

VARIOUS

THE KING'S DAUGHTER
AND OTHER STORIES
FOR GIRLS

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The King's Daughter and
Other Stories for Girls

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The King's Daughter and Other Stories for Girls:

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The King's Daughter and Other Stories for Girls

THE KING'S DAUGHTER

"I wish I were a princess!"

Emma stood with the dust-brush in her hand, pausing on her way upstairs to her own pretty little white room, which she was required to put in order every day.

"Why, my child?" asked her mother.

"Because then I would never have to sweep and dust and make beds, but would have plenty of servants to do these things for me."

"That is a very foolish wish, my daughter, but even if you were a princess, I think you would find it best to learn how to do these things, so that you could do them in case of necessity."

"But it is never necessary for princesses to work."

"There my little girl proves her ignorance. If she will come to me after her work is done, I will show her a picture."

The little bedroom was at length put to rights, and Emma came to her mother, reminding her of her promise about the picture.

"What do you see, my child?" her mother asked, as she laid the picture before her daughter.

"I see a young girl with her dress fastened up, an apron on, and a broom in her hand."

"Can you tell me what kind of place she is in?"

"I do not know. There are walls and arches of stone, and a bare stone floor. I don't think it can be a pleasant place."

"No, it is not. It is a prison, and the young girl is a king's daughter."

"A king's daughter!"

"Yes; and her story is a very sad one."

"Please tell me about her."

"Many years ago the king of France was Louis XVI, and his wife was Marie Antoinette. They were not a wicked king and queen, but they were thoughtless and fond of pleasure.

"They forgot that it was their duty to look after the good of their people; so they spent money extravagantly in their own pleasures, while the whole nation was suffering.

"The people became dissatisfied; and when, finally, Louis and Marie Antoinette saw the mistake they had been making, and tried to change their conduct, it was too late.

"The people, urged on by their leaders, learned to hate their king and queen. They were taken, with their two children, and shut up in a prison called the Temple.

"There were dreadful times in France then, and every one who was suspected of being friendly to the king and his family was

sent to prison and to the guillotine. The prisoners in the Temple passed the time as best they could.

"The king gave lessons to his son and daughter every day, or read aloud to them all, while Marie Antoinette, Madame Elizabeth, and the young Marie Theresa sewed.

"After awhile the angry people took away the king and beheaded him. And shortly after the little son was separated from his mother, sister, and aunt, and shut up by himself in the charge of a cruel jailor.

"Next it was Marie Antoinette's turn to ascend the scaffold, which she did October 16, 1793. Her daughter, Marie Theresa, was then left alone with her aunt, the Madame Elizabeth.

"But it was not long she was allowed this companionship. Madame Elizabeth was taken away and beheaded, and then the poor young girl of sixteen was left entirely by herself in a dismal prison, guarded and waited on by brutal soldiers.

"For a year and a half she lived thus, leading the most wretched existence, and not knowing whether her mother and aunt were alive or dead. Years afterward, when she was free, she wrote about her life in prison. In that we read:—"I only asked for the simple necessities of life, and these they often harshly refused me. I was, however, enabled to keep myself clean. I had at least soap and water, and I swept out my room every day.'

"So here in the picture you see a king's daughter, and the granddaughter of an empress (Marie Theresa of Austria, one of the most remarkable women in history), after having carefully

made her toilet, sweeping the bare stone floor of her cell.

"Which do you think caused her the most satisfaction in those dark days of trial: the remembrance that she was the daughter of a king? or the knowledge of domestic duties, which she had probably learned while she was a happy, envied princess, living in a palace and surrounded by a great many servants!"

"Is that a true story?"

"Yes, Emma, every word of it; and there is much, much more that I cannot tell you now."

"What became of her at last?"

"She was finally released from prison, and sent to Austria to her mother's friends; but it was a full year after she reached Vienna before she smiled; and though she lived to be seventy years old, she never forgot the terrible sufferings of her prison life.

"But, my child, what I wish to teach you is, that though it is sometimes very pleasant to be a princess, it may be most unfortunate at other times. But always remember, my dear girl, that a knowledge of housekeeping never comes amiss, and every young woman, no matter what the circumstances are, will be far happier and more useful for possessing that knowledge."

Children do not always comprehend everything at once; so I will not say that Emma soon learned to take delight in dusting and sweeping. But bear in mind that that woman is the most queenly, who uses her wisdom and her strength for the benefit of those around her, shrinking from no duty that she should perform, but

doing it cheerfully and well.

THE OLD BROWN HOUSE

It was very old, low-roofed, and weather-beaten, standing quite a little stretch from the road, and you might have supposed it deserted but for the thin column of smoke that wound slowly above the roof, so desolate did it look.

But it was inhabited, and could you have pushed aside the creaking door, you might have seen an old woman, wrinkled and gray, sitting by the silent hearth, stirring the dull fire, or looking absently from the window.

It was Aunt Ruth Jones, as the neighbors called her, of whom little was known, except that she was a queer old woman—a sort of hermit, living all alone in the neglected old house. It had come into her possession, with a small farm adjoining, by the death of her parents some thirty years before.

At first the neighbors were curious to see the new occupant; they found a tall, spare woman, then about thirty-four years of age, little given to gossip, shy, and cold. Some affirmed that she was proud, and others said that her life had been one of disappointment. But none had succeeded in drawing out her story, and gradually the old brown house and its occupant were left to themselves.

Years had wrought changes; the walls were now darkened with smoke, the windows dingy, the floor sunken in; there was nothing cheery in the ill-kept room, or in the face of Aunt Ruth. Some

natures become shriveled and cramped when left to themselves, and hers was such an one; I am afraid it was also narrowed and hardened by being shut off from humanity, with none to share her joys or grief, or to care indeed, if she had any.

