

Farjeon Benjamin Leopold

Joshua Marvel



Benjamin Farjeon

Joshua Marvel

«Public Domain»

Farjeon B.

Joshua Marvel / B. Farjeon — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

CHAPTER I	5
CHAPTER II	11
CHAPTER III	15
CHAPTER IV	22
CHAPTER V	30
CHAPTER VI	37
CHAPTER VII	41
CHAPTER VIII	45
CHAPTER IX	57
CHAPTER X	65
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	73

Farjeon B. L. Benjamin Leopold Joshua Marvel

CHAPTER I CONCERNING CERTAIN FAMILY CONVERSATIONS AND THEIR RESULT

In the parish of Stepney, in the county of Middlesex, there lived, amidst the hundreds of thousands of human bees who throng that overcrowded locality, a family composed of four persons—mother, father, and two children, boy and girl—who owned the surprising name of Marvel. They had lived in their hive for goodness knows how many years. The father's father had lived there and died there; the father had been married from there; and the children had been born there. The bees in the locality, who elbowed each other and trod upon each other's toes, were poor and common bees, and did not make much honey. Some of them made just enough to live upon; and a good many of them, now and then, ran a little short. The consequence was, that they could not store any honey for a rainy day, and were compelled to labor and toil right through the year, in cold weather and in warm weather, in sunshine and in rain. In which respect they were worse off than other bees we know of that work in the summer and make themselves cosy in the winter.

The bees in the neighborhood being common and poor, it was natural that the neighborhood itself should partake of the character of its inhabitants. But, common and poor as it was, it was not too common nor too poor for love to dwell in it. Love did reside there; not only in the hive of the Marvels, but in hundreds of other hives, tenanted by the humblest of humble bees.

George Marvel had married for love; and, lest the reader should suppose that the contract was one-sided, it may be as well to mention that George Marvel's wife had also married for love. They fell in love in the way, and they married in the usual way; and, happy and satisfied with each other, they did not mar their enjoyment of the then present by thinking of the sharp stones which, from the very circumstances of their position, were pretty sure to dot the road of their future lives. There are many such simple couples in the world who believe that the future is carpeted with velvet grass, with the sun always shining upon it, and who find themselves all too soon stumbling over a dark and rocky thoroughfare.

It was not long before the Marvels came to the end of *their* little bit of carpet sunshine; yet, when they got upon the stones, they contrived by industry and management to keep their feet. George Marvel was a wood-turner by trade, and earned on an average about thirty-two shillings a week. What with a little new furniture now and then, and a little harmless enjoyment now and then, and a few articles of necessary clothing now and then, and the usual breakfasts, dinners, and teas, with a little bit of supper now and then, the thirty-two shillings a week were pretty well and pretty fully employed. So well and so fully were those weekly shillings employed, that it was often a very puzzling matter to solve that problem which millions of human atoms are studying at this present moment, and which consists in endeavoring to make both ends meet. That they did contrive, however, to make both ends meet (not, of course, without the tugging and stretching always employed in the process), was satisfactorily demonstrated by the fact that the family, were respected and esteemed by their neighbors, and that they owed no man a shilling. Not even the baker; for they sent for their loaves, and paid for them across the counter. By that they almost always received an extra piece to make up weight; and such extra pieces are of importance in a family. Not even the butcher; for Mrs. Marvel did her own marketing, and found it far cheaper to select her own joints, which you may be sure never had too much bone in them. Not even the cat's-meat man; for the farthing a day laid out with

that tradesman was faithfully paid in presence of the carrot-haired cat (who ever heard of a cat with auburn hair?) who sat the while with eager appetite, looking with hungry eyes at the skewer upon which hung her modicum of the flesh of horse.

Mrs. Marvel was a pale but not sad woman, who had no ambition in life worthy of being called one, save the ambition of making both ends meet, and of being able, although Stepney was not liable to floods, to keep the heads of her family above water. But, because Mrs. Marvel had no ambition, that was no reason why Mr. Marvel should not have any. Not that he could have defined precisely what it was if he had been asked; but that the constant difficulties which cropped up in the constant attempt to solve the problem (which has something perpetual in its nature) of making both ends meet, made him fretful. This fretfulness had found vent in speech day after day for many years; so that Joshua Marvel, the wood-turner's heir, had from his infancy upwards been in the habit of hearing what a miserable thing it was to be poor, and what a miserable thing it was to be cooped up, as George Marvel expressed it, and what a miserable thing it was to live until one's hair turned gray without ever having had a start in the world. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Joshua Marvel had gathered slowly in his mind the determination not to be a wood-turner all his life, but to start in the world for himself, and try to be something better; never for one moment thinking there was the most remote possibility of his ever being any thing worse. When, in the course of certain family discussions and conversations, this determination became known, it did not receive discouragement from the head of the family, although the tender-hearted mother cried by the hour together, and could not for the life of her see why Joshua should not be satisfied to do as his father had done before him.

"And what is that, mother?" Mr. Marvel would ask. "What have I done before him? I've been wood-turning all my life before him-that's what I've been doing; and I shall go on wood-turning, I suppose, till my dying day, when I can't wood-turn any more. Why, it might be yesterday that I started as a boy to learn wood-turning. The first day I used the lathe I dreamed that I had cut my thumb off; and I woke up with a curious sensation in my jaw which has haunted me ever since like a ghost. That was before I knew you, mother. And now it is to-day, and I'm wood-turning still; and-How many white hairs did you pull out of my head last night, Sarah?"

"Fourteen," replied Sarah; "and you owe me a farthing."

"Fourteen," said Mr. Marvel, quietly repudiating the liability, which arose from an existing arrangement that Sarah should have a farthing for every dozen white hairs she pulled out of his head; "and next week it will be forty, perhaps; and the week after four hundred."

"White hairs will come, father," said Mrs. Marvel; "we must all get 'em when we're old enough."

"I'm not old enough," grumbled Mr. Marvel.

"And I don't see, father," continued Mrs. Marvel, "what the fourteen white hairs Sarah pulled out of your head has to do with Joshua."

"Of course *you* don't see, mother," said, Mr. Marvel, who had a contempt for a woman's argument; "you're not supposed to see, being a woman; but I *do* see; and what I say is, wood-turning brings on white hairs quicker than any thing else."

"Grandfather was a wood-turner," remarked Mrs. Marvel, "and he didn't have white hairs until he was quite old."

"Well, he was lucky-that's all I can say; but, for all that, Josh isn't going to be a wood-turner, unless he's set his mind upon it."

"I won't be a wood-turner, father," said Joshua.

"All right, Josh," said Mr. Marvel; "you sha'n't."

From this it will be seen that the voice maternal was weak and impotent when opposed to the voice paternal. But Mrs. Marvel, although by no means a strong-minded woman, had a will of her own, and a quiet unobtrusive way of working which often achieved a victory without inflicting humiliation. She did not like the idea of her boy leading an idle life; she had an intuitive conviction that Joshua would come to no good if he had nothing to do. She argued the matter with her good man,

and never introduced the subject at an improper time. The consequence was, that her first moves were crowned with success.

"If Joshua won't be a wood-turner, father " – she said.

"Which he won't," asserted her husband.

"Which he won't, as you say," Mrs. Marvel replied, like a sensible woman. "If he won't be a wood-turner, he must be something. Now he must be something, father-mustn't he?"

This being spoken in the form of a question, left the decision with Mr. Marvel; and he said, as if the remark originated with himself, – "Yes; he must be something."

And with that admission Mrs. Marvel rested content for a little while; but not for long. She soon returned to the attack; and asked her husband what Joshua should be. Now this puzzled Mr. Marvel; and he could not see any way out of the difficulty, except by remarking that the boy would make up his mind one of these fine days. But "these fine days" – in which people, especially boys, make up their minds-are remarkably like angels' visits; and the calendar of our lives often comes to an end without one of them being marked upon the record. To all outward appearance, this was likely to be the case with Joshua; and the task of making up his mind seemed to be so tardy in its accomplishment, that George Marvel himself began to grow perplexed as to the future groove of his son and heir; for Joshua kept himself mentally very much to himself. Vague wishes and desires he had; but they had not yet shaped themselves in his mind-which was most likely the reason why they had not found expression.

Meanwhile Mrs. Marvel was not idle. She saw her husband's perplexity, and rejoiced at it. Her great desire was to see Joshua settled down to a trade, whether it were wood-turning or any other. Wood-turning she would have preferred; but, failing that, some other trade which would fix him at home; for with that keen perception which mothers only possess with regard to their children-a perception which springs from the maternal intellect alone, and which is born of a mother's watchful anxious love-she felt that her son's desires, unknown even to himself, might possibly lead him to be a wanderer from her world, the parish of Stepney, in which she was content to live and die. In that beehive she had been born; in that beehive she had experienced calm happiness and wholesome trouble; and in that beehive she wished to close her eyes; and to see her children's faces smiling upon her, when her time came to say good-by to the world of which she knew so little. With all a woman's cunning, with all a woman's love, she devoted herself to the task of weaning the mind of her favorite child from the restless aspirations which might drive him from her side.

"Until Joshua makes up his mind what he is going to be, father," she said one night at candle-time, "it's a pity he should remain idle. Idleness isn't a good thing for a boy."

"Idleness isn't a good thing for boy or man," said Mr. Marvel, converting his wife's remark into an original expression of opinion by the addition of the last two words. "But I don't see what we are to do, mother."

"Suppose I get him a situation-as an errand-boy, perhaps-until he makes up his mind."

"I'm agreeable," said Mr. Marvel, "if Josh is."

But Josh was not agreeable. Many a fruitless journey did Mrs. Marvel make, trudging here and trudging there; and many an application did she answer in person to written announcements in shop-windows of "Errand-boy wanted." Joshua would not accept any of the situations she obtained for him. She got him one at a watchmaker's; no, he would not go to a watchmaker's: at a saddler's; no, he would not go to a saddler's; at a bootmaker's, at a tailor's; no, nor that, nor that. Still she persevered, appearing to gain fresh courage from every rebuff. As for Joshua, he was beginning to grow wearied of her assiduity. He was resolved not to go to any trade, but being of a very affectionate nature he desired to please his mother, and at the same time to convince her that it was of no use for her to worry him any longer. So he set her, what he considered to be an impossible task: he told her that he was determined not to go anywhere except to a printing office. He felt assured that she would never be able to get him within the sacred precincts of such an establishment. And even if she did, there was

something more noble, something more distinguished and grander, in printing than in bootmaking, or tailoring, or watchmaking, or wood-turning. There was a fascinating mystery about it; he had seen watchmakers and tailors, and cobblers working, but he had never seen the inside of a printing-office. Neither had any of his boy-friends. He had been told, too, that there was an act of parliament which allowed printers to wear swords in the streets. That was a fine thing. How all the neighbors would stare when they saw him walking through the narrow streets of Stepney with sword at his side! Joshua had some sense of humor; and he chuckled to himself at the impossible task he had set his mother.

He was therefore considerably astonished one day, when Mrs. Marvel told him she had obtained a situation for him as errand-boy in a newspaper-office. Did ever a woman fail, except from physical or mental prostration, in the accomplishment of a certain thing upon which she has set her mind? And if, in working for the accomplishment of the desired result, she brings to her aid an unselfish, unwearying love, *then* did ever a woman fail? At all events Mrs. Marvel did not. After much labor, fortune befriended her; and she heard that an errand-boy was wanted at a certain printing-office where a weekly newspaper was printed. Thither she hurried, and soon found herself in a small dark office, in which the master sat.

He treated her in the most off-hand manner. Yes, he wanted an errand-boy. Was he sharp, intelligent, willing? Oh, her son! Very well. Let him come to-morrow. Wages, four shillings a week. Time, from eight to eight. An hour to dinner, half an hour to tea. Good-morning.

Thus the matter was settled, and Joshua engaged. Mrs. Marvel went home rejoicing.

With fear and trembling, a little pleased and a good deal dismayed, Joshua made his way the next morning to the printing-office. Groping along a dark passage he came to a door on which the word "Office" was dimly discernible. The freshness of youthful paint had departed from the word; the letters were faded, and they appeared to be waiting to be quite rubbed out with a kind of jaded resignation. In response to the sharply-uttered "Come in!" Joshua opened the door, and entered the room. The person he saw before him had such a dissipated appearance, that any stranger would have been warranted in coming to the conclusion that he had not been in bed for a fortnight. The room was full of papers, very dusty and very dirty; and looked as if, from the day it was built, it had not found time to wash itself. Scarcely raising his eyes from a long slip of paper, upon which he was making a number of complicated marks, the occupant of the room said, -

"It's of no use bothering me. I sha'n't have any copy ready for half an hour. Hallo! Who are you?"

"The new errand-boy, sir," said Joshua, humbly.

"Oh, very well! Take this proof up stairs and sweep the composing-room; then come down and clean the street-door plate. Cut along! Look sharp!"

Looking as sharp as he could, Joshua walked up stairs, and found himself in the composing-room of the establishment. A number of men and boys, decorated with aprons with large bibs, were playing a mysterious game with hundreds and thousands of small pieces of lead, which they clicked with marvellous rapidity, but without any apparent meaning, against an instrument they held in their hands. He looked in vain for the swords which he had heard printers were allowed to wear, and he was covered with confusion at finding himself in the midst of so large an assemblage, who one and all appeared as if they were playing on a number of pianos without any tune in them. Going up to a youth whose head, covered with a profusion of red hair, looked as if it were in a blaze, Joshua asked to whom he should give the proof. "To Snooks," was the prompt reply. For which piece of information he received a slap on the side of his head from some person in authority; who taking the proof from Joshua, directed him to sweep up the room. While performing this task he surveyed the scene before him. There were sixteen men and four boys at work. All the men had the same dissipated look that he had observed upon the countenance of the master. Their faces, otherwise, were very clean; but the tips of the right-hand fore-finger and thumb of each were black with dirt, caused by the types which they picked up with those extremities from the boxes before them. Not a word was spoken,

except what appeared to have reference to the business, and the conversation proceeded somewhat in this wise. One of the workmen, walking to a slab of iron placed in the middle of the room, took therefrom a sheet of manuscript, and looking at it negligently, shouted, -

"Number three!"

Another voice at the end of the room cried out, -

"Awful Collision!"

Joshua stopped in the midst of his sweeping, and waited for the shock. But as none came, he proceeded with his work, and thought that the second speaker was crazy. In the mean time the dialogue continued.

Speaker number one: "End a break."

Speaker number two: "All right," with a growl.

Speaker number one: "What type?"

Speaker number two, with another growl: "Minion."

At the word "minion," which Joshua considered was a term expressive of any thing but respect, he expected speaker number one would walk up to speaker number two, and punch his head. Instead of which the insulted individual went into his corner again, and re-commenced playing his tuneless piano in the meekest possible manner. The overseer then going to a part of the room where long rows of type were placed in detached pieces, asked, -

"How long will this Dreadful Suicide be before it's finished?"

"Done in five minutes, sir," was the reply, in a cheerful voice.

"Who's on the Inquest?" asked the overseer.

"I am, sir."

"Be quick and get it finished; you've been long enough over it. Now, then, how long is this Chancery Court to remain open?"

"Close it up in two minutes, sir."

And Joshua gazed with a kind of wonder at the individual who spoke, as if it were as easy to close the Court of Chancery as to close his hand.

It was the day on which the paper was sent to press; the publishing hour was three o'clock in the afternoon; and as the work was behindhand, everybody was very busy. In the centre of the room was a large iron slab, and at one time the hammering and beating on this slab were terrific. Two, or three excited individuals, with mallets and iron sticks in their hands, advanced towards the type, which was laid upon the slab, with the apparent intention of smashing it to pieces. They commenced to do this with such extraordinary earnestness, that Joshua was on the point of rushing down stairs to the master to inform him that his property was being wantonly destroyed; but as the other workmen appeared to regard the proceeding as quite a matter of course, Joshua checked himself and thought it would perhaps be as well for him to say nothing about it. The overseer also continued to issue his strange orders; and during a slight cessation in the hammering, he peremptorily ordered the workman to "lock up that Escaped Lunatic, and be quick about it." At another time he gave directions to lay the Female in Disguise on the stone (meaning the iron slab), to unlock the Old Bailey, and to correct the Chancellor's Budget. Joshua grew perfectly bewildered. The information that there was an Escaped Lunatic in the room did not so much astonish as alarm him; but as to the Female in Disguise he could not identify her, and he waited in amazement to see what disguise she wore and where she would be brought from; at the same time entertaining the idea that to lay any female upon a stone was a decidedly improper proceeding. While in this state of mental perplexity, the overseer cried out, -

"Now, then, who has the Female in Disguise in hand?"

