good to us, and to Him be all the glory and the praise.

"In the days I am telling you of there were no railroads, and the rough mountain roads would be very difficult to cross with the heavy artillery and baggage. Therefore, Washington urged a forward movement with a small but chosen band and only such artillery and light stores as were absolutely necessary.

"Washington went with the rear division, riding in a covered wagon, for he had been quite sick with fever and pains in his head, and was not yet able to sit a horse. He overtook the advance division at the mouth of the Youghiogeny River, fifteen miles from Fort Duquesne, and the next morning, though still very weak in body, attended Braddock on horseback. The ground was very steep on the north side of the Monongahela, which made it necessary to ford the river twice and march a part of the way on the south side. About noon they were within ten miles of Fort Duquesne. It was here they crossed to the north

side, and their road lay through a level plain, at the north end of which a gradual ascent began, leading to hills of some height, and then through an uneven country covered with trees. Three hundred men, under Colonel Gage, marched first, then came another party of two hundred, then Braddock with the main body, artillery and baggage.

"All had crossed the river, and the advance body was going cheerfully up the hill, on each side of which was a ravine eight or ten feet deep, covered with trees and long grass. General Braddock had not employed any scouts. He despised Indians, colonists and their irregular kind of warfare. A hundred friendly Indians had joined him on the march, but he treated them so coldly, in spite of all Washington could say in their favor, that they had all gone away. They came again on the very night before this dress parade between the ravines, and again offered their assistance; but in spite of all Washington could say in favor of employing them, the general refused to do so."

"And were the French and their Indians hiding in those ravines, grandma?" asked Ned.

"Yes," she replied; "that was just what they were doing, and after the first British division had got well into the field between the ravines, without seeing or hearing an enemy, they suddenly received a volley of musket-balls in their faces. As one of the soldiers afterward said, they could only tell where the enemy were by the smoke of their muskets. But the British at once returned a fire that killed the French commander, and was so

heavy that the Indians thought it came from artillery, and were about to retreat when Dumas, who was in command now that his superior officer was killed, rallied them and sent them, under French officers, to attack the right flank while he held the front.

"The British now received another rain of bullets, and the wood rang with the savage yells of the Indians, but they could see only smoke, except when now and then an Indian ventured from behind a tree to take a scalp. The Virginians, used to the Indian's way of fighting, dropped on the ground or rushed behind trees, and the British regulars tried to imitate them. Braddock, just then reaching the scene, was furious at that. Riding about the field, he forced his men, both British and Virginians, back into the ranks, just where the enemy could get full sight of them and shoot them down the more readily."

"Why, grandma, what did he do that for?" asked Ned.

"It seems he wanted them to keep rank just because he considered that the regular thing to do."

"Stupid old fellow!" exclaimed one of the other young listeners.

"Yes; he does not seem to have been very bright in that particular line," assented Mrs. Travilla, "but he was very brave; four horses were shot under him, and he mounted a fifth. All his aides were shot down but one – our Washington; though hardly well enough to sit in his saddle, he rode about the field delivering Braddock's orders to the troops, so making himself a conspicuous target for the enemy, who fired at him again and

again, but could not kill him – did not even succeed in wounding him, though two horses were shot under him, and he sprang upon a third and went fearlessly on with his work."

"But he was not wounded. I remember reading that," said Elsie. "Surely, grandma, God took care of him, that he might after a while become the Father of his Country."

"Yes, God protected him, and that made it impossible for the foe to destroy him."

"But they killed Braddock, didn't they?" asked Ned.

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Travilla, "that Braddock was fatally wounded at that time, but I have seen an account of his fatal wounding, which may or not be true. It is thought that among the Americans who were in the fight were two of the name of Fausett – brothers – Thomas and Joseph. Thomas is said to have been a man of gigantic frame and of uncivilized, half savage propensities. It is said that he spent most of his life in the mountains, living as a hermit on the game that he killed. In the battle we are talking of he saw his brother behind a tree, saw Braddock ride up to him in a passion and strike him down with his sword. Tom Fausett drew up his rifle instantly and shot Braddock through the lungs, partly in revenge for the outrage upon his brother and partly, as he always declared, to get the general out of the way that he might sacrifice no more of the lives of the British and Americans."

"Why, grandma, did he want his own men killed?" asked Ned.

"No; but he was foolish, obstinate and determined to have

his own way. Those who appointed him commander of that force made a great mistake. He was a good tactician, but proud, prejudiced and conceited. Talking with Benjamin Franklin, who was then postmaster-general, he said, 'After taking Fort Duquesne, I am to proceed to Niagara, and having taken that, to Frontenac, if the season will allow time, and I suppose it will, for Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days; and then I can see nothing that can obstruct my march to Niagara.' Franklin thought the plan excellent if he could take his fine troops safely to Fort Duquesne, but told him there might be danger from Indian ambuscades; the savages, shooting unexpectedly from their places of concealment in the woods, might destroy his army in detail. Braddock thought that an absurd idea, and replied that the Indians might be formidable enemies to raw American troops, but it was impossible they should make an impression upon the King's regular and disciplined troops. And, as I have already told you, that was the idea he acted upon in the fight, which is always spoken of as 'Braddock's defeat.' He insisted that his men should be formed in regular platoons; they fired by platoons – at the rocks, into the bushes and ravines, and so killed not enemies only, but many Americans – as many as fifty by one volley."

"Oh, how dreadful!" cried Elsie; "killing their own comrades instead of the enemies they were fighting."

"Grandma, did Tom Fausett's shot kill Braddock at once?" asked Ned.