As the days came and went, they brought nothing to her but a little round of chores, a bit of patchwork, or straw braiding, and occasionally a walk to the village store to buy the few articles she required.

The gay dresses and pert stare of the village girls, the glimpses of happy homes caught through the windows, and the noisy stir of life, only made more striking the contrast of her own lonely lot. Gladly would she hasten back to her own silent fireside, where the cats, at least, were glad of her presence. Old Brindle knew her step, and tossed her head impatiently for nubbins of corn, or the pail of slop with which she was wont to be treated. The hens cackled merrily, and scarcely stirred from their tracks, as her dress brushed their shining feathers.

The care of these creatures was a kind of company, and on frosty mornings Aunt Ruth might be seen watching them eating so greedily, while her own breakfast was yet untasted, and her feet and fingers benumbed with cold.

Though none shared her heart or home, yet there was sometimes one bright presence within those dim walls, a childish, questioning voice, and sweet laughter.

It was Bessie Lane. One June day, on her way to school, a sudden dash of rain had driven the child there for shelter. And

ever since, the happy little girl, with flaxen hair and clear eyes, would go to the forsaken old house to chat with Aunt Ruth. As that springing step was heard, and the latch lifted, there would come a gleam of brightness to the faded eyes, and a smile to the thin mouth.

The child found ready entrance to the lonely heart; children will, you know, they are so "queer," as wise old heads sometimes affirm.

"What in the world makes you visit that old hermit?" said Eliza Ray, her schoolmate, one morning. "Bridget, our hired girl, says she is sure such a looking old hag must be a witch."

"Witch or not, I like her;" and Bessie Lane tossed up her hat, and pranced off after a fox squirrel just down the road.

So Bessie kept up her visits, and the two would sit and talk together by the hour, Aunt Ruth showing her long-treasured trinkets, relics of years gone by, and detailing their history, till Bessie's eyes would dilate with wonder.

On this wintry morning, in which we have introduced her to you, sitting by the dull fire, and looking from the dingy window, the time of Bessie's absence had been longer than usual. The sky was leaden, and the wind whistled down the chimney and shook the casements.

Suddenly Aunt Ruth starts and peers through the window. There is a bright little hood and blue cloak approaching; she sees that, but not the carefully wrapped parcel Bessie is carrying, for she hurries to brighten the fire and brush the hearth.

"Good morning, Aunt Ruth. It has been ever so long since I have been here, hasn't it?"

"Yes, a long time for a lonesome old body like me; but this is no place for the young and happy, I know."

"Oh, yes it is, dear Aunt Ruthie. You must not say so. I like to come real well. But Uncle Jake has been so sick; he sent for pa and ma, and I went with them. It is such a long way off, I thought we never would get there. And Oh, Aunt Ruth, I have not told you yet"—and the chubby face sobered.

"What is it, child?" picking up bits of litterings from the floor. Somehow she always did so when Bessie was around, the hands involuntarily moved in little touches of order and neatness. The room was good enough for her: for the child it seemed dismal and must be brightened a little. But Aunt Ruth was unconscious that she was being called to a better life, or that a love for light and beauty was awakening in her weary heart.

"Well, I will tell you; we are going to move away. I declare, I think it's too bad to leave all the girls just as I began to like them, and you, too, Aunt Ruth. I don't want to go one bit;" tears rolling down her face.

"Going away, my little girl going off?" said Aunt Ruth seriously.

"Yes; and mamma said we couldn't move Chip, it would be such a bother, so I have given poor birdie away to Allie Smith;" tears flowing afresh. "I let Amy Wells have my kitten, but I haven't found a place for my poor little rose. See," said Bessie,

going to the table and removing the wrapper from her parcel, "isn't it a beauty? You will keep it to remember me by, and take care of it always, won't you, Aunt Ruth?"

The little blossoms were out in full, and seemed to smile a benediction upon the old woman.

"Yes, yes, child, I will keep your rose; no harm shall come to it." The little plant seemed to carry her thoughts away, for she began talking absently to herself, then recalling her musings she said:—"So you are going away; and you'll forget all about poor Aunt Ruth with so many new friends. Well, well, it's natural."

"No, no, indeed I shall not," said Bessie, giving her a hearty hug, "and sometime I will come to see you." They talked a long time, but at last, with a good-by kiss to Aunt Ruth, and to the pet rose, she was gone like a flitting sunbeam.

Then the shadows seemed to come back to the inmate of the old house; but as her glance fell upon the little flower, she began clearing a place for it to stand in the warmest corner, musing to herself the while:—

"Just such roses I used to carry in my hand to the old stone church in Amsden when no bigger than Bessie. It seems like yesterday, but ah! it is a long time. Maybe if I could do like that again, it would not be so dark and lonesome like. I think I'll put the rose here by the south window, then if the child ever does come, she will see it from the gate."

Bringing a little pine stand, she carefully placed the plant upon it. In doing so, she chanced to glance at the window. "Bless me!

it never looked quite so dirty before;" and Aunt Ruth moved with new life, as she cleansed, rinsed, and polished the glass. But this being done, the old muslin curtain seemed dingier than common, shading the clear glass; so it was taken down, and another finer one unpacked from a drawer and put in its place.

The next morning, as she ate her lonely breakfast, she placed her chair to face the window and the rose. The sun was shining, and as the rays streamed across the room to the opposite wall, she marked the cobwebs. That day the cobwebs were swept down, the other window washed, and the floor cleaned. The old house had not been so neat and cheery for many years.

Near the close of the week she went to the village, this time putting on a dark delaine, instead of the snuff calico with a yellow flower. Somehow the gay dresses and curious glances did not disturb her as much as usual. A pleasant recognition was passed with a neighbor whom she had not spoken to for a year.