"I have, sir," a voice replied.

"Bring it here, then," ordered the overseer, "and finish the corrections on the stone."

"All right, sir."

Joshua started and looked round to catch a sight of the female; in his agitation he stumbled against a workman who held a column of type in his arms. The type fell to the ground, and was smashed into thousands of pieces. In an instant the whole office was in confusion.

"You've done it this time, youngster," the workman said in dismay, looking at the scattered type on the floor.

Joshua did not exactly know what it was he *had* done, but felt that it must be something very bad. He soon received practical proof of the extent of the mischief, for the master, rushing into the room, kicked him down stairs and told him to go about his business. Which Joshua did in a state of much bewilderment.

Thus all the good intentions of Mrs. Marvel were frustrated. Joshua declared he would not take another situation, and his father sided with him and encouraged him. It must be confessed that Mr. Marvel continued to have his perplexities about Joshua's career, but to have openly admitted them would have been handing the victory to his wife. So he kept them to himself, and thus maintained his supremacy as master of the house. Many of his neighbors were henpecked, and he used to laugh at them. It would not have done to have given them the chance to laugh at him. Therefore, as time progressed, Mrs. Marvel's protests were less and less frequently made, and Joshua's determination not to be a wood-turner gathering strength month after month, it soon came to be recognized as quite a settled thing that he was to start in life for himself, and was not to do as his father had done before him. Pending his decision, Joshua continued to lead an idle life. But he was by no means viciously inclined; and much of his time was spent in the cultivation of two innocent amusements, both of which served him in good stead in the singular future which was in store for him. One of these amusements was a passion for music. He knew nothing of musical notation, and played entirely by ear; yet he managed to extract sweet melody from a second-hand accordion, of which, after long and patient saving of half pence and pence, he had become the happy purchaser. The other of his tastes grew out of a boyish love. How he acquired it will be recounted in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

SHOWING HOW A PASSION FOR PUNCH AND JUDY MAY LEAD TO DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES

There are few boys in the world who are without their boy-friends whom they worship, or by whom they are worshipped, with a love far surpassing in its unselfishness the love of maturer years. The memory of times that are gone is too often blurred by waves of sorrowful circumstance. Our lives are like old pictures; the canvas grows wrinkled, and the accumulated dust of years lies heavy upon figures that once were bright and fair. But neither dust nor wrinkles can obliterate the memory of the love we bore to the boy-friend with whom we used to wander in fields that were greener, beneath skies that were bluer, than fields and skies are now.

Cannot you and I remember the time when we used to stroll into the country with our boy-friend, and, with arms thrown lovingly around each other's neck, indulge in day-dreams not the less sweet because they were never to be realized? And how, when we had built our castles, and were looking at them in the clouds, with our hearts filled with joyful fancies, we wandered in silence down the shady lane, sweet with the scent of the flowering May that shut us out from view on either side; and across the field with its luxuriant grass up to our ankles with everywhere the daisy peeping out to watch us as we passed; and over the heath where the golden gorse was blushing with joy; and down the narrow path to the well which shrunk from public observation at the bottom of a flight of cool stone steps, hewn out by the monks of a cloister which should have been hard by, but wasn't, having been destroyed in a bloody battle which took place once upon a time?

Not many such experiences as these did Joshua and his boy-friend enjoy; for our Damon's Pythias, whose proper name was Daniel Taylor, was lame, with both his legs so badly broken that, had he lived unto the age of Methuselah and been fed upon the fat of the land, those props of his body would have been as useless to him all through his long life as if they had been blades of the tenderest grass.

The Taylors had three children: Susan, Ellen, and Daniel. Ellen and Daniel were twins, and when they were born Susan was ten years old. The worldly circumstances of the Taylors were no better than those of their neighbors; indeed, if any thing, they were a little worse than those of many around them. The parents, therefore, could not afford to keep a nurse-girl, and it was fortunate for them that they had provided one in the person of their elder daughter, and had allowed her to grow to a suitable age before they ventured to bring other children into the world. Fortunate as it was for the parents, it was most unfortunate for Daniel; for before he and his other half were born, Susan Taylor had contracted a passion almost insane in its intensity, to which her only brother was doomed to be a victim. That passion was a love for the British drama, as represented in Punch and Judy. All Susan's ambitions and yearnings were centred in the show; and it was not to be supposed that she would allow so small a matter as twins to interfere with her absorbing passion. How the liking for Punch and Judy had grown with her years and strengthened with her strength, it is not necessary here to trace. The fact remains, and is sufficient for the tragedy of poor Daniel's life. Squeezed to their sister's breast, Daniel and Ellen were condemned to take long journeys after Punch and Judy, and to be nursed at street-corners by a girl who had eyes and mind for nothing but the *dramatis personæ* of that time-honored play. In her scrambles after the show she often wandered a long way from home, and tore her dress, and jammed her bonnet, and muddled her stockings, and knocked her boots out at the toes, and got herself generally into a disreputable condition. But in presence of the glories of Punch and Judy, which were to her ever fresh and ever bright, such discomforts sank into absolute insignificance. All paltry considerations were forgotten in the absorbing interest with which she watched the extraordinary career of the hero of the drama. She was insensible to the cuffs and remarks of the acting-manager

who went round for contributions, which the on-lookers were solicited to drop into a tin plate or a greasy cap. He naturally resented Susan's presence at the exhibition, for she had never been known to contribute the smallest piece of copper towards the expenses. But neither his cuffs nor his resentful language had any effect upon Susan, who, in her utter disregard of all adverse circumstances, proved herself to be an ardent and conscientious admirer of the British drama. As a consequence of her peregrinations, she often found herself in strange neighborhoods, and did not know her way home. The anxiety she caused her mother, who was naturally proud of her twins, almost maddened that poor woman. She used to run about the neighborhood of Stepney, wringing her hands and declaring that her twins were kidnapped. At first the neighbors were in the habit of sympathizing with her, and of making anxious inquiries of one another concerning the children; but when, after some months of such uneventful excitement, they found that Susan and her twins were always brought home in good condition as regarded their limbs-although in a very disgraceful condition as regarded their personal appearance: but dirt counted for nothing in such a case of excited expectation-their ardor cooled, and they withheld their sympathy from the distressed mother. Indeed, they looked upon themselves in the light of injured individuals, because something really calamitous had not happened to the children. At length Susan became such a nuisance-not only at home, but at many police-stations, where she was popularly known as "that dirty girl again, with the twins" – that the mother was recommended to lock her up. Despairing of being able to cure her daughter of her Punch-and-Judy mania by any other means, the mother locked her up with her infant charges in a room on the first floor.

That was a sad thing for poor Daniel. Susan very naturally sulked at being locked up, and at being deprived of her favorite amusement. Life had no joy for her without Punch and Judy. With Punch and Judy, existence was blissful; without Punch and Judy, existence was a blank. Regarding the twins as the cause of her imprisonment, she vented her spleen upon the unfortunate couple, and was spiteful enough to leave traces of yellow soap in their eyes when she washed them; and when they cried because of the smart, and rubbed their eyelids with their little fists to get rid of the unwelcome particles, she smacked them on the tenderest parts of their persons, and made them cry the more. But they were not destined to endure this kind of torture for more than a couple of days.

On the third day of their imprisonment, Susan was sitting moodily on the floor, sulking as usual, and biting her lips and fretting, when suddenly the well-beloved "too-to-too-a-too" of the Punch-and-Judy showman came floating through the window. Wild with delight, she snatched up the twins, and, rushing to the window, bent her body forward, and looked out. Yes; there it was-there was the show. Preparations were being made for the drama; the green curtain was down, the crowd was collecting, and the acting manager was already taking a critical survey of the persons who loitered, and was mentally marking down those who would not be allowed to stroll or slink away without being solicited for a fee. The front of the stage was not turned towards the window out of which Susan was looking; and she could only see part of the show. That was a terrible disappointment to her; and her suffering was really very great when she found that the gallows upon which Punch was to be hanged was erected just in that corner of the stage of which she could not obtain a glimpse. She stamped her foot upon the floor excitedly; and, bending her body still more forward in her eagerness, poor Daniel slipped out of her arms on to the pavement. For a moment Susan was so bewildered that she could not realize what had occurred: but, when she heard the sharp cry of agony to which Daniel gave utterance, and when she saw the crowd of people rushing with frightened faces towards the spot where the little fellow was lying, she ran into a corner of the room with the other child in her arms, and throwing her frock over her head, cowered down with her face to the wall, and began to cry. But little notice was taken of her. Daniel was picked up and carried into the house. He was not killed; but his two legs were badly broken, and were destined never to be of any use to him. So, as he had to depend upon artificial legs for support, Daniel began to learn the use of crutches almost before he had begun to learn to toddle.

The love that existed between Joshua and Daniel sprang out of an innocent flirtation which was indulged in by Joshua Marvel and Ellen Taylor. The amatory youngsters exchanged vows when they

were quite little things, and pledged themselves not to marry any one else: "no, not for the wide, wide world!" Innocent kisses, broken pieces of crockery with which they played at dinners and shops on back-window sills, and the building of grottoes when the oyster-season came round, were the material bonds which united the youthful loves of Joshua and Ellen.

In due time Joshua was introduced to the family; not exactly as the accepted suitor of the little damsel, but in a surreptitious sneaking manner, which older suitors would have considered undignified. Such a mean position did he for sometime occupy in the house of his affianced, that on several occasions when Mr. Taylor came home drunk, Joshua was locked up in the coal-cellar, lest he should meet the eye of the tipsy parent, who, when he was in his cups, did not possess the most amiable disposition in the world. From that coal-cellar Joshua would emerge low-spirited and grimy, and in a despondent mood; but sundry marks of affection from Ellen, the effects of which were afterwards visible in black patches on her nose and cheeks and cherry lips, invariably restored him to cheerfulness. Such a courtship was not dignified; but Joshua and Ellen were perfectly satisfied; and so was Dan, who thoroughly approved of his twin-sister's choice of a sweetheart.

As the children grew in years, the ties that united Ellen and Joshua were weakened; while those that united the boys were strengthened, until a very perfect and unselfish love was established between them. Both the lads were in the same condition as regarded their time. Joshua had his on his hands because he had not made up his mind what he was going to be; and Daniel had his on his hands because he had broken his legs. Each had his particular fancy. Joshua's was music; Dan's was birds.

Condemned to a sedentary life from the nature of his affliction, and not able to run about as other boys did-for when his sister had let him fall from her arms out of the window the breaking of his legs was not the only injury he had received-Dan turned his attention to a couple of canaries which were part of his parents' household gods. In course of time the birds grew to be very fond of him; and he trained them to do such pretty tricks, and was himself of so gentle and amiable a disposition, that good-natured neighbors made him occasional presents of birds-such as a linnet, or a lark, or a pair of bullfinches-until he had gathered around him a small collection of feathered younglings. With these companions his life was as happy as life could be. He did not mope or fret because his legs were useless, and because he was compelled to use crutches; on the contrary, he absolutely loved his wooden props, as if they were bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

"You are right not to be a wood-turner Jo," said Dan, when his friend related to him the substance of the family discussions. "If my legs were like yours, I wouldn't be."

Dan called his friend "Jo." It was not quite right for Joshua, he said, but it sounded pretty. And so it did, especially from his lips.

"I wish your legs *were* like mine, Dan," said Joshua.

"It's of no use wishing," replied Dan. "You know what mother says; it takes all sorts to make a world."

"Sound legs and broken legs-eh, Dan?"

"Yes," answered Dan merrily; "and long ones and short ones, and thick ones and thin ones. Besides, if I had the strongest and biggest legs in the world, I don't think I should be happier than I am."

"But wouldn't you like to be a hero-the same as I am going to be?" asked Joshua.

"We can't all be heroes. You go and fight with lions; I will stop and play with birds. I couldn't tame lions; but I *can* tame birds." Which he could, and did.

Dan was fond of speaking about lions because his name was Daniel; and many and many a time had he and Joshua read the wonderful story of Daniel in the lions' den. Joshua did not know much of the Bible until Dan introduced it to him, and read to him in his thin sweet voice the marvellous romances in that Book of books.

"There was a hero for you!" exclaimed Joshua admiringly, referring to the biblical "I wonder what made him so brave."

"Because he was doing what he knew to be right," replied Dan.

"I dare say," was the acquiescent rejoinder.

"And because he was not afraid to speak the truth even to Belshazzar; and because, above all, he believed in God. So God delivered him."

"All because he was doing right," said Joshua.

"All because he was doing right," repeated Dan. "I'm not a bit brave; that is because I am lame, perhaps. If I was thrown into a lions' den I should die of fear-I am sure I should; but if I was thrown into a birds' cage, full of strange birds, I would soon make friends with them; they would come and eat out of my hand in no time."

Dan, indeed, was wonderfully learned about birds and their habits, and possessed a singular power over them. He could train them to any thing almost. And bear this in mind; he used no cruel means in his training of them. What he taught them he taught them by kindness; and they were subservient to him from love and not from fear. The nature of the affliction which condemned him to a sedentary life, sharpened and concentrated his mental faculties, and endued him with a surprising patience. If it had been otherwise, he could never have trained the birds so thoroughly. Never mind what they were-blackbirds, linnets, larks, bullfinches, canaries-they were one and all his willing slaves, and, in the course of time, performed the tasks he set them with their best ability. Give Dan any one of these birds' and in a few weeks it would hop upon his finger, dance at his whistle, come at his call, fall dead upon the table, and jump up again at a given signal as lively as a cricket. He made little carts for them to draw, little swords for them to carry, little ladders for them to climb up, little guns for them to fire off, little houses for them to go in at the doors of and come out of the chimneys of. It was a sight worth seeing to watch them go through their performances; to see the dead bird lie on its back on the table, and watch cunningly out of a corner of its left eye for the signal which allowed it to come to life again; to see the family birds, after indulging in a little sensible conversation on the doorstep, go into the house, the door of which closed with a spring directly they got on the inside of it, and then presently to see their heads pop out of the chimneys, as if their owners were wondering what sort of weather it was; to see the first villain of the company hop upon the cart in which the pop-gun was fixed, and hop upon a slip of wood which in some mysterious manner acted upon the gun, and caused it to go off-and then to see the desperado watch for dreadful consequences which never followed; to see that cold-blooded and desperate bird jump briskly down, as if it were not disappointed, and place its neck in a ring in the shafts, and hop away to another battle-field; to see the two military birds march up and down in front of the house, holding little wooden swords in their beaks, as who should say to an advancing foe, "Approach if you dare, and meet your doom!" to see the climbing-bird hop up the steps of the ladder, and then hop down again triumphantly, as if it had performed a feat of which bird-kind might be proud; and to know that the birds enjoyed the fun and delighted in it; were pleasant things to see and know, and could do no one any harm. Of course there were hitches in the performances; occasionally the birds were dull or obstinate; but, as a rule, they were tractable and obedient; and if they did sometimes bungle their tricks they might very well be excused, for they were but feeble creatures after all.

So Dan passed his time innocently, and loved his pets, and his pets loved him. Joshua grew to love them too. He learned all their pretty little vocal tricks, and could imitate the different languages of the birds in such a wonderful manner that they would stop and listen to his warbling, and would answer it with similar joyful notes of their own. And when Dan and he were in a merry mood-which was not seldom-they and the birds would join in a concert which was almost as good, and quite as enjoyable, as the scraping of fiddles and the playing of flutes. Sometimes, in the evening, Joshua would play soft music upon his second-hand accordion; and directly he sounded the first note the birds would hop upon the table and stand in a line, with their heads inclined on one side, listening to Joshua's simple melodies with the gravity of connoisseurs, and would not flutter a feather of their little wings for fear they should disturb the harmony of sound.