"No; it was on the 9th of July he was shot, and he died on the evening of the 13th. It was on that day the remnant of his army went into camp at the Great Meadows. In the evening, after the fight, Braddock exclaimed, 'Who would have thought it?'

"Then he remained silent until a few minutes before he died, when he said, 'We should better know how to deal with them another time.' They buried him before daybreak in the road and levelled his grave with the ground, lest the Indians should find and mutilate his body. The chaplain had been wounded, and Washington read the burial service."

"At the Great Meadows, grandma?" asked Elsie.

"About a mile from Fort Necessity," replied Mrs. Travilla. "I have read that on the 17th the sick and wounded reached Fort Cumberland, and the next day Washington wrote to a friend that since his arrival there he had heard a circumstantial account of his own death and dying speech, and now he was taking the earliest opportunity of contradicting the first, and of giving the assurance that he had not yet composed the latter."

"Well, I hope he got the praise he deserved from somebody," said Elsie.

"Yes, he did," replied her grandma. "An eloquent and accomplished preacher, Rev. Samuel Davies, who a few years later became president of Princeton College, in a sermon to one of the companies organized after Braddock's defeat, after praising the zeal and courage of the Virginia troops, added: 'As a remarkable instance of this, I may point out to the public

that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."

"And doesn't it seem that that was what God preserved him for, grandma?" exclaimed Elsie, her eyes shining with pleasure.

"It does, indeed; God was very good to us in giving us such a leader for such a time as that of our hard struggle for the freedom which has made us the great and powerful nation that we now are."

"And we are not the only people that think very highly of Washington," remarked one of the cousins in a tone which was half assertive, half inquiring.

"No, indeed," replied Mrs. Travilla; "one English historian has said that Washington's place in the history of mankind is without a fellow, and Lord Brougham said more than once, 'It will be the duty of the historian in all ages to let no occasion pass of commemorating this illustrious man; and until time shall be no more will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom and virtue be derived from the veneration paid to the immortal name of Washington.'"

"That's high praise, grandma, isn't it?" said Eric Leland; "and I think our Washington deserved every word of it."

"As I do," she replied; "he was just, generous, disinterested – spending so many of the best years of his life in fighting for the freedom of his country, and that without a cent of pay – wise, fearless, heroic, self-sacrificing; he feared God, believed in

Christ, was a man of prayer, fully acknowledging divine aid and direction in all that he attempted and all he accomplished. He was a wonderful man, a God-given leader to us in a time when such an one was sorely needed."

"When was the war quite over, grandma?" asked Ned.

"The treaty of peace was signed in Paris on the 20th of January, 1783," replied Mrs. Travilla. "News did not then fly nearly so fast as it does now, and it was not till the 17th of the following April that Washington received the proclamation of peace by our Congress. On the 19th of April, the anniversary of the shedding of the first blood of the war, at Lexington, eight years before, the cessation was proclaimed at the head of every regiment of the army. That was by Washington's general orders, in which he added, 'The chaplains of the several brigades will render thanks to Almighty God for all His mercies, particularly for His overruling the wrath of man to His own glory, and causing the rage of war to cease among the nations.'"

CHAPTER III

Noticing now that weak little Ned began to look weary and sleepy, Mrs. Travilla bade the other children go out and amuse themselves a while wherever they liked about the house and grounds; so they quietly left the room.

"Please don't go away, grandma. Please stay beside me while I take my nap," murmured the little fellow, opening his eyes to look up at her, then closing them again.

"No, darling, I won't," she said soothingly. "I have a book and am going to sit here beside you and read while you sleep."

Elsie and the others refreshed themselves with some lively sport upon the lawn; then the young guests, thinking it time to return to their homes, mounted their bicycles and departed, leaving Elsie sitting in the veranda, whiling away the time with a bit of fancy work while waiting and watching for the return of father and mother and the other loved ones from their city shopping.

Meantime, she was thinking how very much she would like to give her dear sister Grace a handsome wedding present, and regretting that she had not expected the wedding to come so soon and saved her pocket money for that purpose. She had not wasted it, but had been more liberal in gifts to some others and spent more in self-indulgences than now seemed to have been at all necessary.

But these regretful meditations were at length interrupted by the carriage turning in at the great gates and coming swiftly up the driveway.

"Oh, I am so glad you have come back at last, papa, mamma, and all the rest of you dear folks," she exclaimed, hastening to meet them as they alighted and came up the veranda steps. "I suppose you have bought ever so many beautiful things."

"Yes, so we have," replied her mother.

"Many more than were at all necessary," laughed Grace. "If this sort of kindness killed, I am afraid I should not live very long."

"But it does not, and you look very rosy and well for you," laughed Elsie as Grace reached her side, put an arm about her and gave her a kiss.

"Yes, she has stood the ordeal very well so far," remarked Dr. Harold, giving his affianced a very lover-like glance and smile.

"I am ever so glad of that," said Elsie. "And oh, I do want to see all those pretty things! Mayn't they be carried into the library, mamma? Grandma and Ned will want to see them, and they are in there."

"Yes," replied Violet, leading the way, "and we will all go in there and examine them together. I hear Ned talking, so there is no danger of waking him out of a nap."

All followed her lead, a servant, bearing the heavier packages, bringing up the rear. All enjoyed examining the purchases – rich silks, laces, ribbons and jewelry – and some minutes were spent

in lively chat over them and about other pretty things seen in the city stores.