A strange feeling had come over her,—a feeling that she was one of the great human family after all, and the icy mountain of reserve began to thaw just a little. Her purchases made, she concluded to take another road home. This route lay past a church. It was lighted, though early, and a few real worshipers had met to pray before the regular service.

They were singing now, and Aunt Ruth paused, as a clear, triumphant voice bore up the strain,—

"Plunged in a gulf of dark despair."

Spell-bound, she listened to its close, never stirring from her

tracks till a group of people passed near, then slowly walking on, you might have heard her talking again to herself:—

"O Ruth Jones, where are you? I used to sing that, too, in the same old church where I carried the roses, only it was years after. I used to pray, too. I wonder if God would hear me now."

That night, and many nights after, she could not sleep; the words of song kept ringing in her ears, bringing up the old scenes and associations, till the great deep of her soul was broken up.

In her darkness she felt gropingly, feebly, for the old paths, and the good Spirit was all the time leading her back to the light. I can not retrace for you all the way that she came. I only know that gradually, surely, the night wore away, and the Sun of peace shone upon her soul. She went to the church, where the song had that night staid her footsteps, and listened to the words of life.

Her life became a blessing; for her nature was broadened, deepened and purified. The sick and needy learned to be glad at her coming, and little children ran to meet her.

And did Bessie Lane ever come again?

Yes, when June smiled upon the earth, the childish figure once more paused at the gate, but the blue eyes gazed bewildered around. "This isn't the place. Aunt Ruth must have moved away." Well might she think so; the house was neatly painted, the yard fence repaired, and up and down the path all sorts of flowers were blooming. Just then Bessie descried a neatly dressed old lady tying up some vines.

"Can you tell me where Aunt Ruth Jones has gone that

used to"—Bessie stopped, and with one bound sprang into the woman's arms, for it was Aunt Ruth herself.

"It is so beautiful here! how did it all happen?" cried the delighted child.

Aunt Ruth smiled brightly, and, taking Bessie by the hand, passed into the neat, cheerful room, and up to the south window, where the carefully tended rose was putting forth beauty and fragrance.

Bessie fairly danced with delight at sight of the rose, but Aunt Ruth seated the child gently by her side, and told how it had happened; how the little flower had at first whispered to her heart of the long ago; of the holy song that would not let her sleep; and, lastly, of God's good Spirit that had so tenderly led her straying steps to the sun-gilt path of peace.

A STORY FOR SCHOOL GIRLS

It was recess at Miss Capron's school. The girls stood together in one large group, talking very earnestly.

"I think it was a shame," said Marcia Lewis, "for her to make me face the corner for an hour, just because I spoke half a dozen words to Nellie Jones."

"I think so, too," chimed in a half a dozen other voices.

"She delights in showing her authority," said Lottie Barnes.

"So she does, or she wouldn't have kept Anna Mory and me on the recitation seat, for missing one or two questions in arithmetic."

"Don't you think she is dreadfully cross? I guess if we should try to keep account of all her cross words and looks, we would have to be pretty busy."

"Wouldn't that be a nice idea? Let us make a mark on our slates every time she is cross, and see what a long string of marks we shall get."

"Oh yes! let's do it! Yes! yes!" chimed in a dozen voices in full chorus.

Poor Miss Capron! With a sinking at her heart she saw the unloving looks in her scholars' faces as they entered the schoolroom after this stormy consultation. She had a severe headache that afternoon, so that, altogether, she did not wear nearly so smiling a face as usual; and the girls, prejudiced as they

were, found ample occasion for setting down their cross-marks.

Pretty soon Lottie Barnes held up her slate to view, displaying a long row of marks. Anna Mory imitated her example; then Lottie Jones; and in less than two minutes the whole school followed suit. This, of course, called for a reprimand from Miss Capron; and then there was a terrible clicking of pencils. Soon Marcia Lewis dropped her slate on the floor, and the next instant every slate was on the floor.

"Girls! girls!" said Miss Capron sternly; "you seem to have banded yourselves together to trample on the rules of order. I shall proceed no further with recitations until you have become quiet and orderly."

But even this seemed to fail of producing the desired result. The girls were quiet only a few minutes. Nellie Jones remembered that she had in her pocket a bottle of snuff for her grandmother, and in ten minutes the schoolroom was resounding with sneezes. Next, little paper balls began to fly mysteriously from all sides, and every girl appeared intent upon her lesson. Presently, a half-suppressed titter from Marcia Lewis awakened an answering one from Mattie Lee, and one after another joined, until at length there was an almost deafening peal of laughter.

"The very spirit of mischief seems to have made headquarters here this afternoon," said Miss Capron. "It is useless to try to proceed with recitations, while my whole attention is needed to keep you in order. I will give you another recess of fifteen minutes, and if you do not succeed in getting rid of your excess

of fun and frolic, I shall take very prompt and decisive measures to help you."

The girls felt some little twinges of conscience, but, after all, were quite delighted with the success of their experiment.

"I tell you what it is," said Marcia Lewis, "Miss Capron has no business to be so awful cross. Only think what a sight of marks we got. Let's act just as bad when we go into school again, and she will have to dismiss us, and then we'll all go down to the falls and have a nice time."

"Would'nt it be grand," said Nellie Jones.

"Splendid," replied Mattie Lee.

"Why! what is the matter?" said Mary Paine, who had been absent from school during the day until then and was surprised to find her usually pleasant companions so excited. When she had heard the whole story, she looked very sad:—

"Poor Miss Capron! How could you treat her so!"

"It is just what she deserves for being so cross," said Lottie Barnes.

"Oh, you have been looking at the wrong side, girls. I have heard a story of a lady who began to find faults in her son's wife. The more she looked for them, the more she found, until she began to think her daughter-in-law the most disagreeable person in the world. She used to talk of her failings to a very dear friend.