CHAPTER III

LIFE AND DEATH OF GOLDEN CLOUD

There was one canary which they had christened Golden Cloud. It was one of the two canaries that Dan had first trained; and for this and other reasons Golden Cloud was a special favorite with the lads. Dan used to declare that Golden Cloud literally understood every word he spoke to it. And it really appeared as if Dan were right in so declaring and so believing; it was certainly a fact that Golden Cloud was a bird of superior intelligence. The other birds were of that opinion, or they would not have accepted its leadership. When they marched, Golden Cloud was at the head of them-and very proud it appeared to be of its position; when the performances took place, Golden Cloud was the first to commence; if any thing very responsible and very particular were to be done, Golden Cloud was intrusted with it; and if any new bird was refractory, it devolved upon Golden Cloud to assist Dan to bring that bird to its senses. The birds did not entertain a particle of envy towards Golden Cloud because it had attained an eminence more distinguished than their own; and this fact was as apparent, as it must have been astonishing, to any reflective human being who enjoyed the happy privilege of being present now and then at the performances of Dan's clever troupe. Even when old age crept upon it-it was in the prime of life when Dan first took it in hand-the same respect was paid to the sagamore of the company. Its sight grew filmed, its legs grew scaly, its feathers grew ragged. What matter? Had it not been kind and gentle to them when in its prime? Should they not be kind and gentle to it now that Time was striking it down? And was it not, even in its decrepitude, the wise bird of them all?

Notwithstanding that it grew more and more shaky every hour almost, the old sense of duty was strong in the heart of Golden Cloud; and it strove to take part in the performances to the last. Golden Cloud had evidently learned the lesson, that to try always to do one's duty is the sweetest thing in life. In that respect it was wiser than many human beings, who should have been wiser than it. It was a melancholy sight, yet a comical one, withal, to see Golden Cloud lift a sword with its beak, and try to hold it there, and hop with it at the head of the company. It staggered here and there, and, being almost blind, sometimes hit an inoffensive bird across the beak, which caused a momentary confusion; but every thing was set right as quickly as could be. The other birds bore with Golden Cloud's infirmities, and made its labors light for it. Even the tomtit-that saucy, beautiful rascal, with its crown of Cambridge blue, who had been the most refractory bird that Golden Cloud ever had to deal with, who *would* turn heels over head in the midst of a serious lesson, and who *would* hop and twist about and agitate its staid companions with its restless tricks-even the tomtit, whose greatest delight was to steal things and break things, but whose spirit had been subdued and tamed by Golden Cloud's firmness, assisted the veteran in its old age, and did not make game of it.

One evening Joshua came round to Dan's room rather later than usual, and found Dan in tears.

"What is the matter, Dan?" asked Joshua.

Dan did not reply.

"Do your legs hurt you, Dan?" asked Joshua tenderly.

Dan formed a "No" with his lips, but uttered no sound.

Joshua thought it best not to tease his friend with any more questions. He saw that Dan was suffering from a grief which he would presently unbosom. He took his accordion on his knee and began to play very softly. As he played, a canary in a mourning-cloak came out of the toy-house; another canary in a mourning-cloak followed; then a bullfinch, and another bullfinch; then the tomtit and the linnets; and then the blackbirds; all in little black cloaks which Ellen Taylor's nimble fingers had made for them that day out of a piece of the lining of an old frock. At the sight of the first canary, with its black cloak on, Joshua was filled with astonishment; but when bird after bird followed, and ranged themselves solemnly in a line before him, and when he missed the presence of one familiar

friend, he solved the riddle of their strange appearance; the birds were in mourning for the death of Golden Cloud.

They seemed to know it, too; they seemed to know that they had lost a friend, and that they were about to pay the last tribute of respect to their once guide and master. The bullfinches, their crimson breasts hidden by their cloaks, looked, with their black masks of faces like negro birds in mourning; the amiable linnets, unobtrusive and shy as they generally were, were still more quiet and sad than usual; even the daring blackbirds were subdued-with the exception of one who, in the midst of a silent interval, struck up "Polly, put the kettle on," in its shrill whistle, but, observing the eyes of the tomtit fixed upon it with an air of reproach, stopped in sudden remorse, with the "kettle" sticking in its throat.

Dan had made a white shroud for Golden Cloud; and it was both quaint and mournful to see it as it lay in its coffin-Dan's money-box-surrounded by the mourners in their black cloaks. They stood quite still, with their cunning little heads all inclined one way, as if they were waiting for news concerning their dead leader from the world beyond the present.

Joshua, with a glance of sorrow at the coffin, said, -

"Your money-box, Dan!"

"I wish I could have buried it in a flower-pot, Jo," replied Dan, suppressing a sob.

"Why didn't you?"

"Mother said father would be angry," -

Here the blackbird-perceiving that the tomtit was no longer observing it, and inwardly fretting that it should have been pulled up short in the midst of its favorite song; also feeling awkward, doubtless, with a kettle in its throat-piped out, with amazing rapidity and shrillness, "Polly, put the kettle on; we'll all have tea."

The blue feathers in the tomtit's tail quivered with indignation, and its white-tipped wings fluttered reprovingly. Moral force was evidently quite thrown away upon such a blackbird as that; so the tomtit bestowed upon the recreant a sharp dig with its iron beak, and the blackbird bore the punishment with meekness; merely giving vent, in response, to a wonderful imitation of the crowing of an extremely weak cock, who led a discontented life in a neighboring back-yard. After which it relapsed into silence.

Dan, who had stopped his speech to observe this passage between the birds, repeated, -

"Mother said father would be angry; he knows how many flower-pots we have. So I used my money-box."

"But you would rather have a flowerpot, Dan?"

"I should have liked a flower-pot above all things; it seems more natural for a bird. Something might grow out of it; something that Golden Cloud would like to know is above it, if it was only a blade of grass."

Joshua ran out of Dan's room and returned in a very few minutes with a flowerpot with mignonette growing in it. He was almost breathless with excitement.

"It is mine, Dan," he said, "and it is yours. I bought it with my own money; and it shall be Golden Cloud's coffin."

"Kiss me, Jo," said Dan.

Joshua kissed him, and then carefully lifted the flower-roots from the pot, and placed Golden Cloud in the soft mould beneath. A few tears fell from Dan's eyes into the flowerpot coffin, as he looked for the last time upon the form of his pet canary. Then Joshua replaced the flower-roots, and arranged the earth, and Golden Cloud was ready for burial.

"Play something, Jo," said Dan.

Joshua took his accordion in his hands, and played a slow solemn march; and the birds, directed by Dan, hopped gravely round the flower-pot, the tomtit keeping its eye sternly fixed upon the

rebellious blackbird, expressing in the look an unmistakable determination to put an instant stop to the slightest exhibition of indecency.

"I don't know where to bury it," said Dan, when the ceremony was completed. "Ellen has been trying to pick out a flagstone in the yard, but she made her fingers bleed, and then couldn't move it. And if it was buried there, the stone would have to be trodden down, and the flowers in the coffin couldn't grow."

"There's that little bit of garden in *our* yard," said Joshua. "I can bury it there, if you don't mind. I can put the flowerpot in so that the mignonette will grow out of it quite nicely. It isn't very far, Dan," continued Joshua, divining Dan's wish that Golden Cloud should be buried near him; "only five yards off; and it is the best place we know of."

Dan assenting, Joshua took the flowerpot, and buried it in what he called his garden; which was an estate of such magnificent proportions that he could have covered it with his jacket. He was proud of it notwithstanding, and considered it a grand property. A boundary of oyster-shells defined the limits of the estate, and served as a warning to trespassing feet. In the centre of this garden Golden Cloud was buried. When Joshua returned to Dan's room, the mourning-cloaks were taken off the birds—who seemed very glad to get rid of them—and they were sent to bed.

Dan was allowed to sit up an hour longer than usual that night, and he and Joshua occupied those precious minutes in confidential conversation. First they spoke of Golden Cloud, and then of Joshua's prospects.

"You haven't made up your mind yet what you are going to be, Jo," said Dan.

"I haven't made up my mind," replied Joshua, "but I have an idea. I don't want you to ask me what it is. I will tell you soon—in a few weeks perhaps."

"Where have you been to-day? You were late."

"I went to the waterside."

"To the river?"

"To the river."

"To the river that runs to the sea," said Dan musingly, with a dash of regret in his voice. "What a wonderful sight it must be to see the sea, as we read of it! Would you like to see it, Jo?"

"Dearly, Dan!"

"And to be on it?"

"Dearly, Dan!"

Dan looked at Joshua sadly. There was an eager longing in Joshua's eyes, and an eager longing in the parting of his lips, as he sat with hands clasped upon his knee.

"I can see a great many things that I have never seen," said Dan; "see them with my mind, I mean. I can see gardens and fields and trees, almost as they are. I can fancy myself lying in fields with the grass waving about me. I can fancy myself in a forest with the great trees spreading out their great limbs, and I can see the branches bowing to each other as the wind sweeps by them. I can see a little stream running down a hill, and hiding itself in a valley. I can even see a river—but all rivers must be muddy, I think; not bright, like the streams. But I can't see the sea, Jo. It is too big—too wonderful!"

Rapt in the contemplation of the subject, Dan and Joshua were silent for a little while.

"Ships on the top of water-mountains," resumed Dan presently, "then down in a valley like, with curling waves above them. That is what I have read; but I can't see it. 'Robinson Crusoe' is behind you, Jo."

Joshua opened the book—it was a favorite one with the lads, as with what lads is it not?—and skimmed down the pages as he turned them over.

"A raging wave, mountain-like, came rolling astern of us," he said.

"That is the shipwreck," said Dan, looking over Joshua's shoulder. "Then here, farther down: 'I saw the sea come after me as high as a great hill, and as furious as an enemy.' Think of that! Here picture."

The lads looked for the thousandth time at the rough wood-cut, in which Robinson was depicted casting a look of terror over his shoulder at the curling waves, ten times as tall as himself; his arms were extended, and he was supposed to be running away from the waves; although, according to the picture, nothing short of a miracle could save him.

"Look!" said Joshua, turning a few pages back and reading, "'yonder lies a dreadful monster on the side of that hillock, fast asleep.'"

"I looked where he pointed," read Dan-it was a favorite custom with them to read each a few lines at a time-"and saw a dreadful monster indeed, for it was a terrible great lion that lay on the side of the shore, under the shade of a piece of the hill that hung as it were a little over him. Xury, says I, you shall go on shore, and kill him."

"Could you kill a lion, Jo?" asked Dan, breaking off in his reading.

"I don't know," said Joshua, considering and feeling very doubtful of his capability.

Dan resumed the reading: -

"I took our biggest gun, which was almost musket-bore, and loaded it with a good charge of powder and with two slugs, and laid it down; then I loaded another gun with two bullets; and the third (for we had three pieces), I loaded with five smaller bullets."

"No, I couldn't kill a lion," said Joshua, in a tone of disappointed conviction; "for I can't fire off a gun. But that occurred nearly two hundred years ago, Dan. I don't suppose there are as many lions now as there used to be."

"And ships are different, too, to what they were then, Jo," said Dan, closing the book. "Stronger and better built. I dare say if it had been a very strong ship that Robinson Crusoe went out in, he wouldn't have been wrecked."

"I am glad he was, though; if he hadn't been, we shouldn't have been able to read about him. It is beautiful, isn't it?"

"Beautiful to read," replied Dan. "But he was dreadfully miserable sometimes; for twenty-four years and more he had no one to speak to. It appears strange to me that he didn't forget how to speak the English language, and that he didn't go mad. Now, Jo, supposing it was you! Do you think, if you had no one to speak to for twenty years, that you would be able to speak as well as you do now? Don't you think you would stammer over a word sometimes, and lose the sense of it?"

Dan asked these questions so earnestly, that Joshua laughed, and said, -

"Upon my word, I don't know, Dan."

But the time was to come when the memory of Dan's questions came to Joshua's mind with a deep and solemn significance. "He had his parrot certainly," continued Dan; "but what used he to say to it? 'Robin, Robin, Robin Crusoe! Poor Robin Crusoe! How came you here? Where have you been, Robin?' That wasn't much to say, and to be always saying; and I am sure that if he kept on saying it for so many years, he must have entirely forgotten what the meaning of it was. You try it, - say a word, or two or three words, for a hundred times. You will begin to wonder what it means before you come to the end."

"But he had his Bible; and you know what a comfort that was to him."

"Perhaps that was the reason he didn't go mad. I dare say, too, that some qualities in him were strengthened and came to his aid because he was so strangely situated. What qualities now, Jo?"

"I don't understand you, Dan."

"I *do* say things sometimes you don't understand at first, don't I, Jo?"

Joshua nodded good-humoredly.

"I am often puzzled myself to know what I mean. Leaving Robinson Crusoe alone, and speaking of qualities, Jo, take me for an instance. I am a cripple, and shall never be able to go about. And do you know, Jo, that my mind is stronger than it would have been if I were not helpless? I can see things."

"Can you see any thing now, Dan?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"I can see something that will separate you and me, Jo."

"Forever, Dan?"

"No, not forever; we shall be together sometimes and then you can tell me all sorts of things that I shall never be able to see myself."

"Don't you think your legs will ever get strong?" asked Joshua.

"Never, Jo; they get worse and worse. And I feel, too, so weak, that I am afraid I shall not have strength to use my crutches much longer. Every thing about me-my limbs, and joints, and every thing-gets weaker and weaker every day. If it wasn't for my body, I should be all right. My mind is right. I can talk and think as well as if my body were strong. Stupid bits of flesh and bone!" he exclaimed, looking at his limbs, and good-humoredly scolding them. "Why don't you fly away and leave me?"

At this point of the conversation Mrs. Taylor called out that it was time for Dan to go to bed, so the lads parted. That night Joshua dreamed that he killed a lion; and Dan dreamed that Golden Cloud came out of the flower-pot, and it wasn't dead, but only pretending.

Dan had good reason for speaking in the way he did of his body, for it distressed him very much. Soon after the death of Golden Cloud, he grew so weak and ill that he was confined to his bed. But his mind scarcely seemed to be affected by his bodily ills, and his cheerfulness never deserted him. He had his dear winged companions brought to his bedroom, and they hopped about his bed as contentedly as could be. And there he played with them and took delight in them; and, as he hearkened to their chirrupings, and looked at their pretty forms, a sweet pleasure was in his eyes, a sweet pleasure was in his heart. And this pleasure was enhanced by the presence of Joshua, who spent a great deal of time with his sick friend.

The tender love that existed between the lads was undefiled by a single selfish act or thought. They were one in sympathy and sentiment. Joshua was Dan's almost only companion during his illness. Dan's mother tended him and gave him his physic, which could not do him any good, the doctor said; but Mrs. Taylor's household duties and responsibilities occupied nearly the whole of her time; she could not afford to keep a servant, and she had all the kitchen-work to do. Ellen-Dan's twin-sister and Joshua's quondam sweetheart-was often in the room; but, young as she was, she was already being employed about the house assisting her mother. She scrubbed the floors and washed the clothes; and, although she was so little that she had to stand on a chair in the tiny yard to hang the clothes on the line, she was as proud of her work, and took as much pleasure in it, as if she were a grown woman, who had been properly brought up. Notwithstanding the onerous nature of her duties, she managed to spend half an hour now and again with Josh and Dan, and would sit quite still listening to the conversation. Her presence in the room was pleasing to the boy-friends, for Ellen was as modest and tidy a little girl as could be met with in a day's walk.

Susan, Dan's unfortunate nursemaid, was a young woman now. But she had a horror of the sick-room. She entertained a secret conviction that she was a murderess, and really had some sort of an idea that if Daniel died she would be taken up and hanged. She was as fascinated as ever with Punch and Judy; but the fascination had something horrible in it. Often when she was standing looking at the show-and she was more welcome to the showman than she used to be, for now she sometimes gave him a penny-she would begin to tremble when the hangman came on the scene with his gallows, and would then fairly run away in a fright. Ever since she had let Daniel slip from her arms out of the window, there had been growing in her mind a fear that something dreadful was following her; and a dozen times a day she would throw a startled look behind her, as if to assure herself that there was nothing horrible there. She had been sufficiently punished for her carelessness. For a good many weeks after it occurred, bad little boys and girls in the neighborhood used to call after her, "Ah-h-h Who killed her little brother? Ah-h-h!" If she ran, they ran after her, and hooted her with the dreadful accusation. It took different forms. Now it was, "Ah-h-h-h! Who killed her little brother? Ah-h-h!" And now it was, "Ah-h-h! Who'll be hung for killing her little brother? Ah-h-h-h!" Such an effect did

this cruel punishment have upon her, that she would wake up in terror in the middle of the night with all her fevered pulses quivering to the cry, "Ah-h-h-h! Who'll be hung for killing her little brother? Ah-h-h-h!" But time, which cures all things, relieved her. The bad boys and girls grew tired of saying the same thing over and over again. A new excitement claimed their attention, and poor Susan was allowed to walk unmolested through the streets. But the effect remained in the terror-flashes that would spring in her eyes, and in the agonized looks of fear that she would throw behind her every now and again, without any apparent cause. These feelings had such a powerful effect upon her, that she never entered Dan's room unless she were compelled to do so; and once, when Dan sent for her and asked her to forgive him for being naughty when he was a baby, she was so affected that she did nothing but shed remorseful tears for a week afterwards.