Then Grace was summoned to the sewing room to inspect the work going on there. Violet went with her, and Harold hastened away to see a patient, the captain and Elsie following him as far as the veranda, he seating himself and drawing her to his knee to pet and fondle her, as was his wont when they happened to be alone together.

"Well, darling little daughter," he said, "I hope you have had a pleasant time at home with grandma and Ned and cousins while papa and mamma were away?"

"Yes, sir; grandma was telling us about Washington and Braddock's defeat, and it was very interesting. So the time passed very pleasantly. Papa, what beautiful things you and mamma and the rest brought home from the city! I wish" – she paused, blushing and hanging her head.

"Well, dear child, speak out and tell papa what you want," he said encouragingly.

"I was just wishing I could buy a handsome wedding gift for dear Sister Grace; but I did not think she was going to be married so soon, and – and my pocket money is almost all gone."

"Well, never mind," he said with a smile and patting her cheek. "I have been considering an increase of pocket money for you and Ned just at this time. I shall give each of you \$50 to-morrow, to do with exactly as you please – buy for yourselves or for others or save up for some future time."

"Oh, papa, thank you, thank you!" she cried joyously. "And now can you tell me what to buy for Sister Grace?"

"We will consult mamma about that," he said, "and perhaps she will go with us into the city to-morrow to make the purchase."

"Ah, Elsie wanting to do some shopping, too?" asked Violet's pleasant voice as she stepped out from the hall door to the veranda and came quickly toward them. "No" – to her husband – "do not get up; I will take a seat by your side," suiting the action to the word.

"Yes, mamma," answered the little girl; "surely I ought to give a wedding present to Sister Grace; and papa is going to give me money – \$50 – to buy it with."

"Oh, that is nice," said Violet. "Levis, my dear, you are certainly the best of fathers, as well as of husbands."

"According to my very partial wife," he returned with a pleased little laugh.

"And this one of your daughters, too, papa," said Elsie.

"As well as all the kith and kin who know him well," added Violet. "What do you think of buying with that large sum of money, Elsie?"

"I want your advice about that, mamma."

"I believe Grace feels very rich now – in silks, satins, laces, jewelry" – Violet responded in a musing tone. "Ah, well of that last few ladies can have too much. A ring, a bracelet, would hardly come amiss."

"No, mamma, I do not believe they would; and they would be

becoming to sister's beautiful hands and arms. I wonder if Ned would not like to buy one or the other for her with his \$50."

"Let us go to the library now and consult him about it," said the captain, setting Elsie down and rising to his feet as he spoke.

"The best plan, I think," said Violet. "He is sure to want to spend your gift to him in something for Grace."

They found Ned still awake and pleased at their coming.

"You may be newsteller and questioner, Elsie," said their father, and she told in hurried, joyous fashion what he had promised, and what she thought of buying for Grace with her \$50, concluding with the query, "What will you do with your fifty, Ned?"

"I do not know. I cannot go to the stores to find anything," he sighed disconsolately.

"But you can trust mamma and the rest of us to select something for you," suggested his father in tender tones.

"Oh, I guess that will do," responded Ned more cheerfully; "and be sure that I want it to be something handsome, if it costs every cent of the \$50."

So that matter was settled, and the next morning the captain, Violet and Elsie drove into the city, visited the best jewelry store, and selected a beautiful ring and bracelet. Elsie was so charmed with them that she seemed hardly able to think of anything else on the homeward drive.

"I hope Ned will be pleased with the bracelet," she said; "but if he would rather have the ring for his gift to Gracie, he may,

and I will give the bracelet."

"That is right, daughter," said the captain. "I think they are both beautiful, and they cost very nearly the same."

They found Ned awake and full of eager expectation. He heard the carriage wheels on the driveway, and cried out, "There they are, grandma, and oh, how I wish I could run out to the veranda to meet them!"

"Never mind about that, sonny boy; they will be in here directly," was the kind response, and the next minute Elsie came running in, holding up two little parcels.

"We have bought them, Ned," she cried. "They are just lovely, and you may open the packages and take your choice which to have for your gift to Sister Grace," and she put them in his hands as she spoke.

He looked delighted, hastily tore open the larger package, and cried out, "Oh, I will take this for mine. It is the prettiest bracelet I ever saw!"

"But the ring is every bit as beautiful," said Elsie, "and I do not care in the least which you give and which will be my present to Gracie."

"And since you do not care in the least, it won't matter who gives which," laughed their mother.

"And that makes it easy for you both," said the captain, drawing up a chair to the side of the couch for his wife, then seating himself by her side.

"What do you think of them, mother?" turning to Grandma

Elsie.

"That they are both beautiful," she replied. "Grace is sure to be greatly pleased with them. Ah, here she comes!" as the young girl came tripping in, followed by Harold.

"Oh, Gracie, here are our wedding gifts to you – Elsie's and mine. Come look at them," cried Ned, raising himself to a sitting posture in his excitement.

"Oh, they are lovely, lovely!" she responded, taking them from his hands, turning them about in hers and gazing upon them delightedly. "But," she added in a regretful tone, "I am afraid you have both spent far too much on me."

"Not at all, daughter; they were bought with both your mamma's and my full approval," said the captain. "What do you think of them, Harold?" as he, too, seemed to be giving the trinkets a critical examination.

"I entirely agree in the opinion Grace has just expressed," he replied. "They are quite worthy of the admiration of us all. Must have cost a pretty penny, I should say."

"But not too much for gifts to our dear sister Grace," said Elsie.

"No, no; I quite agree with you in that opinion," replied Harold, with a smile and a look of ardent love and admiration at the sweet face of his betrothed.