"Finally, her friend said to her one day, 'No doubt Jane has her faults, and very disagreeable ones, but suppose for awhile you try to see what good qualities you can discover in her character.

Really, I am very curious to know.'

"The good lady was a little offended at her friend's plain suggestion; but finally concluded to try it; and long before she had discovered half her good traits, she began to regard Jane as a perfect treasure. Now you have been doing just as this lady did, in looking for faults. Let us be like her the rest of the afternoon in looking for pleasant things. Let us see how many smiles we can get from Miss Capron."

Mary Paine was one of the oldest girls in the school. She gave the girls subjects for their compositions and helped them out of all their troubles. So being a favorite they consented, half reluctantly, to do as she said.

Miss Capron dreaded to ring the bell. The fifteen minutes passed, and she felt compelled to call her scholars. They entered in perfect order.

Each took her seat quietly and began studying in real earnest. Frequently, however, a pleasant smile would seek an answering one from the teacher, and then one would be added to the rapidly increasing row of smile-marks. The good order and close application to study, and the winning looks, soon caused a continual smile to lighten Miss Capron's face, till the girls finally rubbed out the marks, saying it was of no use to try to keep account.

Marcia Lewis wrote on her slate, "It's smile all the time."

Before Miss Capron dismissed the school at night, she said:—"My head ached sadly before recess, and I fear I was impatient

with you. Your good conduct since has convinced me that I must have been in fault. I thank you, my dear girls, for your love and kindness, and hope you will forgive my faults as freely as I do yours. School is dismissed."

Instantly she was surrounded by all the girls and showered with kisses.

"We have been very wicked," said Marcia Lewis, "and it is not your fault at all."

Little Libbie Denny then related the whole story of the conspiracy, and when she told the part that Mary Paine had taken, Miss Capron put her arm about Mary, and kissing her, said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

"Well, my dears," she added, "which was best, looking for frowns or for smiles?"

"O, the smiles," said they all together.

"I wish you might learn a lesson from this, to remember all through your lives. Overlook the bad and seek for what is good in everybody; and so you will help to make both yourselves and others happier and better. What is the lesson, girls?"

And each voice responded, "We will overlook the bad, and seek only for what is good in those around us."

WHAT ONE LIE DID

It was winter twilight. Shadows played about the room, while the ruddy light flickered pleasantly between the ancient andirons.

A venerable old lady, whose hair time had silvered, but whose heart he had left fresh and young, sat musing in an armchair, drawn up closely by the fireside. Suddenly the door opened, and a little girl hurried to her side.

"Well, Bessie," said the old lady, laying her hand lovingly on the child's sunny ringlets, "have you had a good slide?"

"Beautiful, Aunt Ruth; and now won't you tell me one of your nice stories?"

Bessie was an only child, whose mother had just died. The little girl had come to visit her aunt, who had learned to love her dearly because of her winning ways and affectionate disposition.

But Aunt Ruth's eyes were of the clear sort, and she soon discovered that Bessie was not only careless about telling the truth, but that she displayed little sensitiveness when detected in a falsehood.

Now, if there was any one trait for which Aunt Ruth was particularly distinguished, it was her unswerving truthfulness; and if there was any one thing that annoyed her more than all others, it was anything like falsehood.

"A liar shall not stand in my sight," was the language of her heart, and so she determined, with the help of God, to root out

from her darling's character the noxious weed, whatever effort it might cost her. Of this she had been musing, and her resolve was formed.

"Get your rocking-chair, dear, and come close beside me;" and in a moment the child's blue eyes were upturned to hers.

"I am old now, Bessie," and she tenderly stroked that fair brow, "and my memory is failing. But I can recall the time when I was a little dancing, sunny-haired girl, like you. You open your eyes wonderingly, but, if your life is spared, before you know it, child, you will be an old lady like Aunt Ruth.

"In those young days I was in a spelling-class, at school, with a little girl named Amy, a sweet-tempered, sensitive child, and a very good scholar. She seemed disposed to cling to me, and I could not well resist her loving friendship. Yet I did not quite like her, because she often went above me in the class, when, but for her, I should have stood at the head.

"Poor Amy could not account for my occasional coolness, for I was too proud to let her know the reason. I had been a truthful child, Bessie, but envy tempted me, and I yielded. I sometimes tried to prejudice the other girls against Amy, and this was the beginning of my deceit. She was too timid to defend herself, and so I usually carried my point.

"One day our teacher gave out to us the word, *believe*. In her usual low voice, Amy spelt '*b-e-l-i-e-v-e, believe.*' Her teacher misunderstanding her said, quickly, 'Wrong—the next;' but turning to her again, asked, 'Did you not spell it *l-e-i-v-e*?'"

"No ma'am, I said *l-i-e-v-e*,"

"Miss R—, still in doubt, looking at me, inquired, 'You heard, Ruth; how was it?'

"A wicked thought occurred to me,—to disgrace her, and raise myself. Deliberately I uttered a gross falsehood, 'Amy said *l-e-i-v-e*,'

"The teacher turned toward Amy, who stood, silent, distressed and confounded by my accusation. Her flushed face and streaming eyes gave her the appearance of guilt.

"'Amy,' said her teacher sternly, 'I did not expect a lie from you. Go, now, to the foot of the class, and remember to remain after school.'

"I had triumphed, Bessie; Amy was disgraced, and I stood proudly at the head of my class, but I was not happy.

"When school was dismissed, I pretended to have lost something, and lingered in the hall. I heard the teacher say,—

"'Amy, come here,' and then I caught the light footsteps of the gentle child.

"'How could you tell that lie?'

"'Miss R— I did not tell a lie,' but even as she denied it, I could see through the keyhole that in her grief at the charge, and her dread of punishment, she stood trembling like a culprit.

"'Hold out your hand.'