One day, when Dan was playing with the birds, and no other person but he and Joshua was in the room, he said, -

"Do you think the birds know that I am so weak and ill, Jo, dear?"

"Sometimes I think they do, Dan," answered Joshua.

"Dear little things! You haven't any idea how weak I really am. But I am strong enough for something."

"What, Dan?"

"If you don't ask any questions, I sha'n't tell you any stories," replied Dan gayly. "Lend me your penknife."

Joshua gave Dan his penknife, and when he came the next day Dan was cutting strips of wood from one of his crutches.

"O Dan!" exclaimed Joshua, bursting into tears.

Dan looked at Joshua, and smiled.

"O you cry-baby!" he said. But he said it in a voice of exquisite tenderness; and he drew Joshua's head on to the pillow, and he laid his own beside it, and he kissed Joshua's lips.

"I shall not want my crutches any more," he whispered in Joshua's ear as thus they lay; "that is all. It isn't as bad as you think."

"You are not going to die, Dan?" asked Joshua in a trembling voice.

"I don't think I am-yet. It is only because I am almost certain-I feel it, Jo-that I shall be a helpless cripple all my life, and that I shall not be able to move about, even with the help of crutches."

"Poor dear Dan!" said Joshua, checking his sobs with difficulty.

"Poor Dan! Not at all! I can read, I can think, and I can love you, Jo, all the same. I have made up my mind what I am going to do. I shall live in you. You are my friend, and strong as you are, you can't love me more than I love you. And even if I was to die, dear" -

"Don't say that, Dan; I can't bear to think of it."

"Why? It isn't dreadful. If I was to die, we should still be friends-we should still love each other. Don't you love Golden Cloud?"

Joshua whispered "Yes."

"But Golden Cloud is not here. Yet you love him. And so do I, more than I did when pet was alive. I don't quite know how it is with birds, but I do know how it is with us. If you was here, Jo, and I was there, we should meet again."

"Amen, Dan!"

"And it is nice to believe and know-as you and I believe and know-that if we were parted, we should come together again by and by; and that perhaps the dear little birds would be with us there as they are here, and that we should love them as we love them now. They are so pretty and harmless that I think God will let them come. Besides, what would the trees do without them?"

"What do you mean, Dan, by saying that you are going to live in me?"

"It is a curious fancy, Jo, but I have thought of it a good deal, and I want you to think of it too. I want to be with you, although I shall not be able to move. You are going to be a hero, and are going

to see strange sights perhaps. I can see farther than you can; and I know the meaning of your going down to the riverside, as you have done a good many times lately. I know what you will make up your mind to be, although I sha'n't say until you tell me yourself. Well, Jo, I want you to fancy, if I don't know what is happening to you-if you are in any strange place, and are seeing wonderful things-I want you to fancy, 'Dan is here with me, although I cannot see him.' Will you do that, Jo, dear?"

"Yes; wherever I am, and whatever I shall see, I will think, 'Dan is here with me, although I cannot see him.'"

"That is friendship. This isn't," said Dan, holding up a finger; "this is only a little bit of flesh. If it is anywhere about us, it is here;" and he took Joshua's fingers, and pressed them to his heart. Then, after a pause of a few moments, he said, "So don't cry any more because I am cutting up my crutches; I am making some new things for the birds."

They had a concert after that; and the blackbird whistled "Polly, put the kettle on," to its heart's content; and the tomtit performed certain difficult acrobatic tricks in token of approval.

Dan recovered so far from his sickness as to be able to leave his bed. But it almost appeared as if he was right in saying that he should not want his crutches. He had not sufficient strength in his shoulders to use them. He had to be lifted in and out of bed, and sometimes could not even wash and dress himself. Ellen Taylor was his nurse, and a dear good nurse she proved herself to be. A cross word never passed her lips. She devoted herself to the service of her helpless brother with a very perfect love; and her nature was so beautiful in its gentleness and tenderness that those qualities found expression in her face, and made that beautiful also. Dan had yielded to Joshua's entreaties not to destroy his crutches. "You might be able to use them some day," Joshua would say. To which Dan would reply by asking gayly if Joshua had ever heard of a miracle in Stepney. However, he kept his crutches, and Joshua was satisfied. In course of time Joshua began to train a few birds at his own house, and now and then Dan's parents would allow Dan to be carried to Joshua's house, and to stop there for a few days. When that occurred, Dan and Joshua slept together, and would tell stories to each other long after the candle had been blown out-stories of which Joshua was almost always the hero. Joshua had one great difficulty to overcome when he first introduced the birds into his house; that difficulty was the yellow-haired cat, of which mention has already been made. With the usual amiability of her species, the domestic tigress, directly she set eyes upon the birds, determined to make a meal of them, and it required all Joshua's vigilance to prevent the slaughter of the innocents. But he was patient, and firm, and kind, and he so conquered the tigerish propensities of the cat towards the birds, that in a few weeks she began to tolerate them, and in a few weeks more to play with them and to allow them to play with her, and gradually grew so cordial with them that it might have been supposed she had kittenized them by mistake.

CHAPTER IV IN WHICH DAN GETS WILD NOTIONS INTO HIS HEAD, AND MAKES SOME VERY BOYISH EXPERIMENTS

If every farthing of the allowance of pocket-money which Joshua and Dan received from their respective parents had been carefully saved up, it would not have amounted to a very large sum in the course of the year. Insignificant, however, as was the allowance, it sufficed for their small wants, and was made to yield good interest in the way of social enjoyment. The lads did not keep separate accounts. What was Joshua's was Dan's, and what was Dan's was Joshua's. As there were no secret clasps in their minds concealing something, which the other was not to share and enjoy, so there was no secret clasp in their money-box which debarred either from spending that which, strictly speaking, belonged to his friend. Dan was the treasurer; the treasury was the money-box which was to have been Golden Cloud's coffin. Dan's allowance was two pence a week, which was often in arrears in consequence of his father being too fond of public-houses; Joshua's allowance was four pence a week, which he received very regularly. But each of their allowances was supplemented by contributions from independent sources. The motives which prompted these contributions were of a very different nature; as the following will explain: -

"Something more for the money-box, Dan," said Joshua, producing a four-penny piece, and dropping it into the box.

"From the same party, Jo?" asked Dan.

"From the same jolly old party, Dan. From the Old Sailor."

"Is he nice?"

"The Old Sailor? You should see him, that's all."

"You have been down to the waterside again, then?"

"Yes. Tuck-tuck-joeey!" This latter to the linnet, who came out to have a peep at Joshua, and who, directly it heard the greeting, responded with the sweetest peal of music that mortal ever listened to. When the linnet had finished its song the obtrusive and greedy blackbird, determined not to be outdone, and quite ignoring the fact that it had had a very good supper, ordered Polly to put the kettle on, in its most piercing notes.

"Did you go on the river, Jo?" asked Dan.

"Yes. In a boat. Rowing. The Old Sailor says I am getting along famously."

"I *should* like to see the Old Sailor."

"I wish you could; but he is such a strange old fellow! He doesn't care for the land. When I tell mother what I am making up my mind to be-what I shall have *made* up mind then to be-I will coax him to come to our house. I want him to talk to mother about the sea, for she is sure to cry and fret, and although the Old Sailor doesn't think that women are as good as men, he thinks mothers are better."

Dan laughed a pleasant little laugh.

"That is queer," he said.

"He knows all about you, and he asks me every day, 'How is Dan?'"

"I am glad of that-very glad."

"So am I. I have told him all about the birds, and how, they love you. You would never guess what he said to-day about you."

"Something very bad, I dare say," said Dan, knowing very well, all the time, that it was something good, or Joshua would not tell him.

"Something *very* bad. He said, 'He must be a fine little chap'-meaning you, Dan-'or the birds wouldn't love him.'"

"Has he been all over the world, Jo?"

"All over the world; and O Dan, he has seen *such* places!"

"I tell you what we will do," said Dan. "To-morrow you shall buy a couple of young bullfinches, and you shall find out some tune the Old Sailor is fond of; and I will teach the bullfinches to whistle it. Then you shall give the birds to the Old Sailor, and say they are a present from me and you."

"That will be prime! He will be so pleased!"

"Have you ever heard him sing, Jo?"

"Yes," answered Joshua, laughing; "I have heard him sing, -

'Which is the properest day to drink,
Saturday, Sunday, Monday?
Each is the properest day, I think-
Why should I name but one day?
Tell me but yours, I'll mention my day,
Let us but fix on some day-
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday,
Saturday, Sunday, or Monday.'"

"I don't think that would do," said Dan, echoing Joshua's laugh.

"Here's another," said Joshua, and he played a prelude to "Poor Tom Bowling," and sang the first verse, -

'Here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling,
The darling of our crew;
No more he'll hear the tempest howling,
For death has broached him too.
His form was of the manliest beauty,
His heart was kind and soft,
Faithful below Tom did his duty,
But now he's gone aloft,
But now he's gone aloft.'"

Joshua sang the words with much tender feeling, but Dan shook his head.

"The birds would never be able to get the spirit of the song into them," he said, "and the tune is nothing without that. Never mind-we'll teach them something, and then the Old Sailor shall have them."

"And I shall tell him they are a present from you alone."

"No," said Dan energetically; "that would spoil it all. They are from you and me together. Can't you guess the reason why?"

"I believe I can," replied Joshua, after a little consideration. "The Old Sailor likes me, and you want him to like you because of me, not because of yourself alone; you want him to like me more because of you-as I am sure he will when he knows you."

"That's it. I want him to know that we love each other, and that we shall always love each other, whether we are together or separated. I want everybody who likes you, Jo, to like me."

Joshua laid his hand upon Dan's, which rested on the table, and Dan placed his other hand upon Joshua's playfully. Their hands were growing to be very unlike. Dan's hand, as it grew, became more delicate, while Joshua's grew stronger and more muscular. Dan laughed another pleasant laugh as he

remarked the difference between them. "That is a proper kind of hand for a hero," he said. And then, in a more serious voice, "Joshua, do you know I think we can see each other's thoughts." And so, indeed, it appeared as if they could.

The next day the bullfinches were bought, and Dan began to train them. They were a pair of very young birds, not a dozen days old, and the air Dan fixed upon to teach them first was "Rule, Britannia."

So much for Joshua's supplemental contributions to the general fund. Now for Dan's.

"Another sixpence in a piece of paper, Jo!"

"That makes eighteen pence this month, Dan. Poor Susan!"

"Poor Susan!" echoed Dan.

Susan was very much to be pitied. Looking upon herself as her brother's destroyer, she endeavored, by offerings of sixpences as often as she could afford them, to atone for the crime—for so she now regarded it—by which she had made him a helpless cripple. These sixpences were not given openly; they were laid, as it were, upon the sacrificial altar in secret. Sometimes the altar was one of Ellen's shoes, and Ellen, when she dressed herself, would feel something sticking in her heel, and discover it to be a sixpence tightly screwed up in a piece of paper, with the words, "For Dan; from Susan," written on it; sometimes the altar was one of Dan's pocket-handkerchiefs, and the sixpence was tied up in a knot; sometimes it was a bag of bird-seed; sometimes Dan's cap. She was so imbued with a sense of guilt, that she trembled when she met Dan's eye. He was as kind and gentle to her, when he had the opportunity, as he was to all around him; and divining her secret remorse, he tried by every means in his power to lessen it. But the feeling, that, if Dan died, she was a murderess, was too deeply implanted in her to be ever removed. She lived in constant fear. She was afraid of the dark, and could not sleep without a rush-light near her bedside. Often in the night, on occasions when Dan was weaker than usual, she would creep down stairs, and listen at his bedroom-door to catch the sound of his breathing. If she did not hear it at first, the ghostly echo of the old terrible cry, "Ah-h-h-h! who killed her little brother? Ah-h-h-h!" filled the staircase and the passage with dreadful shadows; shadows that seemed to thicken and gather about her as if possessed with a desire to stifle her—and she would press her hands tightly upon her eyes so that she should not see them. Then perhaps she would open Dan's door quietly, and hearing him breathe, ever so softly, would creep up stairs again, a little more composed; always closing her door quickly, to prevent the shadows on the stairs from coming into her room.

The supplemental contributions from Susan and the Old Sailor were very acceptable to Dan and Joshua, who were both fond of reading. What was not spent in birds' food was spent in books. They subscribed to two magazines, the "Penny Magazine" and the "Mirror," which came out weekly; the subscription was a serious one for them, and made a great hole in their pocket-money: it swallowed up three pence per week. The addition of a new book to their modest library was one of the proudest events in their quiet lives. "New" books is not a strictly correct phrase, for the collection consisted of second-hand volumes, picked up almost at random at old-book stalls. Although their library was a small one, not numbering in its palmiest days more than fifty volumes, it was wonderfully miscellaneous. Now it was a book of travels that Joshua bought; now a book of poems; now an odd volume of a magazine; now a book on natural history; now a speculative book which neither of the boys could understand—not at all a weak reason in favor of its being purchased. Over these books the boys would pore night after night, and extract such marrow from them as best suited their humor. The conversations which arose out of their readings were worth listening to; Dan's observations, especially, were very quaint and original, and gave evidence, not only of good taste, but of the possession of reflective powers of a high order.

An old book on dreams which Joshua bought for a song, as the saying is, proved especially attractive to Dan. The proper title of the book was the "Philosophy of Dreams," an ambitious sub-title—the "Triumph of Mind over Matter" – being affixed. Dan read and re-read this book with avidity. In it

the writer contended that a person could so command and control his mental forces, as to train himself to dream of events which were actually taking place at a distance from him, at the precise moment they occurred. Space, said the author, was of the smallest consequence. There was one thing, however, that was absolutely necessary—that a perfect sympathy should exist between the dreamer and the person or persons of whom he was dreaming. It was a wildly-speculative book taken at its best, and contained much irrelevant and ridiculous matter; but it was just the kind of book to attract such a lad as Dan, and it set him thinking. "Perfect sympathy! Such a sympathy," he thought, "as exists between me and Jo;" and he proceeded to read with greater eagerness. The author, in support of his theory, dragged in nearly all the sciences; and drew largely upon that of phrenology. He explained where certain organs lay, such as wonder, veneration, benevolence, destructiveness, and proceeded somewhat in the following fashion: Say that a person is sleeping, and that he is not disturbed by any special powerful emotion, arising probably from strong anxiety connected with his worldly circumstances. His mind must be at rest, and his sleep be calm and peaceful. Under these circumstances, if a certain organ, say the organ of veneration, be gently pressed, the sleeper will presently dream a dream, in which the sentiment of veneration will be the quality most prominently brought into play. And so with wonder, and benevolence, and combativeness, and other qualities. Having stated this very distinctly, the writer proceeded, as if the mere statement were sufficient proof of its incontestability: say that between the sleeper and the operator a strong and earnest sympathy existed; the operator, selecting in his mind some person with whom they are both acquainted, brings his power of will to bear upon the sleeper. (Here the writer interpolated that the experiment would fail if the organs of concentrativeness and firmness were not more than ordinarily large in the operator.) With his mind firmly fixed upon the one object, he wills that the sleeper shall dream of their mutual acquaintance; and as he wills it, with all the intensity he can exercise, he gently manipulates the sleeper's organ of tune—which, by the way, the author stated he believed was the only one of the purely intellectual faculties which could be pressed into service. The sleeper will then dream of the selected person, and his sense of melody and the harmony of sound will be gratified. Then, in a decidedly vague manner, as if he had got himself in a tangle from which he did not know how to extricate himself, the author argued that what one person could do to another, he could do also to himself, and that the effect produced upon another person by physical manipulation may be produced upon one's self by a strong concentration of will. During our waking moments he said, the affective faculties of our mind are brought into play. Thus, we see and wonder; thus, we see and venerate; thus, we see and pity. These faculties or sentiments are excited and make themselves felt without any effort on our part. If, then, circumstances, which previously did not affect us, can thus act upon us without the exercise of voluntary effort to produce sensation; if circumstances, in which we had no reason to feel the slightest active interest, can cause us to venerate, to pity, to wonder—broadly, to rejoice and to suffer—why should we not be able, by the aid of a powerful sympathy and an earnest desire, to bring into reasoning action the faculties which are thus excited by uninteresting and independent circumstances?