"Put them on, Gracie, and let us see how they will look on your pretty hand and arm," pleaded Ned, and she complied.

"Ah, they fit nicely," she said with a pleased little laugh; then

took them off and replaced them in their boxes, adding, "but are too handsome and costly to wear just now. They should be shown first along with the other Christmas and wedding gifts."

"Such a long time to wait," sighed Ned disconsolately.

"Not so very, Neddie boy," returned Grandma Elsie in a cheery tone; "this is Friday, and Christmas comes next week on Wednesday."

"Oh, I am glad it is so near! But, oh, dear," he added with a sigh, "it won't be so delightful as it has been other years, because I cannot go out of doors and run and play as I have on other Christmas days."

"No; but do not fret, my little son; you shall have a good time in the house," said his father.

"Oh, yes, papa, and will we have a Christmas tree? I am not too old for that, am I?"

"No, not at all; and I doubt if you ever will be," returned his father, smoothing his hair and smiling down into his face.

"Oh, Sister Grace, will your dresses be done by that time?" asked Elsie.

"Hardly, I think," smiled Grace; "but it will be another week before we sail away in our *Dolphin*; and if they are not all finished then they can be sent after us to Viamede."

"I suppose, grandma, you will be wanting us all at Ion for Christmas," said Ned. "Uncle Harold, do you think I will be well enough to go?"

"No, my boy; but we can have a fine Christmas here in your

own home," replied his uncle in kindly tones.

"Oh, yes, of course we can. There is no place better than home, anyhow; at least, not if grandma and you, uncle, are here with us."

"Just what I think," said Elsie; "and you will be here, won't you, grandma and uncle?"

"Part of the time," replied Mrs. Travilla; "and I think it likely that most of your other relatives will make a call on you some time during the day."

"And you will stay with us between this time and that, and tell us your nice true stories, won't you, grandma?" entreated Ned.

"I have planned to be here a part of almost every day until we go on board the *Dolphin*, Neddie dear," she said, smiling kindly on him as she spoke.

"And you will, too, won't you, uncle?" queried the little fellow, with an entreating look up into Harold's face.

"Yes; I intend to give my little patient all the care he needs from his uncle doctor," was the pleasant-toned reply.

"Thank you, sir; that is good; I am glad I have such a kind uncle that knows how to treat sick folks," returned Ned, closing his eyes, composing himself for a nap, and adding, "I am tired and sleepy now. Please everybody excuse me if I do not keep awake to enjoy your company."

An hour later the little boy awoke, looking and feeling stronger and better than he had at any time since the beginning of his illness; and he continued to gain as the days passed on, listening

with pleasure while his grandma and others tried to entertain him with stories, and now and then joining in some quiet little game that called for no exertion of strength.

At last it was Christmas eve, and he and Elsie went early to bed and to sleep after hanging up their stockings for Santa Claus to fill. They knew there was to be a Christmas tree, but the sight of it was to be deferred till the next morning, because after his night's rest Ned would be better able to enjoy it.

Over at Sunnyside Evelyn sat beside the crib of her sleeping babe, busy with her needle, fashioning a dainty robe for the darling, when Lucilla stole softly in, came to her side, and speaking in an undertone, not to disturb the little sleeper, said:

"Chester and I are going over to Woodburn to help in the trimming of the Christmas tree, and should be happy to have your company. Will you go along?"

"Thank you, Lu; I should like to but for leaving baby, and I won't disturb her, taking her up to carry her along, she is sleeping so sweetly."

"You are quite right; it would be a shame to rouse her out of that sweet sleep. The darling; how lovely she is!" responded Lucilla, leaning over the crib and feasting her eyes with a long, tender gaze into the innocent little face. "But could not you trust her to the care of her nurse for a half hour or so?"

"Thank you, but I think I am more needed here than there just now. There will be a good many to join in the fun of trimming the tree – good fun, too, it will be, I know."

"Yes; and you have already sent over your and Max's lovely gifts. Well, good-bye, sister dear. You will be missed, but no one will blame you for staying beside your darling."

Eva was missed and her absence regretted, but the work of trimming the tree went merrily on, the captain, Violet, Harold, Grace, Chester and Lucilla all taking part in the work, while visiting relatives came pouring in, bringing both Christmas and wedding gifts. There was a merry time, and Grace seemed almost overwhelmed by the multitude of rare and beautiful presents, some of them very costly, bestowed upon her. There were laces, jewelry, gold and silver tableware, several handsome pictures for her walls, pretty toilet sets, books; and from Harold's mother and Grace's father certificates of valuable stock, which would add largely to the income of the young couple.

The tree was a particularly large and handsome one when brought in, and made a grand appearance, indeed, at the conclusion of the work of its trimmers.

There were many expressions of gleeful admiration, then all were invited to the dining-room and feasted with cakes and ices.

"Dearest, I fear this has been almost too much for you," Harold said in a low aside to his betrothed when the last of the guests had bidden adieu and departed. "I hope excitement is not going to keep you awake."

"I will try not to allow it to do so," she returned in the same low key, and smiling up into his eyes. "I hope to show myself to-morrow a patient to be proud of."

"As you are to-night, love, and always," returned Harold gallantly, taking her hand and carrying it to his lips.

"In the estimation of my very partial lover doctor," laughed Grace.

"Ah, yes; and in that of many others. The lover is craving a tête-à-tête with his best beloved, but the doctor knows she should at once retire to her couch of rest. Good-night, darling. Only a week now till I can claim you for my very own."