"There I stood, as if spellbound. Stroke after stroke of the hard ferule I heard fall upon the small white hand of the innocent child. You may well hide your eyes from me, Bessie. Oh, why

did I not speak? Every stroke went to my heart, but I would not confess my sin, and so I stole softly from the door.

"As I lingered on the way, Amy walked slowly along, with her books in one hand, while with the other she kept wiping away the tears, which would not yet cease to flow. Her sobs, seeming to come from a breaking heart, sank deep into my own.

"As she walked on, weeping, her foot stumbled, and she fell, and her books were scattered on the ground. I picked them up and handed them to her. Turning toward me her soft blue eyes swimming in tears, in the sweetest tones, she said,—

"I thank you, Ruth.'

"It made my guilty heart beat faster, but I would not speak; so we went on silently together.

"When I reached home, I said to myself, 'what is the use, nobody knows it, and why should I be so miserable?' I resolved to throw off the hated burden, and, going into the pleasant parlor, I talked and laughed as if nothing were the matter. But the load on my poor heart only grew the heavier.

"I needed no one, Bessie, to reprove me for my cruel sin. The eye of God seemed consuming me. But the worse I felt, the gayer I seemed; and more than once I was checked for my boisterous mirth, while tears were struggling to escape.

"At length I went to my room. I could not pray, and so hurrying to bed, I resolutely shut my eyes. But sleep would not come to me. The ticking of the old clock in the hall seemed every moment to grow louder, as if reproaching me; and when it slowly told the

hour of midnight, it smote upon my ear like a knell.

"I turned and turned upon my little pillow, but it was filled with thorns. Those sweet blue eyes, swimming in tears, were ever before me; the repeated strokes of the hard ferule kept sounding in my ears. At length, unable to endure it longer I left my bed, and sat down by the window. The noble elms stood peacefully in the moonlight, the penciled shadow of their spreading branches lying tremulously on the ground.

"The white fence, the graveled walks, the perfect quietness in which everything was wrapped, seemed to mock my restlessness, while the solemn midnight sky filled me with a sense of awe which I never felt before. Ah! Bessie, God was displeased with me, my conscience was burdened and uneasy, and I was wretched.

"As I turned from the window, my eyes rested on the snow-white coverlet of my little bed, a birthday gift from my mother. All her patient kindness, rushed upon my mind. I felt her dying hand upon my head. I listened once more to her trembling voice, as she fervently besought the blessing of heaven upon me:—

"Oh, make her a truthful, holy child!"

"I tried to banish from my thoughts this last petition of my dying mother; but the more resolute was my purpose, the more distinctly did those pleading tones fall upon my heart, till, bowing upon the window, I wept convulsively. But tears, Bessie, could give me no relief.

"My agony became every moment more intense, till at length,

I rushed, almost in terror, to my father's bedside.

"Father! father!" but I could say no more. Tenderly putting his arm around me, he laid my throbbing head upon his bosom; and there he gently soothed me, till I could so far control my sobbing, as to explain its cause. Then how fervently did he plead with, heaven, that his sinning child might be forgiven!

"Dear father," said I, 'will you go with me to-night to see poor Amy?'

"He answered, 'To-morrow morning, my child.'

"Delay was torture; but striving to suppress my disappointment, I received my father's kiss and went back to my room. But slumber still fled from my weary eyelids.

"My longing to beg Amy's forgiveness amounted to frenzy; and after watching for the morning, for what seemed to me hours, my anguish became so intolerable that I fled once more to my father, and with tears streaming down my cheeks, I knelt by his side, beseeching him to go with me to Amy that moment; adding, in a whisper, 'She may die before she has forgiven me.' He laid his hand upon my burning cheek, and after a moment's thought, replied,

"I will go with you, my child.'

"In a few moments we were on our way. As we approached Mrs. Sinclair's cottage, we perceived lights hurrying from one room to another. Shuddering with dread, I drew closer to my father. He softly opened the gate, and silently we passed through it.

"The doctor, who was just leaving the door, seemed greatly surprised to meet us there at that hour. Words cannot describe my feelings, when in answer to my father's inquiries, he told us that Amy was sick with brain fever.

"Her mother tells me,' he continued, 'that she has not been well for several days, but that she was unwilling to remain from school. She came home yesterday afternoon, it seems, very unlike herself. She took no supper, but sat at the table silently, as if stupefied with grief.

"Her mother tried every way to find out the cause of her sorrow; but in vain. She went to bed with the same heart-broken appearance, and in less than an hour, I was summoned. In her delirium she has been calling upon her dear Ruth, beseeching you with the most mournful earnestness to pity and to save her.'

"Bessie, may you never know how his words pierced my heart!

"My earnest plea to see Amy just one minute, prevailed with her widowed mother. Kindly taking my hand—the murderer's—she led me to the sick chamber. As I looked on the sweet sufferer, all hope deserted me. The shadows of death were already on her forehead and her large blue eyes.

"Kneeling by her bed, in whispered words my heart pleaded, oh, so earnestly, for forgiveness. But, when I looked entreatingly toward her, in her delirious gaze there was no recognition. No, Bessie, I was never to be comforted by the assurance of her pardon.

"When I next saw Amy, she was asleep. The bright flush

had faded from her cheek, whose marble paleness was shaded by her long eyelashes. Delirium had ceased, and the aching heart was still. That small, white hand, which had been held out tremblingly, to receive the blows of the harsh ferule, now lay lovingly folded within the other. Never again would tears flow from those gentle eyes, nor that bosom heave with sorrow. That sleep was the sleep of death!

"My grief was wilder, if not deeper, than that mother's of whose lost treasure I had robbed her. She forgave me; but I could not forgive myself. What a long, long winter followed. My sufferings threw me into a fever, and in my delirium I called continually upon Amy.