Thus far the author: unconscious that he had fallen into the serious error of confounding the affective with the intellectual faculties, and not appearing to understand that, whereas an affective faculty can be brought into conscious action by independent circumstances, an intellectual faculty requires a direct mental effort before it is excited. His essay was not convincing. He wandered off at tangents; laid down a theory, and, proceeding to establish it, so entangled himself that he lost its connecting threads; and had evidently been unable to properly think out a subject which is not entirely unworthy of consideration. However, he had written his book, and it got into Dan's hands and into Dan's head. Joshua did not understand it a bit, and said so; and when he asked Dan to explain it, Dan could scarcely fit words to what was in his mind.

"Although I cannot explain it very clearly, I can understand it," said Dan. "He means to say that a person can see with his mental sight" -

"That is, with his eyes shut," interrupted Joshua jocularly.

"Certainly, with his eyes shut," said Dan very decidedly. "Our eyes are shut when we dream, yet we see things." Joshua became serious immediately; the answer was a convincing one. "And that proves that we have two senses of sight-one in the eyes, the other in the mind. Haven't you seen rings, and circles, and clouds when you are in bed at night, and before you go to sleep? I can press my face on the pillow and say-not out loud, and yet I say it and can hear it-which shows that all our senses are double." (In his eagerness to explain what he could scarcely comprehend, Dan was in danger of falling into the same error as the author of the "Triumph of Mind over Matter" had fallen into, that of flying off at tangents: it was with difficulty he could keep to his subject.) "Well, Jo, I press my head into the pillow, and say, 'I will see rings,' and presently I see a little ball, black, perhaps, and it grows and grows into rings-like what you see when you throw a stone in the water-larger, and larger, all the different colors of the rainbow; and then, when they have grown so large as to appear to have lost themselves in space-just like the rings in the water, Jo-another little ball shapes itself in the dark, and gradually becomes visible, and then the rings come and grow and disappear as the others did. When I have seen enough, I say-not out loud again, Jo, but silently as I did before-'I don't want to see any more,' and they don't come again. What I can do with rings, I can do with clouds. I say, 'I will see clouds,' and they come, all colors of blue, from white-blue to black-blue; sometimes I see sunsets."

"I have seen them too, Dan," said Joshua; "I have seen skies with stars in them, just as I have seen them with my eyes wide open."

"Now, if we can do this," continued Dan, "why cannot we do more?"

"We can't do what he says in this book," said Joshua, drumming with his fingers on the "Philosophy of Dreams."

"I don't know. Why should he write all that unless he knew something? There is no harm in trying, at all events. Let me see. Here is a chart of a head, Jo turning to a diagram in the book. Where is combativeness? Oh! here, at the back of the head, behind the ear. Can you feel it, Jo? Is it a large bump? No; you are going too high up, I am sure. Now you are too much in the middle. Ah! that's the place, I think."

These last sentences referred to Joshua's attempt to find Dan's organ of combativeness.

"I don't feel any thing particular, Dan," he said.

"But you feel something, don't you, Jo?" asked Dan anxiously. "There *is* a bump there, isn't there?"

"A very little one," answered Joshua, earnestly manipulating Dan's head, and pressing the bump. "Do you feel spiteful?"

"No," said Dan, laughing.

"There's a bump twice as large just above your fighting one."

"What is that bump?" said Dan, examining the diagram again. "Ah that must be adhesiveness."

"I don't know what that means."

"Give me the dictionary;" and Dan with eager fingers turned over the pages of an old Walker's Dictionary. "'Adhesive-sticking, tenacious,'" he read. "That is, that I stick to a thing, as I mean to do to this. Now I'll tell you what we'll do, Jo. I shall sleep at your house to-morrow night, and when I am asleep, you shall press my organ of combativeness-put your fingers on it-yes, there; and when I wake I will tell you what I have dreamed of."

"All right," said Joshua, removing his fingers.

"You will be able to find the place again?"

"Yes, Dan."

"And you will be sure to keep awake?"

"Sure, Dan."

The following night, Joshua waited very patiently until Dan was asleep. He had to wait a long time; for Dan, in consequence of his anxiety, was longer than usual getting to sleep. Once or twice Joshua thought that his friend was in the Land of Nod, and he commenced operations, but he was

interrupted by Dan saying drowsily, "I am not asleep yet, Jo." At length Dan really went off, and then Joshua, very quietly and with great care, felt for Dan's organ of combativeness, and pressed it. Joshua looked at his sleeping friend with anxiety. "Perhaps he will hit out at me," he thought. But Dan lay perfectly still, and Joshua, after waiting and watching in vain for some indication of the nature of Dan's sleeping fancies, began to feel very sleepy himself, and went to bed. In the morning, when they were both awake, Joshua asked what Dan had dreamed of.

"I can't remember," said Dan, rubbing his eyes.

"I pressed your combativeness for a long time, Dan," said Joshua; "and I pressed it so hard that I was almost afraid you would hit out."

"I didn't, did I?"

"No; you were as still as a mouse."

"I dreamed of something, though," said Dan, considering. "Oh, I remember! I dreamed of you, So; you were standing on a big ship, with a big telescope in your hand. You had no cap on, and your hair was all flying about."

"Were there any sailors on the ship?"

"A good many."

"Did you quarrel with any of them?"

"I didn't dream of myself at all."

"Did any of the sailors quarrel with me?"

"There wasn't any quarrelling, Jo, that I can remember."

"So you see," said Joshua, "that it is all fudge."

"I don't see that at all. Now I think of it, it isn't likely that I should dream of quarrelling with any one or fighting with any one when I was dreaming of you, Jo."

"Or perhaps you haven't any combativeness, Dan."

"Perhaps I haven't. It wouldn't be of much use to me if I had, for I shouldn't know how to fight."

"Or perhaps your combativeness is so small that it won't act," said Joshua sportively.

"Don't joke about it, Jo," said Dan. "You don't know how serious I am, and how disappointed I feel at its being a failure. Will you try it again to-night?"

Joshua, seeing that Dan was very much in earnest, readily promised; and the experiment was repeated that night, with the same result. After that the subject dropped for a time.

But if Dan's organ of adhesiveness-which, phrenologically, means affection, friendship, attachment-was large, it was scarcely more powerful than his organ of concentrativeness. His love for Joshua was perfect. He knew that Joshua's choice of a pursuit would separate him from his friend. When he said to Joshua, "I shall live in you, Jo," the words conveyed the expression of no light feeling, but of a deep earnest longing and desire to be always with his friend-to be always with him, although oceans divided them. If no misfortune had befallen him, if his limbs had been sound and his body strong, Dan would have been intellectually superior to boys in the same station of life as himself. Debarred as he was from their amusements, their anxieties, and their general ways of life he was thrown, as it were, upon his intellect for consolation. It brought him, by the blessing of God, such consolation that his misfortune might have been construed into a thing to be coveted. There is good in every thing.

All Dan's sympathies were with Joshua. Dan admired him for his determination, for his desire to be better than his fellows. It was Dan who first declared that Joshua was to be a hero; and Joshua accepted Dan's dictum with complacency. It threw a halo of romance around his determination not to be a wood-turner, and not to do as his father had done before him. The reader, from these remarks, or the incidents that follow, may now or presently understand why the wildly-vague essay on the "Philosophy of Dreams; or the Triumph of Mind over Matter," took Dan's mind prisoner and so infatuated him.

Referring to the book again, after the failure of the experiments upon his organ of combativeness, Dan found a few simple directions by which the reader could test, in a minor degree, the power of the mind over the sleeping body. One of the most simple was this: A person, before he goes to sleep, must resolutely make up his mind to wake at a certain hour in the morning. He must say to himself, "I want to wake at five o'clock-at five o'clock-at five o'clock; I *will* awake at five o'clock-I will-I will-I will!" and continue to repeat the words and the determination over and over again until he fell asleep, with the resolve firmly fixed in his mind. If you do this, said the writer, you will awake at five o'clock. Dan tried this experiment the same night-and failed. He repeated it the following night, and the night following that, with the same result. His sleep was disturbed, but that was all. But on the fourth night matters were different. Five o'clock was the hour Dan fixed upon, and nothing was more certain than that on the fourth night Dan woke up at the precise moment. There were two churches in the immediate neighborhood, and, as he woke, Dan heard the first church-bell toll the hour. One, two, three, four, five. Each stroke of the bell was followed by a dismal hum of woful tribulation. Then the other church-bell struck the hour, and each stroke of that was followed by a cheerful ring, bright and crisp and clear. Dan smiled and hugged himself, and went to sleep again, cherishing wild hopes which he dared not confess even to himself. He tried the experiment on the following night, fixing on a different time, half-past three. Undaunted by that and many other failures, he tried again and again, until one night he awoke when it was dark. He waited anxiously to hear the clocks strike. It seemed to be a very long half-hour, but the church-bell struck at last. One, two, three, four. With a droning sound at the end of each stroke, as if a myriad bees, imprisoned in a cell, were giving vent to a long-sustained and simultaneous groan of entreaty to be set free; or as if the bell were wailing for the hour that was dead. Then the joyous church-bell struck One, two, three, four. A wedding-peal in each stroke; sparkling, although invisible, like stars in a clear sky on a frosty night.

Dan went to sleep, almost perfectly happy.

He repeated his experiment every night, until he had a very nearly perfect command over sleep as far as regarded time, and could wake almost at any hour he desired. Then he took a forward step. While playing with his birds he said, "To-night I will dream of you." But the thought intervened that he had often dreamed of the birds and that to dream of them that night would not be very remarkable. So he said, "No, I will not dream of the birds that are living; I will dream of Golden Cloud." It was a long time now since Golden Cloud had been buried, but Dan had never forgotten his pet. When he went to bed he said, "I will dream of Golden Cloud-a pleasant dream." And he dwelt upon his wish, and expressed it in words, again and again. That night he dreamed of Golden Cloud, and of its pretty tricks; of its growing old and shaky; of its death and burial. Then he saw something that he had never seen before. He saw it lying quite contented and happy at the bottom of its flower-pot coffin, and when he chirruped to it, it chirruped in return.

He told his dream to Joshua.

"I have dreamed of Golden Cloud a good many times," said Joshua.

"But I made up my mind especially to dream of Golden Cloud," said Dan, "and I dreamed of it the same night. At other times, my dreaming of it was not premeditated. It came in the usual way of dreams."

"What do you want me to believe from all this Dan?"

"That, as the author of that book says, you can dream of any thing you wish. I scarcely dare believe that I shall be able to dream of what I shall most desire by and by. By and by, Jo," he repeatedly sadly, "when you and me are parted."

Joshua threw his arms around Dan's neck.

"And you are doing all this, dear Dan, because you want to dream of me?"

"And because I want to be with you, Jo, and to see things that you see, and never, never to be parted from you." The wistful tears ran down Dan's cheek as he said these words.

"It would be very wonderful," said Joshua; "almost too wonderful. And I shall think, 'Dan is here with me, although I cannot see him.'"

"Listen again to what he says, Jo," said Dan, opening the "Triumph of Mind over Matter." "A person can so command and control his mental forces as to train himself to dream of events that are actually taking place at a distance from him, at the precise moment they occur."

"And that is what you want to do when I am away, Dan."

"That is what I want to do when you are away, dear Jo."

"I am positive you can't do it."

"Why? I dreamed of Golden Cloud when I wanted to."

"I can understand that. But how did you dream of Golden Cloud, Dan? You dreamed of him as if he was alive" -

"At first I did; but afterwards I saw him in the flower-pot, dead."

"And Golden Cloud chirruped to you?"

"Yes, Jo."

"Think again, Dan. Golden Cloud was dead, and Golden Cloud chirruped to you!"

"Yes, Jo," faltered Dan, beginning to understand the drift of Joshua's remarks.

"That is not dreaming of things as they are, Dan," said Joshua gently, taking Dan's hand and patting it. "If you could dream of Golden Cloud as he is now, you would see nothing of him but a few bones-feathers and flesh all turned to clay. Not a chirrup in him, Dan dear, not a chirrup!"

Dan covered his eyes with his hand, and the tears came through his fingers, But he soon recovered himself.

"You are right, Jo," he said: "yet I'm not quite wrong. The man who wrote that book knew things, depend upon it. He was not a fool. *I* was, to think I could do such wonders in so short a time."

Dan showed, in the last sentence, that he did not intend to relinquish his desire. He said nothing more about it, however, and in a few minutes the pair of bullfinches were on the table in a little cage, whistling, "Rule, Britannia," the high notes of which one of the birds took with consummate ease.

CHAPTER V

JOSHUA MAKES UP HIS MIND TO GO TO SEA

Who was the Old Sailor?

Simply an old sailor. Having been a very young sailor indeed once upon a time, a great many years ago now, when, quite a little boy, he ran away from home and went to sea out of sheer love for blue water. In those times many boys did just the same thing, but that kind of boyish romance has been gradually dying away, and is now almost dead. Steam has washed off a great deal of its bright coloring. The taste of the salt spray grew so sweet to the young sailor's mouth, and the sight of the ocean-the waters of which were not always blue, as he had imagined-grew so dear to his eyes, that every thing else became as naught to him. And so, faithful to his first love, he had grown from a young sailor to an old sailor. At the present time he was living in a rusty coal-barge, moored near the Tower stairs; and, although he could see land and houses on the other side of the water, there was a curl in his great nostrils as if he were smelling the sweet salt spray of the sea, and a staring look in his great blue eyes, as if the grand ocean were before him instead of a dirty river. He was a short thick-set man, and his face was deeply indented with small-pox; indeed, so marked were the impressions which that disease had left upon him, that his face looked for all the world like a conglomeration of miniature salt-cellars. His name was Praiseworthy Meddler. The sea was his world-the land was of no importance whatever. Not only was the land of no importance in his eyes, but it was a place to be despised, and the people who inhabited it were an inferior race. From him did Joshua Marvel learn of the glories and the wonders of the ocean, and from him came Joshua's inspiration to be a sailor.

For Joshua had settled upon the road which was to lead him to fame and fortune. By the time that he had made up his mind what was to be his future walk in life, most other lads in the parish of Stepney of the same age and condition as himself were already at work at different businesses, and had already commenced mounting that ladder which led almost always to an average of something less than thirty-two shillings a week for the natural term of their lives. Although, up to this period of his life, Joshua's career had been a profitless one, as far as earning money was concerned, his time had not been thrown away. The tastes he had acquired were innocent and good, and were destined to bear good fruit in the future. The boyish friendship he had formed was of incalculable value to him; for it was undoubtedly due, in a great measure, to that association that Joshua was kept from contact with bad companions. He had not yet given evidence of the possession of decided character, except what might be gathered from a certain quiet determination of will inherited from his mother, but stronger in him than in her because of his sex, and from a certain unswerving affection for any thing he loved. A phrenologist, examining his head, would probably have found that the organs of firmness and adhesiveness predominated over all his other faculties; and for the rest, something very much as follows. (Let it be understood that no attempt is here being made to give a perfect analysis of Joshua's faculties, but that mention is only being made of those organs which may help to explain, if they be remembered by the reader, and if there be any truth in phrenology, certain circumstances connected with Joshua's career, the consequences of which may have been varied in another man.) Well, then, adhesiveness and firmness very large; the first of which will account for his strong attachment for Dan, and the second for his determination, notwithstanding his mother's efforts, not to take to wood-turning nor any other trade, but to start in life for himself: Inhabitiveness very small; and as inhabitiveness means a tendency to dwell in one place, the want of that faculty will account for his desire to roam. All his moral and religious faculties-such as benevolence, wonder, veneration, and conscientiousness-were large; what are understood as the semi-intellectual sentiments-constructiveness, imitation and mirthfulness-he possessed only in a moderate degree; but one, ideality, was largely developed. Four of his intellectual faculties-individuality, language, eventuality, and time-call for especial notice: they

were all very small, the smallest of them being eventuality, the especial function of which is a memory of events. Mention being made that his organs of color and tune were large, this brief analysis of Joshua's phrenological development is completed.