"Good-night, my best and dearest of physicians; I will follow your prescription, as has been my wont in the past," returned Grace, gently withdrawing her hand from his grasp, then gliding into the hall and up the stairway, while Harold passed out to the veranda, where the captain and Violet, arm in arm, were pacing to and fro, chatting cosily of what they had been doing and were still to do to make the morrow a specially happy day to their children and servants. They paused in their walk at sight of Harold.

"You are not going to leave us to-night?" they asked.

"Yes; I have a patient to visit, and must hasten, for it is growing late."

"Well, come in as early as you can to-morrow," said Violet, and the captain seconded the invitation warmly.

"You may be sure I will do that," laughed Harold, "for both the enjoyment of your society and the good of my patients here. Au revoir."

"Dear fellow!" exclaimed Violet, looking after him as he

moved with his firm, elastic tread down the driveway and through the great gates into the road beyond; "he is worth his weight in gold, both as brother and physician, I think."

"And I am pretty much of the same opinion," smiled the captain. "Now shall we go upstairs and oversee the doings of Santa Claus with those stockings?"

"Yes; for I presume the youthful owners of the stockings are already safe from disturbance in the Land of Nod. Will Grace hang her stocking up, do you think?"

"Hardly, I suppose; but we might steal a march upon the darling after she, too, has reached that Land of Nod."

They had passed up the stairway while they talked, and were now near the door of Grace's sitting-room, and hearing their voices, though their tones were rather subdued for fear of waking the children, she opened it and came smilingly out.

"Ah, papa and mamma, I presume you are about to personate old Santa Claus, and I should like to help a little," she laughed, holding up to view a string of coral beads and a pretty purse of her own knitting.

"Ah," said her father, "those will give pleasure, I know. The children will be well satisfied with those articles of Santa Claus's selection. Ah, this reminds me of the first Christmas in this house, and the delight of my two daughters – Lu and Grace – over the treasures they found in their stockings. Suppose you hang up yours to-night in memory of that time."

"Oh, father dear, I, having already had so many, many gifts

far beyond my deserts, should feel ashamed to be seeking more," Grace replied with a look of ardent, filial love up into his face.

"But do you think you could be wrong or foolish in following your father's advice?" was Violet's smiling query.

"Not if it be given seriously and in earnest, mamma," returned Grace, giving her father a look of loving inquiry.

"You may as well take it in earnest, daughter mine," he answered, drawing her to his side, putting an arm about her and giving her a fond caress; "should you find nothing in it of more worth than a paper of sugar plums, you will have lost nothing by the experiment. But go on now with your preparations for bed, and do not let anxiety concerning the filling of the stocking keep you awake."

"Thank you, my dearest and best of fathers. I shall do my best to obey your kind order. Good-night to you and mamma," she said, retreating into her room and closing her door. She did not fasten it, though, and laughingly hung up her stocking before getting into bed.

She was quite weary from the unusual exertion of the day and evening, and spite of excitement, had presently fallen into profound slumber; nor did she wake till broad daylight. Then the first thing her eye fell upon was the evidently well-filled stocking. With a light laugh she sprang out of bed, seized the stocking, crept back into bed and began an excited examination.

There were fruits and candies, then a paper parcel labelled "A little Christmas gift from papa." Hastily opening it, she found

a handsome new portemonnaie well filled with bank notes and change.

"My dear father!" she murmured to herself low and feelingly; "was there ever such another! And mamma, too," as she picked up a pretty knitted purse, between the meshes of which shone some bright pieces of gold and silver. "But it is Christmas morning; no doubt everybody else in the house is up, and so must I be," she added half aloud, and suiting the action to the word.

She was looking very sweet and fair in a pretty morning gown when, a few minutes later, her father came in, took her in his arms and wished her "A merry, happy Christmas, to be followed by the happiest of New Years."

"Thank you, dear, dearest papa," she said, returning his caresses. "I feel sure it will be a happy year, because I am not to be parted from you – except for a few days till you join us on the coast of Florida."

"Yes, daughter dear, Providence permitting, we shall follow you there very shortly after you reach its shores. Now we will go down to breakfast, which is ready and waiting for us, and after that and family worship children and servants are to see the Christmas tree and receive their gifts."

That programme was carried out, the last act producing much mirth and jollity, amid which Harold joined them. He came full of good cheer, exchanged Christmas greetings, and gave an amusing account of Christmas doings and the effect of the Christmas tree at Ion.

He and Grace had exchanged some trifling gifts by means of the Christmas tree, but now he drew her aside and added to the ornaments she wore a beautiful diamond pin.

"Oh, thank you!" she said, with a pleased little laugh. "I have a surprise for you, but this lovely brooch quite casts it into the shade."

As she spoke she drew from her pocket a tiny box and put it into his hand. He opened it and found a diamond stud.

"Ah, what a beauty!" he exclaimed in tones of pleased surprise. "Thank you, my darling; thank you a thousand times. It is valuable in itself and still more valuable as the gift of my best beloved of earthly dear ones."

"I am very glad you like my little gift," she returned, smiling up into his eyes, "though it compares but poorly with this lovely and costly one you have given me. Oh, but it is a beauty! I must show it to father, mamma and the rest."

"Show us what?" asked Violet, overhearing the last few words, and turning toward the speaker.

"This, that your good, generous brother has just added to my already rich store of Christmas gifts," replied Grace, joyously displaying her new treasure.

"Oh, what a beauty!" cried Violet. "I am glad, Harold, that you show such good taste and generosity to the dear girl you are stealing from us."

"I object to that last clause of your speech," returned her brother with mock gravity. "It will be no theft, since her father

has made it a gift, in generous gratitude for my small services to your small son."