"But God listened to the prayers of my dear father, and raised me from this sickness. And when the light footsteps of spring were seen upon the green earth, and early flowers were springing up around the grave of Amy, for the first time, I was allowed to visit it.

"My head swam, as I read, lettered so carefully on the white tablet:—

"*AMY SINCLAIR, Fell asleep September third.*"

"Beside that fresh turf I knelt down, and offered, as I trust, the prayer of faith. I was there relieved, and strengthened too, Bessie," said Aunt Ruth, as she laid her hand tenderly upon that young head bowed down upon her lap.

Poor Bessie's tears had long been flowing, and now her grief seemed uncontrollable. Nor did her aunt attempt consolation; for

she hoped there was a healing in that sorrow.

"Pray for me!" whispered Bessie, as, at length, looking up through her tears, she flung her arms about her aunt; and from a full heart Aunt Ruth prayed for the weeping child.

That scene was never forgotten by Bessie; for in that twilight hour, a light dawned upon her, brighter than the morning. And, although it had cost Aunt Ruth not a little to call up this dark shadow from the past, yet she felt repaid a thousandfold for her sacrifice. For that sweet young face, lovely as a May morning, but whose beauty had been often marred by the workings of deceit and falsehood, grew radiant in the clear light of that truthful purpose which was then born in her soul.

TWO WAYS OF READING THE BIBLE

"Would you like another chapter, Lilian dear?" asked Kate Everard of the invalid cousin whom she had lately come from Hampshire to nurse.

"Not now, thanks; my head is tired," was the reply.

Kate closed her Bible with a feeling of slight disappointment. She knew that Lilian was slowly sinking under incurable disease, and what could be more suitable to the dying than constantly to be hearing the Bible read? Lilian might surely listen, if she were too weak to read for herself.

Kate was never easy in mind unless she perused at least two or three chapters daily, besides a portion of the Psalms; and she had several times gone through the whole Bible from beginning to end. And here was Lilian, whose days on earth might be few, tired with one short chapter!

"There must be something wrong here," thought Kate, who had never during her life kept her bed for one day through sickness. "It is a sad thing when the dying do not prize the word of God."

"Lilian," said she, trying to soften her naturally quick, sharp tones to gentleness, "I should think that now, when you are so ill, you would find special comfort in the Scriptures."

Lilian's languid eyes had closed, but she opened them, and fixing her soft, earnest gaze upon her cousin, replied, "I do—they are my support; I have been feeding on one verse all the morning."

"And what is that verse?" asked Kate.

"'Whom I shall see for myself,'" began Lilian slowly; but Kate cut her short—

"I know that verse perfectly—it is in Job; it comes just after 'I know that my Redeemer liveth;' the verse is, 'Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.'"

"What do you understand by the expression 'not another'?" asked Lilian.

"Really, I have never particularly considered those words," answered Kate. "Have you found out any remarkable meaning in them?"

"They were a difficulty to me," replied the invalid, "till I happened to read that in the German Bible they are rendered a little differently; and then I searched in my own Bible, and found that the word in the margin of it, is like that in the German translation."

"I never look at the marginal references," said Kate, "though mine is a large Bible and has them."

"I find them such a help in comparing Scripture with Scripture," observed Lilian.

Kate was silent for several seconds. She had been careful to read daily a large portion from the Bible; but to "mark, learn, and

inwardly digest it," she had never even thought of trying to do. In a more humble tone she now asked her cousin, "What is the word which is put in the margin of the Bible instead of 'another' in that difficult text?"

"A *stranger*" replied Lilian; and then, clasping her hands, she repeated the whole passage on which her soul had been feeding with silent delight:

"'Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and *not a stranger*.'

"O Kate," continued the dying girl, while unbidden tears rose to her eyes, "if you only knew what sweetness I have found in that verse all this morning while I have been in great bodily pain! I am in the Valley of the Shadow—I shall soon cross the dark river; I know it: but He will be with me, and 'not a stranger.' He is the Good Shepherd, and I know His voice; a stranger would I not follow.

"Oh," continued Lilian, "in the glad resurrection morn, it is the Lord Jesus whom I shall behold—my own Saviour, my own tried friend, and 'not a stranger;' I shall at last see Him whom, not having seen, I have loved."

Lilian closed her eyes again, and the large drops, overflowing, fell down her pallid cheeks; she had spoken too long for her strength, but her words had not been spoken in vain.

"Lilian has drawn more comfort and profit from one verse—nay, from three words in the Bible, than I have drawn from the whole book," reflected Kate. "I have but read the Scriptures,—

she has searched them. I have been like one floating carelessly over the surface of waters under which lie pearls; Lilian has dived deep and made the treasure her own."

COURTESY TO STRANGERS

"Who was that quiet appearing girl that came into church quite late, last Sabbath?" I asked a friend of mine who was an active member in the church which I had recently joined.

"Did she wear a striped shawl and a dark dress?" inquired my friend. "If so, it was Annie Linton, a girl who is a seamstress in Mr. Brown's shop."

"I did not notice her clothes in particular," I answered, "but her face attracted me; I should know it among a thousand faces. How could you pass by a stranger so indifferently, Mrs. Greyson? I expected that you would ask her to remain at Sabbath school, and go into your Bible class, but you did not once look at her."

"I did not once think of it, and if I had, probably she would not have accepted the invitation, as she is a stranger in town, and undoubtedly will not remain here long," my friend replied quickly, by way of defense.

I said nothing more, for Mrs. G. was really an excellent Christian woman, with this one fault—carelessness—which sometimes caused her to make grave mistakes.

But I could not help thinking about the stranger girl. Her large, dark eyes and finely formed face revealed more than ordinary intelligence, and in some way I gained the impression that, if not a Christian already, she desired to be. It seemed to me that she left the church very reluctantly, and was half waiting an invitation

to the Bible class.