For the purpose of fitting himself for his future career, Joshua had lately spent a great deal of his time at the waterside, and in the course of a few months' experience in boats and barges on the River Thames, had made himself perfectly familiar with all the dangers of the sea. Praiseworthy Meddler had a great deal to do with Joshua's resolve. His attention had been directed to the quiet well-behaved lad, who came down so often to the waterside, and who sat gazing, with unformed thoughts, upon the river. Not upon the other side of it, where tumble-down wharves and melancholy walls were, but along the course of it, as far as its winding form would allow him to do so. Then his imagination followed the river, and gave it pleasanter banks and broader, until he could scarcely see any banks at all, so wide had the river grown; then he followed it farther still, until it merged into an ocean of waters, in which were crowded all the wonders he had read of in books of travel and adventure: wastes of sea, calm and grand in sunlight and in moonlight; fire following the ship at night, fire in the waters, as if millions of fire-fish had rushed up from the depths to oppose the wooden monster which ploughed them through; shoals of porpoises, sharks, whales, and all the wondrous breathing life in the mighty waters; curling waves lifting up the ship, which afterwards glides down into the valleys: blood moons, and such a wealth of stars in the heavens, and such feather-fringed azure clouds as made the heart beat to think of them; storms, too-dark waters seething and hissing, thunder awfully pealing, lightning flashes cutting the heavens open, and darting into the sea and cutting that with keen blades of light, then all darker than it was before: all these pictures came to Joshua's mind as, with eager eyes and clasped hands, he sat gazing at the dirty river. He held his breath as the storm-pictures came, but there was no terror in them; bright or dark, every thing he saw was tinged with the romance of youthful imagining. Praiseworthy Meddler spoke first to Joshua, divined his wish, encouraged it, told the lad stories of his own experience, and told them with such heartiness and enthusiasm, and made such a light matter of shipwreck and such like despondencies, that Joshua's aspirations grew and grew until he could no longer keep them to himself. And, of course, to whom should he first unbosom himself in plain terms but to his more than brother, Dan?

He disclosed his intentions in this manner: he was playing and singing 'Tom Bowling,' the words of which he had learned from old Praiseworthy. He sang the song through to the end, and Dan repeated the last two lines, -

"For though his body's under hatches, His soul is gone aloft."

"My body has been under hatches today, Dan," said Joshua, "although I wasn't in the same condition as poor Tom Bowling. I dare say," with a furtive look at Dan, "that I shall often be under hatches."

"Ah!" said Dan. He knew what was coming.

"The Old Sailor has been telling me such stories, Dan! What do you think? He was taken by a pirate-ship once, and served with them for three months."

"As a pirate?"

"Yes; he has been a pirate. Isn't that glorious? It was an awful thing, though; the ship he was in-a merchantman-saw the pirate-ship giving chase. They tried to get away, but the pirates had a ship twice as good as theirs, and soon overhauled them. Then the grappling-irons were thrown, and the pirates swarmed into the merchantman, and there was a terrible fight. Those who were not killed were taken on board the pirate-ship, the Old Sailor among the rest. There were three women with them, and O Dan! would you believe it? – those devils, the pirates, killed them every one, men and women too, and threw them overboard-killed every one of them but the Old Sailor."

"How was it that he was saved, Jo?"

"That is a thing he never could make out, he says. It turned him sick to see the pirates slashing away with their cutlasses, but when they came to the women he was almost mad. He was bound to a

mast by a strong rope, and when he saw a woman's face turned to him and looking at him imploringly, although her eyes were almost blinded by blood" -

"Oh!" cried Dan with a shudder, as if he could see the dreadful picture.

"It was a woman who had had a kind word for every one on the merchant-ship-a lady she was, and everybody loved her," continued Joshua, with kindling eyes and clinched fists. "When the Old Sailor saw her looking at him, he gave a yell, and actually broke the rope that bound him. But a dozen pirates had him down on the deck the next moment. He fought with them, and called out to them, 'Kill me, you devils!' You should hear the Old Sailor tell the story, Dan! 'Kill me, you devils!' he cried out, and he grappled with them, and hurt some of them. You may guess that they were too many for him. They bound him in such a zig-zag of ropes-round his neck and legs and back and arms-that he couldn't move, and they kicked him into a corner. There he lay, with his eyes shut, and heard the shrieks of his poor companions, and the splashes in the water as their bodies were thrown overboard. After that there was a great silence. 'Now it is my turn,' he said to himself, and he bit his tongue, so that he should not scream out. But it wasn't his turn; some of the pirates came about him, and talked in a lingo he couldn't understand, and when he thought they were going to slash at him, they went away, and left him lying on the deck alive! He lay there all night, dozing now and then, and, waking up in awful fright; for every time he dozed, he fancied that he heard the screams of the poor people who had been killed, and that he saw the bloody face of the poor lady he had tried to save. They didn't give him any thing to eat or drink all night; all they gave him was kicks. 'Then,' said the Old Sailor, 'they're going to starve me!' If he could have moved, he would have thrown himself into the sea, but he was too securely tied. Well, in the morning, the captain, who could speak a little English, came and ordered that the ropes should be loosened. 'Now's my time,' said the Old Sailor, and he felt quite glad, Dan, he says; and he says, too, that he felt as if he could have died happy if they had given him a chew of tobacco. 'Open your eyes, pig of an Englishman!' cried the captain, for the Old Sailor kept his eyes shut all the time. 'I sha'n't, pig of the devil!' roared the Old Sailor; but, without meaning it, he did open his eyes. 'Look here, pig,' said the captain, 'you are a strong man, and you ought to be a good sailor.' 'I'd show you what sort of a sailor I am, if you would cut these infernal'" -

"O Jo!" said Dan, with a warning finger to his lips.

"That is what the Old Sailor said, Dan," continued Joshua. "'I'd show you what sort of a sailor I am, if you would cut these-you know what-ropes, and give me a cutlass or a marlin-spike!' But the captain only laughed at him; and said, 'Now, pig, listen. You will either do one of two things. You will either be one of us'- 'Turn pirate!' cried the Old Sailor; 'no, I'll be-you know what, Dan-if I do!' 'Very well, pig,' said the captain; 'refuse, and you shall be cut to pieces, finger by finger, and every limb of you. I give you an hour, pig, to think of it.' The Old Sailor says that, if he had had a bit of tobacco, he would have chosen to be killed, even in that dreadful manner, rather than consent to join them. He never in all his life longed so for a thing as he longed then for a quid, as he calls it. It made him mad to see the dark devils chewing their tobacco as they worked. 'Anyhow,' he thought, 'I may as well live as be killed. I shall get a chance of escape one day.' So when the hour was up, and the captain came, the Old Sailor told him that he would oblige them by not being chopped into mince-meat, if they would give him a chew of tobacco. They gave it to him, and unbound him; and that is the way he became a pirate."

"And how did he get away, Jo?" asked Dan.

"That is wonderful, too," continued Joshua. "He was with them for three months, and saw strange things and bad things, but never took part in them. They tried to force him to do as they did, but he wouldn't. And he made himself so useful to them, and worked so hard, that it wasn't to their interest to get rid of him."

"I think the Old Sailor must be a little bit of a hero, Jo," interrupted Dan.

Joshua laughed heartily at this. "You will not say so when you see him."

"Why? I suppose he is ugly."

Joshua raised his hand expressively.

"And weather-beaten, and all that" -

"And knows," said Joshua, still laughing, "'Which is Saturday, Sunday, Monday?'"

"Still he may be a hero-not like you, Jo, because you will be handsome."

"Do you think so?"

If by some strange chance a picture of Joshua, as he was to be one day, had presented itself to the lads, how they would have wondered and marvelled as to what could have been the youth of such a man as they saw before them! Look at Joshua now, as he is sitting by Dan's side. A handsome open-faced lad, full of kindly feeling, and with the reflex of a generous loving nature beaming in his eyes. Honest face, bright eyes, laughing mouth that could be serious, strong limbs, head covered with curls-a beautiful picture of happy boyhood. But no more surprising miracle could have occurred to Dan than to see Joshua, as he saw him then sitting by his side, and then to see the shadow of what was to come.

"Do you think so?" and Joshua laughingly repeated the question.

"Do I think so" said Dan, gazing with pride at his friend. "O Mr. Vanity! as if you didn't know!"

Joshua, laughing more than ever, protested that he had never given it a thought, and promised that he would take a good long look at himself in the glass that very night. At the rate the lads were going on, it appeared as if the Old Sailor's story would never be completed, and so Daniel said, to put a stop to Joshua's nonsense.

"It is all your fault, Dan," said Joshua, "because you *will* interrupt. Well, when the Old Sailor had been in the ship for three months, it was attacked by a cruiser which had been hunting it down for a long time. All the pirates were taken-the Old Sailor and all-and sold as slaves at Algiers. They wouldn't believe his story about his not being a pirate, and he was sold for a slave with the rest of them. He worked in chains in the fields for a good many weeks-he doesn't remember how many-until Lord Exmouth bombarded the forts, and put a stop to Christian slavery. And that is the Old Sailor's pirate-story."

"And now to return to what we were saying before you commenced," said Dan. Joshua placed his hands at the back of his head, and interlacing his fingers, looked seriously at Dan, and drew a long breath: "You have something to tell me, Jo."

"I have," said Joshua. "I have made up my mind what I am going to be. You can guess if you like."

"I have no need to guess, Jo, dear; I know, I have seen it all along."

"What is it, then?"

"You are going to sea," said Dan, striving to speak in a cheerful voice, but failing.

"Yes, I shall go to sea;" and Joshua drew another long breath. "How did you find it out, Dan the Wise?"

"How did I find it out, Jo the Simple? Haven't I seen it in your eyes for ever so long? Haven't you been telling me so every day? It might escape others' notice, but not mine."

"I told the Old Sailor to-day, and he clapped me on the back, and said I was a brave fellow. But he knew it all along, too, he said. And he took me into his cabin-such a cabin, Dan-and poured out a tiny glass of rum, and made me drink it. My throat was on fire for an hour afterwards."

"Have you told mother and father?"

"No."

"Tell them at once, Jo. Go home now, and tell them. I want to be left alone to think of it. O Jo! and I am going to lose you!"

Dan had tried hard to control himself, but he now burst into a passion of weeping; and it is a fact, notwithstanding that they were both big boys, that their heads the next moment were so close together that Dan's tears rolled down both their faces. Joshua's heart was as full as Dan's, and he ran out of the room more to lessen Dan's grief than his own.

Thus it fell out that in the evening, when the members of the Marvel family, variously occupied, were sitting at the kitchen fire, Joshua said suddenly to his relatives, -

"I should like to go to sea."

George Marvel was smoking a long clay-pipe; Mrs. Marvel was darning a pair of worsted stockings, in which scarcely a vestige of their original structure was left; and Sarah Marvel was busily engaged in a writing-lesson, in the execution of which she was materially assisted by her tongue, which, hanging its full length out of her mouth, was making occasional excursions to the corners of her lips. George Marvel took the pipe from his lips and looked at the fire meditatively; Mrs. Marvel burst into tears, and let the worsted stocking, with the needle sticking in it, drop into her lap; and Sarah Marvel, casting a doubtful look at her writing-lesson, every letter in which appeared to be possessed with a peculiar species of drunkenness, removed her eyes to her brother's face, upon which she gazed with wonder and admiration. So engrossed was she in the contemplation, that she put the inky part of the pen into her mouth, and sucked at it in sheer absence of mind.

"Don't cry, mother," said George Marvel. "What was that you said, Josh?"

"I should like to go to sea, father."

"Ah!" ejaculated Mr. Marvel thoughtfully, looking steadily into the fire.

Joshua was also looking into the fire, and he saw in it, as plain as plain could be, a fiery ship, full-rigged, with fiery ropes and fiery sails, and saw himself, Joshua Marvel, standing on the poop, dressed in gold-laced coat and gold-laced cocked-hat, with a telescope in his hand. For Joshua, without the slightest idea as to how it was all to come about, had made up his mind that he was to be a captain, dressed as Nelson was in a picture which was one of Praiseworthy Meddler's prize possessions, and which occupied the place of honor in the Old Sailor's cabin. While this vision was before Joshua Mrs. Marvel continued to cry, but in a more subdued manner.

"And so you want to be sailor, Josh?" queried Mr. Marvel.

"Yes. A sailor first, and then a captain."

The intermediate grades were of too small importance to be considered.

"I am sure, Josh," said Mrs. Marvel, crying all the while, "I don't see what you want to go away for. Why don't you make up your mind even now to apprentice yourself to father's trade and be contented? You might get a little shop of your own in time, if you worked very hard, and it would be pleasant for all of us."

"You be quiet, mother," said Mr. Marvel. "What do women know about these things? I'm Joshua's father, I believe" -

"Yes, George, I believe you are," sobbed Mrs. Marvel.

"And, as Joshua's father, I tell you again, once and for all, that he's not going to be a wood-turner. Here's the old subject come up again with a vengeance! I wish a woman's clothes were like a woman's ideas; then they would never wear out. A wood-turner! A pretty thing a wood-turner is! I've been a wood-turner all my life, and what better off am I for it?"

"I am sure, father, we have been very happy," said Mrs. Marvel.

"I am not saying any thing about that," observed Mr. Marvel, expressing in his voice a very small regard for domestic happiness, although, in reality, no man better appreciated it. "What I say is, I've been a wood-turner all my life; and what I ask is, what better off am I, or you, or any of us, for it? If Josh likes to be a wood-turner, he can; I have nothing to say against it, except that he's been a precious long time making up his mind. And if he likes to be a sailor, he can; I have nothing to say against that. I'm Joshua's father, and, as Joshua's father, I say if Josh likes to make a start in life for himself as a sailor, let him. If I was Josh, I would do the same myself."

"Thank you, father," said Joshua. "And, mother, if you only heard what Mr. Praiseworthy Meddler says of the sea, you would think very differently; I know you would."

But Mrs. Marvel shook her head and would not be comforted.

"My father was a wood-turner," said Mr. Marvel, "and he made me a wood-turner. He never asked me whether I would or I wouldn't, and I didn't have a choice. If he had have asked me, perhaps we shouldn't have gone on pinching and pinching all our lives. Now Joshua's different; he's got his choice: never forget, Josh, that it was your father who gave you the world to pick from-and I think he's acting sensibly, as I should have done if *my* father had given me the chance. But he didn't, and it's too late for a man with his head full of white hairs to commence life all over again."

And Mr. Marvel fell to smoking his pipe again, and studying the fire.

"I've never seen the sea myself," he presently resumed; "but I've read of it, and heard talk of it. There are better lands across the seas than Stepney, for a youngster like Josh. There are lots of chances, too; and who knows what may happen?"

"That's where it is, father," whimpered Mrs. Marvel; "we don't know what might happen. Suppose Josh is shipwrecked; what would you say then? You'd lie awake night after night, father-you know you would-and wish he had been a wood-turner. I've never seen the sea, and I never want to; I've been happy enough without it. It's like flying in the face of Providence. And what's to become of us when we are old, if Josh can't take care of us?"

"Just so, mother. Listen to me, and be sensible. Suppose Josh becomes a wood-turner; he can't expect to do better than his father has done. I am not a bad workman myself; and though Josh might make as good, I don't think he'd make a better. Now what I say again is-and it's wonderful what a many times a man has to say a thing before he can drive it into a woman's head, if she ain't willing-although I'm a good workman what better off am I for it? And what better off would Josh be for it, when he gets to be as old as I am? We've commenced to lay by a good many times-haven't we, Maggie? – but we never could keep on with it. First a bit of sickness took it; then a bit of furniture that we couldn't do without took it; then a rise in bread and meat took it; and then a bit of something else took it. You've been a good woman to me, Maggie, and you've pinched all you could for twenty years; and what has come of all your pinching? There's that old teapot you used to lay by in. It's at the back of the cupboard now, and it hasn't had a shilling in it for I don't know when's the time. It would be full of dust, mother, only you don't like dust; and a good job too. But it ain't your fault that it isn't full of something better; and it ain't my fault. It's all because I've been a wood-turner all my days. And the upshot of it is, that we're not a bit better off now than we were twenty years ago. We're worse off; for we've spent twenty good years and got nothing for them."

"We've got Josh and Sarah," Mrs. Marvel ventured to say. The simple woman actually regarded those possessions as of inestimable value-but that is the way of a great many foolish mothers.