"Oh, true enough," laughed Violet, "and our saved son is worth more than any quantity of such jewelry," she added in moved tones, putting an arm around Ned, who had stolen to her side in an effort to see what had caused her pleased exclamation.

"Oh, what a beautiful pin, Gracie!" he exclaimed. "Did you buy it for her, uncle?"

"Yes, on purpose for her," replied Harold, smiling down at the little fellow. "You do not think it too fine for her, do you?"

"No, no; oh, no! nothing could be too fine for our dear, sweet, beautiful Gracie."

"Just what papa thinks," the captain said, joining the little group. "Ah," glancing through the window, "here come our Sunnyside folks to spend the day with us."

Visits from other relatives followed somewhat later, and some who had not been heard from the day before brought additions to the store of wedding and Christmas gifts. Ned was not forgotten or neglected, and in spite of having to remain at home and within doors, passed a very happy day.

CHAPTER IV

That Christmas week was a busy and cheery one to our Woodburn folk and their near and dear ones on the neighboring estates. The Fairview family were expecting to spend the rest of the winter at Viamede; Cousin Ronald and his Annis had accepted a cordial invitation to do likewise, and Grandma Elsie's brother and his family from the Oaks would also pay her a visit there, the duration of which was not settled, as that would depend upon how well Horace's affairs at home should be carried on without his presence and supervision. His little daughter Elsie was to make one of the party on the yacht, but the others would go by rail, as that would not necessitate so early a start from home. The *Dolphin* was being put in readiness for her trip, and the overseeing of that business occupied quite a portion of Captain Raymond's time during that week.

Grace made a lovely bride, surrounded by all her own and Harold's kith and kin. The ceremony took place at noon; a grand dinner followed; then wedding attire was exchanged for a pretty and becoming travelling suit, carriages conveyed bride, groom, his mother and their young charges to the *Dolphin*, and presently the southward journey was fairly begun.

It had been rather hard for Ned to part from "papa and mamma" for even a few days, though with dear grandma and uncle left to him, sister and cousins also, and wearied with that

grief and the exciting scenes of the day, he was soon ready to take to his berth and fall asleep.

The others found it too cool for comfort on the deck, but very pleasant in the well-warmed and lighted saloon. They sat and chatted there for some little time; then retired to their staterooms for the night.

The morning found Ned refreshed and strengthened, the rest in fine health and spirits. They made a cheerful, merry little company about the breakfast table, afterward took some exercise on the deck, then gathered about Grandma Elsie in the saloon and pleaded for one of her "lovely stories."

"Well, dears, what shall I tell of?" she asked with her own sweet smile. "Something more of our Washington or of others of our Presidents?"

"Oh, tell us about the time of our Civil War and the pictures Nast drew then," cried Elsie excitedly. "I saw something about him and his drawings the other day, and I should like to know more of him and his wonderful work. Was he an American, grandma?"

"No, my dear; he was born in the military barracks of Landau, a little fortified town of Germany, and came to this country at the age of six. He and his sister were brought here by their mother. The husband and father was then on a French man-of-war; afterward he enlisted on an American vessel, and he did not join his family until Thomas, his son, was ten years old, and mother and children had been four years in this country. A

comrade of his told them he was coming, and the news made a great excitement in the family.

"The mother sent Thomas to buy a cake with which to welcome his father. As he was coming home with that he was passed by a closed cab. It suddenly stopped, a man sprang out, caught him up and put him in the cab, then got in himself. For an instant Thomas was frightened, thinking he was kidnapped. Then he found he was in his father's arms, and was full of joy; but he was troubled when he saw that between them they had crushed the cake. He thought his mother would be greatly disappointed by that. But she was so glad to see her husband that she did not seem to mind it – the damage to the cake; nor did the children, being so delighted to see their father and the many presents he had brought them from distant places, and to listen to all he had to tell about his travels.

"Thomas was a short, stout, moon-faced lad. He attended a German school for a short time after his father came home, but he was constantly drawing pictures. His teacher would say to him, 'Go finish your picture, Nast; you will never learn to read.' Often he would draw a file of soldiers or a pair of prize fighters; sometimes things he remembered from his life in Landau – as a little girl with her pet lamb or old Santa Claus with his pack.

"In 1860 he went to England, where he still made drawings. Every steamer brought letters from him and papers to the *New York News*. From England he went, that same year, to Italy to join Garibaldi."

"Who was Garibaldi, grandma, and what did Nast want to join him for?" asked Ned.

"To help him to get Italy free," replied Mrs. Travilla. "But I will not tell the story of Garibaldi now – some other time, perhaps. The war was not very long, and Nast stayed until it was over. In November of that same year he said 'Good-by' to his friends in Italy. Then he visited Rome, Florence and Genoa. Late in December he reached Landau, his native city. The old place had not changed, except that to him it looked much smaller than it had before. He went on through Germany, visiting art galleries and cathedrals. But he grew tired of it all and wanted to get home. He crossed the channel to England, and there heard talk of the brewing of war in this country, now his own land. He stayed a few days in London, then sailed for the United States, which he reached on February 1st, 1861. He had been gone a year, and now arrived in New York with only a dollar and a half in his pocket."

"Oh, how little after such long, hard work!" exclaimed Elsie Raymond.

"Yes," said Mrs. Travilla; "but he was brave and industrious and went on working as before. Mr. Lincoln had been elected to the Presidency the November before, and in March Nast went on to Washington to see his inauguration."