The next Sabbath she came again and occupied the same seat,—just in front of my own. She bowed her head very reverently during prayer, and once during the sermon I saw her lip quiver with emotion, and a tear came into her eye.

The services closed, and the stranger lingered as before. My friend, good Mrs. G., again forgot to speak to the girl. She passed out of the church slowly, and did not come again.

I thought she must have left town, as I had not seen her for several days; but one Sabbath, as I attended another church, I saw her again. She seemed a little more at ease, I thought, and there was a quiet smile on her face. After the services were concluded, I saw many a pleasant smile given to the stranger girl, and I understood the secret of the changed look upon her face. I made some inquiries, and learned that she had joined this church, and was earnest and active in all its work.

I also learned that she had made a profession of religion just before coming to our village, and had an unusually happy experience. How much the indifference of our own people had to do with her finding a home in another church, I know not.

Several years have passed since this occurred, but I have never forgotten it. Many a stranger's hand I have clasped, as I thought of Anna Linton's sweet face.

I was young in Christian experience then, and that lesson was a profitable one to me.

Speak to the stranger, Christian friend, with the assurance

that God will bless your efforts to throw sunshine and cheer and welcome into the hearts of others—strangers though they be.

LIVE FOR SOMETHING

Live for something; be not idle—
Look about thee for employ;
Sit not down to useless dreaming—
Labor is the sweetest joy.
Folded hands are ever weary,
Selfish hearts are never gay,
Life for thee has many duties—
Live for something, while you may.

Scatter blessings in thy pathway!
Gentle words and cheering smiles
Better are than gold and silver,
With their grief-dispelling wiles.
As the pleasant sunshine falleth
Ever on the grateful earth,
So let sympathy and kindness
Gladden well the darkened hearth.

JENNIE BROWNING

The light of a beautiful Sabbath was fast fading, and the last golden gleams fell softly upon the form of a light-haired little girl who sat by a cottage window, her head leaning upon her hand as if in deep thought.

The sun had departed like a grand old monarch, leaving behind him a glory of purple and gold more beautiful than his own full splendor. Yet the little girl saw nothing of all this beauty. She was thinking of the story in the Sabbath school book she had been reading,—the story of a child's life; and she wondered if all that happened in the story could be really true.

Jennie was pondering in her troubled brain a question which the reading of the book had brought. What could it be? Evidently it was not to be answered easily, for her face only grew more clouded, until at last she resolved to ask the help of some wiser mind.

Fortunately, Jennie knew that she had but to make her perplexities known to her mother and they would all be explained in the clearest way; so, seating herself in her rocking-chair by her mother's side, she said:—

"Mamma, I want you to tell me something."

"Well, dear, what is it?"

"I've just finished my Sabbath school book, you know, and it's just perfectly lovely; all about the sweetest little girl; only she was

always doing so many kind things for everybody; and I've been trying to think what's the reason little girls in books always have so many chances for doing good, and little girls like me, who are out of books, don't have any at all."

"Not any at all?" questioned the mother. "Is that really so?"

"Well, no, not quite, I suppose," said Jennie, "but then they are just nothing but the tiniest little bits of things. There's never anything big and splendid for real little girls like me to do."

"Now, Susy Chrystie, in the story, took her little sister May out for a walk, and just while they were crossing a bridge, May pulled her hand away from Susy's, and tried to walk on the edge, just as close as she could; but in about one second her foot slipped, and she would have fallen off into the water if her sister hadn't jumped right to her, and caught hold of her dress, and pulled her back all safe."

"Now just think, mamma," said Jennie, her blue eyes opening widely as she spoke, "Susy Chrystie saved her little sister's life; wasn't that a splendid, big something to do?"

"Yes, my dear, that was a brave thing for a little girl to do, for even an older person might have been too frightened by seeing the danger May was in, to act quickly; but if my little Jennie will always try to keep quite still, and never scream when any sudden fright comes to her, she too may be able to think quickly of the best way in which to help herself or others."

"But, mamma, you know that nothing ever does happen to me; and besides, I haven't any little sister or brother."

"Never mind, my child, if you will do carefully everything you do understand, and obey cheerfully even when you cannot see why you should, you will please your heavenly Father and give me comfort and pleasure, and perhaps some day you may have a chance to do something brave."

Jennie's face grew brighter, as it always did when she had confided her griefs to mamma, and for many days she watched and waited anxiously, thinking that at any time something might happen.

And so it did; for one day a letter came from Jennie's aunt, Mrs. Graham, saying she would come and spend a few days with her sister, and bring with her little Willie, a boy about two years old.

Of course they were very welcome, and Jennie greatly enjoyed playing with her cousin. He was a charming fellow, but very fond of having his own way; and one of his great enjoyments was to plunge two chubby hands into Jennie's thick, light hair, and pull it with all his might.

Of course this was a short-lived pleasure when any older person saw him, but when they were alone, Jennie would endure the pain patiently until she could coax the little fellow to let go.

She never gave him a cross word, and when the nurse would say impatiently, "Indade, thin, Miss Jennie, it's a wonder ye don't just shlap his hands!" she would answer gravely, "Oh, no, he's so much littler than I am."

Yet Jennie was not perfect, and though she generally tried to

do what was right, sometimes, like the rest of the world, she wanted to do what she knew was wrong.

One bright afternoon, when she was playing in the yard, her mother called her:—

"Your aunt and I must ride to the station directly, to meet uncle and your father, and I would like to have you go quietly into the nursery and sit there until Maggie returns from an errand; it will not be long."

"But Willie is sound asleep, mamma, he doesn't want me," said Jennie, who was anxious to stay out of doors.

"Yes, dear, I know it, but we shall feel safer to have some one in the room, even if he is asleep; something may happen if he is alone."

Jennie, however, was so unwilling to sit quietly in the house that even these familiar words did not attract her, but with slow steps and a sullen face, she obeyed her mother's wishes.