Her husband did not heed the remark. He took another pull at his pipe, but drew no smoke from it. His pipe was out; but in his earnestness he puffed away at nothing, and continued, -

"Who is to take care of us, you want to know, when we grow old, if Josh don't. When Josh grows up, Josh will get married, naturally."

"So shall I, father," interrupted Sarah, who was listening with the deepest interest to the conversation.

"Perhaps, Sarah," said Mr. Marvel a little dubiously. "Girls ain't like boys; they can't pick and choose. Josh will get married, naturally; and Josh will have children, naturally. Perhaps he'll have two; perhaps he'll have six."

"Mrs. Pigeon's got thirteen," remarked Sarah vivaciously.

"Be quiet, Sarah. Where did you learn manners? Now if Josh has six children, and, being a wood-turner, doesn't do any better as a wood-turner than his father has done-and he's a presumptuous young beggar if he thinks he's going to do better than me" -

"I don't think so, father," said Joshua.

"Never mind. And he's a presumptuous young beggar if he thinks he's going to do better than me," Mr. Marvel repeated; he relished the roll of the words-"what's to become of us then? Josh, if he's a wood-turner with six children, can't be expected to keep his old father and mother. He will

have enough to do as it is. But if Josh strikes out for himself, who knows what may happen? He may do this, or he may do that; and then we shall be all right."

There was not the shadow of a doubt that in that house the gray mare was the worse horse, in defiance of the old adage.

"And as to Joshua's being shipwrecked," continued Mr. Marvel, "you know as well as I do, mother, that it would be enough to break my heart. But I don't believe there's more danger on the sea than on the land. There was Bill Brackett run over yesterday by a brewer's dray, and three of his ribs broken. You don't get run over by a brewer's dray at sea. And what occurred to William Small a month ago? He was walking along as quiet and inoffensive as could be, when a brick from a scaffold fell upon his head, and knocked every bit of sense clean out of him. They don't build brick houses on the sea. Why, it might have happened to me, or you, or Josh!"

"Or me, father," cried Sarah, not at all pleased at being deprived of the chance of being knocked on the head by a brick.

"Or you, Sarah. So, mother, don't let us have any more talk about shipwrecks."

"But if Josh *does* get shipwrecked, father," persisted Mrs. Marvel, "remember that I warned you beforehand."

"But Josh is not going to get shipwrecked," exclaimed Mr. Marvel, slightly raising his voice determined not to tolerate domestic insubordination; "therefore, hold your tongue, and say nothing more about it."

There was one privilege for the possession of which Mr. Marvel, had fought many a hard battle in the early days of his married life, and which he now believed he possessed by right of conquest; that was the privilege of having the last word. To all outward appearance Mrs. Marvel respected this privilege; but in reality she set it at defiance. It was a deceptive victory that he had gained; for if he had the last audible word, Mrs. Marvel had the last inaudible one. Woman is a long-suffering creature; she endures much with patience and resignation; but to yield the last word to a man is a sacrifice too great for her to make. There are, no doubt, instances of such sacrifice; but they are very rare. Many precious oblations had Mrs. Marvel made in the course of her married life; but she had not sacrificed the last word upon the domestic altar. True it was always whispered inly, under her breath; but it was hers nevertheless; and she exulted in it. When a woman cannot get what she wants by hook, she gets it by crook, depend upon it. For twenty years had the Marvels lived together man and wife; and during all that time Mr. Marvel had never known, that in every family conversation and discussion his wife had invariably obtained the victory of the last word; although sometimes a half-triumphant look in her eyes had caused him to doubt.

So, upon this occasion, notwithstanding the decided tone in which her husband had closed the conversation, Mrs. Marvel bent her head over her worsted stocking, and whispered to herself, half tearfully and half triumphantly, -

"But if Josh *does* get shipwrecked, father, don't forget that I warned you beforehand."

CHAPTER VI

THE ACTOR AND HIS DAUGHTER

THAT night, as Joshua was lying half-awake and half-asleep, his mind being filled with pleasant sea-pictures, he was surprised to hear his bedroom-door creak. Without moving in his bed, he turned his eyes towards the door, and, in the indistinct light, he saw his mother enter the room. She opened the door very softly, as if fearful of disturbing him, and she paused for a moment or two in the open space, with her hand raised in a listening attitude. Joshua saw that she believed him to be asleep, and he closed his eyes as she approached the bed. Her movements were so quiet, that he did not know she was close to him, until she gently took his hand and placed it to her lips. Then he knew that she was kneeling by his bedside, and knew also, by a moisture on his hand, that she was crying. His heart yearned to her, but he did not move. He heard her whisper, "God protect you, my son!" Then his hand, wet with his mother's tears, was released, and when he re-opened his eyes, she was gone.

"Poor mother!" he thought. "She is unhappy because I am going to sea. I will ask the Old Sailor to come and tell her what a glorious thing the sea is. Perhaps that will make her more comfortable in her mind."

He acted upon his resolution the very next day, and his efforts were successful. In the evening, he wended his way homewards from the waterside, in a state of ineffable satisfaction because the Old Sailor had promised to come to Stepney, for the express purpose of proving to Mrs. Marvel how superior in every respect the sea was to the land, and what a wise thing Joshua had done in making up his mind to be a sailor.

The lad was in an idle happy humor as he walked down a narrow street, at no great distance from his home. It differed in no respect from the other common streets in the common neighborhood. All its characteristics were familiar to him. The sad-looking one-story brick houses; the slatternly girls nursing babies, whose name was legion; the troops of children of various ages and in various stages of dirtiness, one of their most distinguishing insignia being the yawning condition of their boots, there not being a sound boot-lace among the lot of them; and here and there the melancholy and desponding shops where sweet stuff and cheap provisions were sold. Joshua walked down this poor woe-begone street, making it bright with his bright fancies, when his attention was suddenly aroused by the occurrence of something unusual near the bottom of the street.

A large crowd of boys and girls and women was gathered around a person, who was gesticulating and declaiming with startling earnestness. Pushing his way through the throng, Joshua saw before him a tall, spare man, with light hair hanging down to his shoulders. So long and waving was his hair, that it might have belonged to a woman. His gaunt and furrowed face was as smooth as a woman's, and his mouth was large, as were also his teeth, which were peculiarly white and strong. But what most arrested attention were his eyes; they were of a light-gray color, large even for his large face, and they had a wandering look in them strangely at variance with the sense of power and firmness that dwelt in every other feature. He was acting the Ghost scenes in "Hamlet;" in his hand was a wooden sword, which he sheathed in his ragged coat, and drew and flourished when occasion needed. His fine voice, now deep as a man's, now tender as a woman's, expressed all the passions, and expressed them well. In the library which Dan and Joshua possessed there was an odd volume of Shakspeare's works, and when the street-actor said, in a melancholy dreamy tone, -

"It waves me still: – go on, I'll follow thee,"

Joshua remembered (as much from the intelligent action of the actor as from the words themselves) that it was a Ghost whom Hamlet was addressing. The words were so impressively spoken, that Joshua almost fancied he saw a Shade before the man's uplifted hand. Then, when Hamlet cried, -

"My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen!"

(struggling with his visionary opponents and breaking from them, and drawing his wooden sword)

"By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away! Go on, I'll follow thee;"

Joshua experienced a thrill of emotion that only the representation of true passion could have excited. As the man uttered the last words, Joshua heard a shuddering sigh close to him. Turning his head, he saw Susan, whose face was a perfect encyclopædia of wondering and terrified admiration.

"Who is he following, Joshua?" she asked in a whisper, clutching him by the sleeve.

"The Ghost! Hush!"

"The Ghost!" (with a violent shudder.) "Where?"

Joshua pressed her hand, and warned her to be silent, so as not to disturb the man. Susan held his hand tightly in hers, and obeyed.

The Ghost that the actor saw in his mind's eye was standing behind Susan. The man advanced a step in that direction, and stood with outstretched sword, gazing at the airy nothing. Susan trembled in every limb as the man glared over her shoulder, and she was frightened to move her head, lest she should see the awful vision whose presence was palpable to her senses. The man had commenced the platform-scene, where Hamlet says, "Speak; I'll go no further;" and the Ghost says, "Mark me!" when a tumult took place. At the words, "Mark me!" a vicious boy picked up a piece of mud, and threw it at the man's face, with the words, "Now you're marked;" at which several of the boys and girls laughed and clapped their hands. The actor made no answer, but, seizing the boy by the shoulder held him fast and proceeded with the scene. The boy tried to wriggle himself away, but at every fresh attempt the man's grasp tightened, until, thoroughly desperate, the boy broke into open rebellion.

Actor. Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand Of life, of crown, of queen,
at once despatched.

Boy (struggling violently). Just you let me go, will you?

Actor. Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, Unhousel'd, disappointed,
unaneal'd.

Boy (beginning to cry). Come now, let me go will you? You're a hurting of
me! Let me go you-*(bad words)*.

Actor (calm and indifferent). No reckoning made, but sent to my account,
With all my imperfections on my head.

A girl's voice. Pinch him, Billy!

A boy's voice. Kick him, Billy!

Billy did both, but the actor continued.

Actor. Oh, horrible! Oh, horrible! Most horrible!

Billy. Throw a stone at him, some one!

Actor (sublimely unconscious). If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.

A stone was thrown; and as if this were a signal for a general attack, a shower of stones was hurled at the actor. One of them hit him on the forehead; hit him so badly that he staggered, and, releasing his hold of Billy, raised his hand to his head, while an expression of pain passed into his face. Hooting and yelling, "Look at the mad actor!" "Hoo, hoo! look at the crazy fool!" – the crowd of boys and girls scampered away, and left the man standing in the road, with only Susan and Joshua for an audience. Joshua was hot with indignation, and Susan, spell-bound by awe and fear, stood motionless by Joshua's side, while large tears trickled from her eyes into her open mouth.

The blood was oozing from the wound in the man's forehead, and his long fair hair was crimson-stained. His eyes wandered around distressfully, and a sighing moan died upon his lips. The fire of enthusiasm had fled from his countenance, and in the place of the inspired actor, Joshua saw a man whose face was of a deathly hue, and from whose eyes the light seemed to have departed. With his hand pressed to his forehead, he staggered a dozen yards, and then leaned against the wall for support.

"He is badly hurt, I am afraid," said Joshua.

Susan walked swiftly up to the man.

"Shall we assist you home?" she said. "Home!" he muttered. "No, no! Money! want money!"

As he spoke he drooped, and would have fallen to the ground but for Joshua, who caught the man on his shoulder, and let him glide gently on to a doorstep. Susan wiped the blood from his face with her apron. He looked at her vacantly, closed his eyes, and fainted.

"He is dying, Joshua!" cried Susan, her trembling fingers wandering about the man's face. "Oh, the wicked boys! Oh, the wicked boys!"

A woman here came out of a house with a cup of cold water, which she sprinkled upon his face. Presently the man sighed, and struggled to his feet, murmuring, "Yes, yes; I must go home."

"Where do you live?" asked Joshua. "We will assist you."

He did not answer, but walked slowly on like one in a dream. Assisting but not guiding his steps, Joshua and Susan walked on either side of him, and supported him. Although he scarcely seemed to be awake, he knew his way, and turning down a street even commoner than its fellows, he stopped at the entrance to a miserable court. Waving his hand as if dismissing them, he walked a few steps down the court, and entered a house, the door of which was open. Impelled partly by curiosity, but chiefly by compassion, Joshua and Susan followed the man into a dark passage, and up a rheumatic flight of stairs, into a room where want and wretchedness made grim holiday.

"Minnie!" he muttered hoarsely, and all his strength seemed to desert him as he spoke—"Minnie, child! where are you?"

He sank upon the ground with a wild shudder, and lay as if death had overtaken him. At the same moment there issued from the corner of the room where the deepest shadows gathered, a child-girl, so marvellously like him, with her fair waving hair, her large beautifully-shaped mouth, her white teeth, and her great restless gray eyes, that Joshua knew at once that they were father and daughter.

Minnie crept to the man, and sat beside him. She spoke to him, but he did not reply. And then she looked at Joshua and Susan, whose forms were dimly discernible in the gathering gloom.

"What is the matter with father?" she asked of them in a faint moaning voice.

"Some bad boys threw a stone at him, and hit him on the forehead," Joshua answered. "He will be better presently, I hope."

Minnie did not heed what he said, but felt eagerly in her father's pockets, and, not finding what she searched for, began to cry.

"No, no," she said, beating her hands together; "it is not that. He is weak and ill because he has had nothing to eat. I thought he would have brought home enough to buy some bread, but he hasn't a penny."

Joshua remembered the man's words, "Money! I want money!" and he immediately realized that the poor creatures were in want.

"Are you hungry, Minnie?" he asked.

"I have not had any breakfast," she answered wearily. "No more has father. Nor any dinner. We had some bread last night. We ate it all up. Father went out to-day, hoping to earn a little money, and he has come home without any. We shall die, I suppose. But I should like something to eat first."

"How do you know he has had nothing to eat?" asked Joshua; the words almost choked him.

Minnie looked up with a plaintive smile.

"If he had had only a hard piece of bread given him," she said in a tender voice, "he would have put it into his pocket for me."

"Stop here, Susan," said Joshua, a great sob rising in his throat. "I will be back in ten minutes."

He ran out of the room and out of the house. Never in his life had he run so fast as he ran now. He rushed into Dan's room, and said, almost breathlessly, -

"Where is the money-box, Dan? How much is there in it?"

"Fourteen pence," said the faithful treasurer, producing the box. "What a heat you are in, Jo!"

"Never mind that. I want every farthing of the money, Dan. Don't ask me any questions. I will tell you all by and by."

Dan emptied the money-box upon the table, and Joshua seized the money, and tore out of the house as if for dear life. Soon he was in the actor's room again, with bread and tea. Susan had not been idle during his absence. She had bathed the man's wound, and had wiped the blood and mud from his face and hair. He had recovered from his swoon, and was looking at her gratefully.

Joshua placed the bread before him, and he broke a piece from the loaf and gave it to Minnie, who ate it greedily.

"So fair and foul a day I have not seen," the man muttered; and both Joshua and Susan thought, "How strangely yet how beautifully he speaks!"

Susan made the tea down stairs, and she and Joshua sat quietly by, while the man and his daughter ate like starved wolves. It was a bitterly-painful sight to see.

"I think we had better go now, Susan," whispered Joshua.

They would have left the room without a word; but the man said, -

"What is your name, and what are you?"

"My name is Joshua Marvel, and I'm going to be a sailor."

"There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft," said the actor, "to keep watch for the life of poor Jack."

"That's what Praiseworthy Meddler says," said Joshua, laughing. "I shall come and see you again, if you will let me."

"Come and welcome."

"Goodnight, sir."

"Goodnight, and God bless you, Joshua Marvel!"

Minnie went to the door with Joshua and Susan, and looking at Joshua, with the tears in her strangely-beautiful eyes, said,

"Goodnight, and God bless you, Joshua Marvel!"

She raised herself on tiptoe, and Joshua stooped and kissed her. After that, Susan gave her a hug, and she returned to her father, and lay down beside him.

When he arrived home, Joshua told Dan of the adventure, and how he had spent the fourteen pence. Dan nodded his head approvingly.

"You did right," he said, - "you always do. I should have done just the same."

Then they took the odd volume of Shakspeare from the shelf, and read the Ghost scenes in "Hamlet" before they said goodnight.

CHAPTER VII

EXPLAINS WHY PRAISEWORTHY MEDDLER REMAINED A BACHELOR

Here is Praiseworthy Meddler, sitting in the best chair in a corner of the fireplace in the little kitchen in Stepney. In his low shoes and loose trousers, and blue shirt open at the throat, he looks every inch a sailor; and his great red pock-marked face is in keeping with his calling. On the other side of the fireplace, facing Praiseworthy Meddler, is Mr. George Marvel; next to Praiseworthy Meddler is Mrs. Marvel; on a stool at her father's feet sits Sarah; and Joshua sits at the table, watching every shade of expression that passes over his mother's face. The subject-matter of the conversation is the sea; and Praiseworthy Meddler has been "holding forth," as is evidenced by his drawing from the bosom of his shirt a blue-cotton pocket-handkerchief, upon which is imprinted a ship of twelve hundred tons burden, A 1 at Lloyd's for an indefinite number of years. The ship is in full sail, and all its canvas is set to a favorable breeze. Upon this blue vessel Praiseworthy Meddler dabs his red face in a manner curiously suggestive of his face being a deck, and the handkerchief a mop. When he has mopped his deck, which appears to be a perpetually-perspiring one, he spreads his handkerchief over his knee to dry, and says, as being an appropriate tag to what has gone before, -

"There is no place on earth like the sea."