A portfolio lay on the table beside which Mrs. Travilla now sat, and she took it up and opened it, saying, "I have some articles in this which I have been saving for years past, among them some

things about Nast – some of his own writing; for I have taken an interest in him ever since the time of our Civil War. Listen to this, written of that time when Lincoln was about to be inaugurated. Nast had been ordered by his paper – the News of New York – to go on to Washington to see the inaugural ceremony. Stopping in Philadelphia, he was near Lincoln during the celebrated speech and flag-raising at Independence Hall, and afterward heard the address Lincoln made from the balcony of the Continental Hotel.

"At Washington Nast stopped at the Willard Hotel, which was Lincoln's headquarters. A feeling of shuddering horror, such as a bad dream sometimes gives us, came over him there. The men who had sworn that 'Abe Lincoln' should not take his seat were not gone. Now I will read you what he says about that time."

The children sat very still, listening attentively – Elsie Raymond with almost breathless interest – while her grandmother read.

"It seemed to me that the shadow of death was everywhere. I had endless visions of black funeral parades accompanied by mournful music. It was as if the whole city were mined, and I know now that it was figuratively true. A single yell of defiance would have inflamed a mob. A shot would have started a conflict. In my room at the Willard Hotel I was trying to work. I picked up my pencils and laid them down as many as a dozen times. I got up at last and walked the floor. Presently in the rooms next mine other men were walking; I could hear them in the silence. My head was beginning to throb, and I sat down and pressed

my hands to my temples. Then all at once, in the Ebbett House, across the way, a window was flung up and a man stepped out on the balcony. The footsteps about me ceased. Everybody had heard the man and was waiting breathlessly to see what he would do. Suddenly, in a rich, powerful voice he began to sing "The Star Spangled Banner." The result was extraordinary. Windows were thrown up. Crowds gathered on the streets. A multitude of voices joined the song. When it was over the street rang with cheers. The men in the rooms next mine joined me in the corridor. The hotel came to life. Guests wept and flung their arms about one another. Dissension and threats were silenced. It seemed to me, and I believe to all of us, that Washington had been saved by the inspiration of an unknown man with a voice to sing that grand old song of songs."

"Who was that man, grandma?" asked Ned.

"I can't tell you that, Neddie," she replied. "I think it has never been known who he was."

"Is there some more story about Nast and his pictures?" he asked.

"Yes; he made a great many more pictures. One, on the first page of the Christmas *Harper*, was called 'Santa Claus.' It showed him dressed in the Stars and Stripes, distributing presents in the military camp. In the same paper was another called 'Christmas Eve.' It had two parts: one, in a large wreath, was a picture of the soldier's family at home; and in another wreath was the soldier by the camp-fire, looking at a picture of his wife and children.

Letters came from all parts of the Union with thanks for that picture. A colonel wrote that it reached him on Christmas Eve; that he unfolded it by the light of his camp-fire and wept over it. 'It was only a picture,' he said, 'but I couldn't help it.'

"I don't wonder," sighed Elsie softly, "for how he must have wanted to be at home with his wife and children."

Harold and Grace, who had been taking their morning exercise upon the deck, returned to the saloon and joined the group of listeners just in time to hear their mother's story of Nast's Christmas pictures.

"Nast certainly did a great deal for the Union cause," said Harold. "Do you remember, mother, what Grant said of him when asked, 'Who is the greatest single figure in civil life developed by the Civil War?'"

"Yes. He answered without hesitation, 'Thomas Nast. He did as much as any one man to bring the war to an end.' And many of the Northern generals and statesmen held the same opinion."

"Yes, mother; and all lovers of the Union certainly owe him a debt of gratitude."

"Now, children, shall I tell you something about Lincoln?" she asked. There was an eager assent, and she went on. "He was a noble, unselfish, Christian man; came to the Presidency in a dark and stormy time; did all in his power to avert civil war without allowing the destruction of the Union, denying the right of any State or number of States to go out of the Union. But the rebellious States would not listen, declared themselves out

of the Union, began seizing government property, firing upon those who had it in charge, and Lincoln was compelled to call out troops for its defence.

"But I shall not go over the whole sad story now. After four years, when it was all over, every loyal heart was full of joy and Lincoln's praise was on every tongue. They felt that he had saved his country and theirs, and that at the expense of great suffering to himself. But only a few days later he was fatally shot by a bad fellow, an actor named John Wilkes Booth."

"One of the Confederates, grandma?" asked Ned.

"I think not," she replied. "It is said that his controlling motive for the dreadful deed was insane conceit. That for weeks beforehand he had declared his purpose to do something that would make his name ring round the world."

"As it has," remarked Harold; "but in such a way as I should think no sane man would desire for his."

"And did they hang him?" asked Ned.

"No," replied his uncle; "the awful crime was so sudden and unexpected that for several minutes the audience did not comprehend what had been done, and the assassin escaped for the time. He ran out, leaped upon a saddled horse kept waiting for him and galloped away into the country. He rode into Maryland, from there into Virginia, and took refuge in a barn. He was pursued, cavalry surrounded the barn, and called upon him and his companion to surrender. The other man did, but Booth refused and offered to fight the captain and all his men; then they

set the barn on fire, and one of them, against orders, shot Booth in the neck. That shot made him helpless. He was carried out, laid on the grass, and after four hours of intense agony he died."

"That was a sad, sad time," sighed Mrs. Travilla. "The whole North was in mourning for Lincoln, and even the South soon saw that it had lost its truest and best friend; and there was a movement of sympathy for our nation in its great loss throughout the world."

"Yes, mother," said Harold; "and time only increases the esteem of the world for that great and good man."