She knew quite well how slight a thing she had been asked to do, and although at another time she would not have objected, just now, when she wanted to do something else, it seemed very hard to give up her own will.

Her conscience was so disagreeable, too, for it would keep saying all the time, "I am ashamed of you, Jennie Browning! Can't you do this for your kind mamma, even if you do want to do something else?" How tiresome it all was, and how she wished she could "just do as she liked!"

Thoughts like these were filling Jennie's mind as she stood

looking out of the nursery window; but all at once she was aroused by the strong smell of burning woolen.

Turning quickly, the child grew almost rigid with fear as she saw, just in front of her, a small flame burst out from the rug before the fire, and not far from the crib where Willie lay sleeping. In an instant, however, the thought "What shall I do?" was followed by the remembrance of what her mother had often said, "If in any way your dress should ever take fire, you must try to smother it at once; never run away, but throw yourself down, or wrap yourself in anything to be found."

Remembering this, she hastily caught up the other end of the rug, which was large and heavy, and threw it over the flame. This quite extinguished it, for it had only just started into life when Jennie saw it; but in her zeal she tore off the bedspread and blankets, crowning all with two large pillows upon which she seated herself, for by this time the child was so confused that she hardly knew whether it was the rug or her own dress which had taken fire.

Now she wanted to see somebody, and, not daring to move, she began to scream. This wakened Willie, who added his voice to the uproar, and soon brought the bewildered nurse to the rescue.

In less than an hour the carriage returned, and Jennie was kissed and praised more than she had ever been in all her happy life, by her parents and her aunt and uncle; for they saw quickly what had happened, and trembled to think what might have been.

That night as Mrs. Graham bent to give Jennie her good-night kiss, she whispered, "May God bless you, my thoughtful little niece, for you have saved your cousin's life to-day!"

"Why, did I really?" thought Jennie; "how glad, how glad I am; for if I hadn't been there, the fire would have caught the crib, and oh, that would have been awful!"

Then, as memory brought the scene more clearly before her, and she recollected how her conscience had fairly pushed her into the room, her little face grew red with shame, and she softly said, "I will never fight with conscience again, for if I had had my own way, I could never have saved poor Willie's life."

PAST AND FUTURE

The past is lost to us—the book is sealed,
By mortal ne'er to be unclosed again;
The past is gone—beyond all human power
To change the record of but one short hour,
Though since repented of in tears and pain.

The future lies before us—a fair page,
Whereon 'tis ours to write whate'er we will!
Then let us pause in case our careless hand
Shall make a stain which will forever stand,
Through endless time a silent witness still.

'Tis not enough to keep the pages pure,
And let them ever but a blank remain;
Each leaf in turn should on its surface bear
Some writing that shall stand out clear and fair,
To prove our lives have not been spent in vain.

ANNA'S DIFFICULTY

Our friend Anna came home from school one day with her sunny face all in a cloud, and looking as if it might presently get a sprinkling of tears. There was one to whom she always went in trouble, besides that other One whom she tried never to forget, and she sought her best earthly friend now.

"Mother, I do think it is really mean and rude in the Wilsons that they pass me by when nearly all the class of girls are invited. I don't want to feel bad about such a thing, but I can't help it. I don't know as anybody likes to be slighted."

"Of course not, my daughter," said Mrs. Jones; "the feeling of having been rudely treated is always uncomfortable. What do you suppose is the reason you are not included in the party?"

"It is because the Wilsons feel above us, mother. The girls dress in finer clothes than I do, and have more accomplishments; and then we work for a living, and they do not. But, mother, I believe I am as intelligent and well-bred as they. I can't bear it, mother."

"It is not pleasant, to be sure, Anna; but think again, darling, before you say you *can not* bear it."

"Well, mother, who could? Nobody but you, who seem to have a way of getting round hard places, or walking through them."

"I have had many more years of experience in life than you. But I wish you to think now whether there is not some way for

you to bear this little vexation."

"Oh, yes, mother, I know what you always say, and that, of course, is right; but I don't see how feeling and acting like a Christian takes away one's natural feeling about being slighted and ill-treated by others."

"Perhaps it does not. I sometimes think one's sensibilities are greatly intensified by leading the better life. A Christian, in trying to bring his own character up to the point of perfect love and honor, often becomes exacting of such perfection in others, and failing to find it, feels exquisite pain. Yet the pain will oftener be because God's great principles of right are violated, than that his personal feelings are hurt. Which is easier for you, child, to be wounded in personal feeling, or to see what is wrong against God?"

"I never thought exactly; it is dreadful to see the wrong, but one feels in the other a sense of shame—feels so wronged—it is quite different."

"My precious one," said Mrs. Jones, "when you have so learned the love of God as to know no difference between the interests and the honor of his law, and your own comfort and pleasure and good name, you will see more clearly how this is, and feel, it is likely, the sense of shame and wrong in a different way."

"But, mother, haven't we a right to feel hurt when we are wronged or slighted—I mean personally hurt?"

"Yes; but may be if we looked a little deeper into the principles

of things, or our own principles, we should not suffer so much. What is the secret of your feeling hurt by the Wilsons? Does the slight make your real self in any respect less or worse? Does it injure you in the estimation of others?"

"Why no, mother, I suppose not; but I am as good and as much respected as they are; and I don't like to have it seem that I am beneath them because I am not so rich, and all that."

"My dear, I believe we have talked this subject over before, and long ago understood that we desire no position, no companionship which is not ours by right of moral and intellectual character.

"It is the Christian principle to live in all things for the true and the right; to be willing to take our own place in business and society, and fill it well; to think less of what others think of us than of what we in ourselves are; to appear to be only what we are, and be willing to appear thus while we are always looking up to something wiser, and lovelier, and better.

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