CHAPTER V

The next day, after some healthful exercise upon the deck, the children returned to the saloon, and gathering about Grandma Elsie, begged for another story.

"Something historical?" she asked with her pleasant smile.

"Yes, grandma, if you please," replied Elsie. "I liked your story of Marion so much, and should be glad to hear about some other Revolutionary soldier who helped to drive away the British."

"Well, if you would all like that, I will tell you of Sergeant Jasper and his brave doings."

The other children gave an eager assent, and Mrs. Travilla began.

"History tells us that William Jasper was born in South Carolina in 1750. That would make him about twenty-six years old when the Revolutionary War began. He was patriotic, and at once enlisted as a sergeant in the Second South Carolina Regiment.

"In June, 1776, a British fleet appeared off Charleston bar, and several hundred land troops took possession of Long Island, separated from Sullivan's – on which was our Fort Sullivan – only by a narrow creek. At half-past ten o'clock on the morning of the 28th of June the British ships anchored in front of our Fort Sullivan, which instantly poured a heavy fire upon them.

"But I shall not go into a detailed account of the battle, which, Lossing tells us, was one of the severest during the whole war, redounded to the military glory of the Americans, greatly increased the patriotic strength at the South, and was regarded by the British as very disastrous; for the loss of life on their ships was frightful.

"But I must tell you of a daring feat performed by Sergeant Jasper. At the beginning of the action, the flag-staff of our fort was cut away by a ball from a British ship, and the Crescent flag of South Carolina, that waved opposite the Union flag upon the western bastion, fell outside upon the beach. Jasper leaped the parapet, walked the length of the fort, picked up the flag, fastened it upon a sponge staff, and in the sight of the whole British fleet, whose iron hail was pouring upon the fortress, he fixed the flag firmly upon the bastion. Then he climbed up to the parapet and leaped, unhurt, within the fort, three cheers greeting him as he did so."

"Oh, how brave he was!" cried Ned. "I hope they gave him a reward for it."

"Yes," said his grandma, "the governor, on the day after the battle, visited the fort, and rewarded Jasper with the gift of his own small sword, a handsome one which hung by his side, and thanked him in the name of his country. He also offered him a lieutenant's commission; but the young hero declined it, saying, 'I am not fit to keep officers' company; I am but a sergeant.'

"He seems to have had no educational advantages, as he could

neither read nor write."

"Oh, what a pity!" exclaimed several young voices.

"Yes, it was," sighed Mrs. Travilla. "I hope you are thankful, my dears, for your superior advantages.

"I have read that Jasper was given a roving commission, and choosing six men from the regiment to go with him, he went here and there, and often returned with prisoners before his general knew of his absence.

"Jasper had a brother who had joined the British, but he loved him so dearly that he ventured into the British garrison to see him. The brother was greatly alarmed at sight of him, lest he should be seized and hung as an American spy, his name being well known to many of the British officers. But Jasper said, 'Don't trouble yourself; I am no longer an American soldier.'

"'Thank God for that, William!' exclaimed the brother, giving him a hearty shake of the hand; 'and now only say the word, my boy, and here is a commission for you, with regimentals and gold to boot, to fight for his Majesty, King George.'

"But Jasper shook his head, saying that though there seemed but little encouragement to fight for his country, he could not fight against her. He stayed two or three days with his brother, hearing and seeing all that he could, then bade good-by and returned to the American camp by a circuitous route, and told General Lincoln all that he had seen."

"Grandma," said Ned thoughtfully, "it seems to me he did not tell the truth when he said he was not an American soldier. Was

it right for him to say that?"

"I think not, Ned; but I suppose he thought it was, as he meant by it to help his country's cause. But remember, my dears, it is never right to do evil even that good may come.

"But to go on with my story. Jasper soon went again to the English garrison, this time taking with him his particular friend, Sergeant Newton, a young man of great strength and courage. Jasper's brother received them very cordially, and they remained several days at the British fort without causing the least alarm.

"On the morning of the third day the brother said to them, 'I have bad news to tell you.' 'Aye, what is it?' asked William. His brother replied that ten or a dozen prisoners had been brought in that morning, as deserters from Savannah; that they were to be sent there immediately, and from all he could learn, it would be likely to go hard with them, as it seemed they had all taken the King's bounty."

"What does that mean, grandma?" asked Ned.

"That they had agreed to remain British subjects instead of fighting for their country; and for that the British were to protect them against the Americans. But it seems they had changed their minds and gone over to the cause of their country.

"Jasper asked to see the poor fellows, and his brother took him and Newton to the spot where the poor fellows were, handcuffed, and sitting or lying upon the ground. With them was a young woman, wife of one of the prisoners, sitting on the ground opposite to her husband, with her little boy leaning on

her lap. Her dress showed that she was poor, and her coal-black hair spread in long, neglected tresses on her neck and bosom. Sometimes she would sit silent, like a statue of grief, her eyes fixed upon the ground; then she would start convulsively, lift her eyes and gaze on her husband's face with as sad a look as if she already saw him struggling in the halter, herself a widow and her child an orphan. The child was evidently distressed by his mother's anguish, and weeping with her.

"Jasper and Newton felt keenly for them in their misery. They silently walked away into a neighboring wood, tears in the eyes of both. Jasper presently spoke. 'Newton,' he said, 'my days have been but few, but I believe their course is nearly finished.' Newton asked why he thought so, and he answered, because he felt that he must rescue those poor prisoners or die with them, otherwise the remembrance of that poor woman and her child would haunt him to his grave.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.