The Old Sailor was not aware that any thing of a paradoxical nature was involved in the statement, or he might not have repeated it.

"There is no place on earth like the sea. Show me the man who says there is, and I'll despise him; if I don't, I'm a Dutchman;" adding, to strengthen his declaration, "or a double Dutchman."

The man not being forthcoming-probably he was not in the neighborhood, or, being there, did not wish to be openly despised-Praiseworthy Meddler looked around with the air of one who has the best of the argument, and then produced a piece of pigtail from a mysterious recess and bit into it as if he were a savage boar biting into the heart of a foe.

"But the danger, Mr. Meddler," suggested Mrs. Marvel, in a trembling voice.

"There is more danger upon land, lady."

"There, mother," said Mr. Marvel; "didn't I tell you so, the other night?"

"You told her right," said Praiseworthy, with emphasis. "Danger on the sea, lady! What is it to danger on the land? A ship can ride over a wave, let it be ever so high; but a man can't step over a wagon. Are carts and drays and horses safe? Are gas-pipes safe? And if there is danger on the sea, lady-which I don't deny, mind you, altogether-what does it do? Why, it makes a man of a boy, and it makes a man more of a man."

"Hear, *hear*, HEAR!" exclaimed Mr. Marvel, rapping on the table.

"Look at me!" said the enthusiastic sailor. "Here am I-I don't know how many years old, and that's a fact-I've lived on the sea from when I was a boy; and I've been blown by rough winds, and I've been blinded by storms and I've been wrecked on rocky coasts, and I've been as near death, ay, a score of times, as most men have been. Lord love you, my dear! All we've got to do is to do our duty; and when we're called aloft, we can say, 'Ay, ay, sir!' with a brave heart. What better life than a life on sea is there for boy or man? And doesn't Saturday night come round?

"For all the world's just like the ropes aboard a ship,
Each man's rigged out,
A vessel stout,
To take for life a trip.
The shrouds, the stays, the braces,

Are joys, and hopes, and fears;
The halliards, sheets, and traces,
Still as each passion veers,
And whim prevails,
Direct the sails.
As on the sea of life he steers.
Then let the storm
Heaven's face deform,
And danger press;
Of these in spite, there are some joys
Us jolly tars to bless;
For Saturday night still comes, my boys,
To drink to Poll and Bess."

Praiseworthy Meddler roared out the song at the top of his voice, as if it were the most natural and appropriate thing for him to do just there and then. The effect of his sudden inspiration was, that every member of the Marvel family, without being previously acquainted with the young ladies referred to, repeated in their honor the refrain of the last two lines, -

"For Saturday night still comes, my boys,
To drink to Poll and Bess."

with such extraordinary enthusiasm, that the carrot-haired cat rose to her feet in alarm, debating within herself the possibility of the Marvel family having suddenly caught a contagious madness from the Old Sailor. Convinced that the matter required looking into, puss walked softly to the door, with the intention of arousing the neighbors; but, silence ensuing at the conclusion of the refrain, she became reassured, and stole back to her warm space on the floor, and curled herself up again, and blinked at the fire.

After this exertion, Praiseworthy Meddler took the twelve-hundred-ton ship off his knee, and dabbed his face with it energetically.

"What does it amount to," he continued, "if the heart's brave? What does it amount to when it is all over, and when one gets to be as old as I am? I'm tough and firm;" and he gave his leg a great slap. "I'm as young as a younger man; and I know that there's no place on earth like the sea."

"And you can get promotion, can't you?" asked Joshua, eagerly. "A man needn't be a common sailor all his life?"

"No, Josh; he needn't stick at that, if he's willing and able, and does his duty. I know many a skipper who once on a time was only an able-bodied seaman."

"Do you hear that, mother?" cried Joshua. "Now are you satisfied?" and he jumped up and gave her a kiss.

"What is a skipper, Mr. Meddler?" asked Mrs. Marvel, with her arm round Joshua's waist. She had a dim notion that a skipper was connected with a skipping-rope, and that she might have been a skipper in her girlhood's days. If that were the case, she could not see what advantage it would be to Joshua to become one.

"A skipper's a captain, mother," whispered Joshua.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Marvel, but not quite clear in her mind on the point. "Then, if I might be so bold, Mr. Meddler" -

But here Mrs. Marvel stopped suddenly, and blushed like a girl.

"Ay, ay, lady, go on," said the Old Sailor, encouragingly.

"If I might make so bold," continued Mrs. Marvel, with an effort, "how is it that you never rose to be a skipper?"

"O mother!" cried Joshua.

"The question is a sensible one, Joshua," said Praiseworthy Meddler slowly, "and a right one too; though, if all able-bodied seamen rose to be skippers, there wouldn't be ships enough in the world for them. I should have been promoted, I have no doubt; but I was born with something unfortunate, which has stuck to me all my life, and which I have never been able to get rid of."

"Is it any thing painful?" asked Mrs. Marvel with womanly solicitude.

Praiseworthy Meddler looked at her with a droll expression on his face, and folded his twelve-hundred-ton ship into very small squares, and laid it in the palm of his left hand, and flattened it with the palm of his right, before he spoke again.

"It wasn't my fault, it was my misfortune. I couldn't help my father's name being Meddler, and I couldn't help being a Meddler myself, being his son, you see. My father didn't like his name any more than I did, but he didn't know how to change it; he was born a Meddler, and he died a Meddler. My being a Meddler is the only reason, I do believe, why I am not a skipper this present day of our Lord; and I don't think I am sorry that, when I die, I sha'n't leave any Meddlers behind me."

"You have never been married, Mr. Meddler?"

"No, lady; but I was very near it once, as you shall hear. It was all because of my name that I wasn't. My father didn't like his name, as I have told you. His Christian name was Andrew; he was a saddler. He got along well enough to set up shop for himself, and one morning he took the shutters down for the first time, and commenced business. Over his window was the sign, 'A. Meddler, saddler.' There was a rival saddler in the same town, whose name was Straight, and who didn't like my father setting up in opposition to him; and he put in his window a bill, with this on it: 'Have your saddles made and repaired by a Straightforward man, and not by A. Meddler.' That ruined my father: people laughed at him, instead of dealing with him; he soon had to shut up shop, and go to work again as a journeyman. He had two children; the first was a girl, the next was me. I heard that he was very pleased when my sister was born, because she was a girl. 'She can marry when she grows up,' he said, 'and then she will have her husband's name.' When I was born, my father wasn't pleased: he didn't want any more Meddlers, he said. But he couldn't help it; no more could I. He did what he thought was the very best thing for me—he gave me a fine Christian name to balance my surname he had me christened Praiseworthy. Now that made it worse. If I was laughed at for being a Meddler, I was laughed at more for being a Praiseworthy Meddler. Once, when I was a young fellow, I did good service in a ship I was serving in. When we came into port, the skipper reported well of me, and the owners sent for me. I went to the office, thinking that I should be promoted for my good services. The firm owned at least a dozen merchant-ships; and I should have been promoted, if it hadn't been for my name. The owners spoke kindly to me; and after I had satisfied them that I was fit for promotion, the youngest partner asked my name. I told him Meddler. He smiled, and the other partners smiled. 'What other name?' he asked. 'Praiseworthy,' I answered; 'Praiseworthy Meddler.' He laughed at that, and said that I was the only Praiseworthy Meddler he had ever met. They seemed so tickled at it, that the serious part of the affair slipped clean out of their heads; they called me an honest fellow, and said that they would not forget me. They didn't forget me; they gave me five pounds over and above my pay. If it hadn't been for my name, they might have appointed me mate of one of their ships. I was so mad with thinking about it, that I began to hate myself because I was a Meddler. If the name had been something I could have got hold of, I would have strangled it. At last I made up my mind that I would get spliced, and that I would take my lass's name the day I was married. Being on leave, and stopping at my father's house, I told him what I had made up my mind to do. He was a melancholy man—it was his name that made him so, I do believe—and he told me, in his melancholy voice, that it was the best thing I could do, and that he wished he had thought of doing so before he married. 'Wipe it out, my boy,' he said, 'wipe out the unlucky name; sweep all the Meddlers out of

the world. It would have been better you had been born with a hump than been born a Meddler.' He talked a little wild sometimes, but we were used to it. I began to look about me; and one day I caught sight of a lass who took my fancy. My leave was nearly expired, and I had to join my ship in a few days. I wanted to learn all about the girl, and I was too bashful to do it myself, which is not the usual way of sailors, my dear. So I pointed out the lass to a shipmate, and told him I had taken a fancy to her, and would he get me all the information he could about her. That very night, as I was bolting the street-door, just before going to bed, I heard my shipmate's voice outside in the street. 'Is that you, Meddler?' he asked. 'Yes, Jack,' I answered. 'I thought I'd come to tell you at once,' he cried; 'I've found out all about her. Her father's dead, and her mother's married again, and the lass isn't happy at home.' 'That makes it all the better for me,' I said. 'Has she got a sweetheart?' 'None that she cares a button for, or that a sailor couldn't cut out,' he answered. 'Hurrah!' I cried; 'I will go and see her tomorrow. Thank you, Jack; goodnight.' 'Goodnight,' he said, and I heard him walking, away. Just then I remembered that I had forgotten the most important thing of all-her name. I unbolted the door, and called after him, 'What is her name, Jack?' 'Mary Gotobed!' he cried from a distance. 'Mary what?' I shouted. 'Gotobed!' he cried again. I bolted the door, and went."

Praiseworthy Meddler, pausing to take breath, cast another droll look upon his attentive auditors.

"Gotobed!" he then resumed. "Why, it was worse than Meddler! I couldn't marry a lass named Gotobed, and take her name; I didn't want to marry and keep my own name; I couldn't put them together and make one sensible name out of the two. Gotobed Meddler was as bad as Meddler Gotobed. And the worst of it all was, that I liked the lass. She was as pretty a lass as ever I set eyes on. She looked prettier than ever when I saw her the next day; and forgetting all about the names I spoke to her and lost myself."

"Lost yourself!" exclaimed Mrs. Marvel.

"Yes, my dear," said the Old Sailor, with a bashfulness that did not set ill upon him. "I fell in love."

He said this in a confidential hoarse whisper to Mrs. Marvel, as if the youngsters ought not to hear it.

"Oh, that!" said Mrs. Marvel with a smile.

"But directly she heard what my name was," continued the Old Sailor, "she burst out laughing, and ran away. I had to go to my ship soon after that; and when I came back again, she was married to some one else. So I gave up the idea of marrying; and the name I was born to has stuck to me all my life. And that is the reason why I never married, and why I never became a skipper."

They made merry over the Old Sailor's story, and over other stories that he told of the sea, and of the chances it afforded a youngster like Joshua of getting on in the world. And towards the close of the evening Mrs. Marvel fairly gave in, and promised that she would not say another word against Joshua's determination to be a sailor. In token of which submission a large jug of grog was compounded, in honor of the Old Sailor; and when that was drunk, another was compounded in honor of Joshua. Of both of which Praiseworthy Meddler drank so freely, that he staggered home to his barge in a state of semi-inebriation, singing snatches of sea-songs without intermission, until he tumbled into his hammock and fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII

A HAPPY HOLIDAY

In after years, when Joshua was many thousands of miles away from Stepney, Dan loved to linger over the memory of one especially happy day which he, and Joshua, and Ellen and the Old Sailor spent together. Upon that day the sun was rising now; and Dan, lying in bed, was waiting impatiently for the solemn and merry church-bells to strike the hour of seven. His Sunday clothes were smoothly laid out upon a chair, close to his bed. Had the day not been an eventful one, he would not have been allowed to wear his best suit in the middle of the week. When Joshua makes his appearance in Dan's bedroom, it will be seen that he will also be dressed in his best clothes. The secret of all this is, that the lads had received permission from their parents to spend the day with the Old Sailor at the waterside, and were to be taken in a cart to the Old Sailor's castle-the barge near the Tower Stairs. Twenty times at the least had Dan said to Joshua, "I should so like to see the Old Sailor, Jo!" And Joshua, in the most artful manner, had fished for the invitation, which would have been very readily given had the Old Sailor been aware of Joshua's desire. But Joshua, like a great many other diplomatists who think themselves wise in their generation, went to work in a subtle roundabout way, and so gave himself a vast deal of trouble, which would have been saved had he come straight to the point at once. At length, one day, when the Old Sailor had said, "And how is Dan, Josh?" and Joshua had answered that he thought Dan was beginning to grow strong, he ventured to add, with inward fear and trembling: "And he would so much like to see you, sir, and hear some of your sea-stories! When I tell them they don't sound the same as when you tell them. There's no salt in them." Artful Joshua! "Well, my lad," the Old Sailor had said with a chuckle (he was not insensible to flattery, the old dog!), "why not bring him here to spend the day?"

"When shall it be, sir?" asked Joshua secretly delighted.

"Next Wednesday, Josh," said the Old Sailor. So next Wednesday it was. And Joshua ran to Dan's house wild with delight, and coaxed Dan's parents in to giving their permission.

It was on this very Wednesday morning that Dan was lying awake, waiting for seven o'clock to strike. He awoke at least two hours before the proper time to rise; and those hours appeared to him to be longer than hours ever were before. The ride itself would be an event in Dan's life; but it was not to be compared with what was to come afterwards-the spending of a whole day and night in a house on the water. During the past week Dan had been in a fever of pleasurable anticipation, and in a fever of fright also, lest it should rain upon this particular day. The previous night it *had* rained; and Dan, lying awake for a longer time than usual, had prayed for the rain to go away. Ellen-standing at the window in his bedroom, after she had got out his clean shirt and Sunday clothes, and brushed and smoothed them, and taken up a stitch in them here and there, as women (and girls after them) say-had seen the spots of rain falling, and, joining her prayer to his, had begged very earnestly to the rain to go away and come again another day.

And now the day was dawning; and Dan, opening his eyes, clapped his hands in delight to see the sun shining so brightly upon the broken jug which stood upon the window-sill, and in which was a handful of the sweet-smelling humble wall-flower. The pair of bullfinches which Joshua had bought for the Old Sailor were busily at work in their cage, which was hanging at the window, and were as conscious of the beauty of the morning as the most sensible human being could possibly be. Dan was so delighted that he whistled "Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves!" And one of the bullfinches, after abstracting the last hemp-seed from the glass containing their morning meal, immediately piped out with fervid patriotism, "For Britons never, *never*, NE-*ver* shall be slaves!" From this episode the reader will learn that the education of the bullfinches was completed. "Rule, Britannia," was not their sole vocal accomplishment. They could whistle "And did you not hear of a jolly young waterman?"

in a very superior manner. On that day the bullfinches were to be presented to their new master-to whom not a hint had been given of the pleasant surprise in store for him; which made it all the more delightful.

While the patriotic bullfinch was asserting in the most melodiously-persuasive notes that "Britons never, *never*, NE-*ver* shall be slaves," its mate was engaged drawing up water in the tiniest little bucket in the world-another of the accomplishments (coming, presumably, under the head of "extras") which patient Dan had taught the birds in order to win the heart of the Old Sailor. The industrious bullfinch had a remarkably rakish eye, which flashed saucily and impatiently as the music fell upon its ears. The slender rope which held the bucket being in its beak, it could not join in the harmony; but directly the bucket was hauled up and secured, it whetted its whistle, and piped out in opposition, -

"And did you not hear of a jolly young waterman,
Who at Blackfriars-bridge used for to ply?
He feathered his oars with such skill and dexterity,
Winning each heart and delighting each eye;"

repeating, as was its wont, the last line, "Winning each heart and delighting each eye," so as to produce a greater effect. I do not assert that the bullfinch actually uttered the words, but I *do* assert positively that it sang the music of them with the most beautiful trills that mortal ever heard.

But there was the solemn church-bell striking seven o'clock in tones less solemn than usual, and there was the joyous church-bell following suit. And as if the sound had conjured him up, there was Joshua, dressed in his best, and looking so fresh and handsome with his holiday-face on, that Dan might well be proud of him. He had his accordion under his arm, and in one hand was a bunch of flowers which Dan was to give to the Old Sailor, and in the other a glass containing some rape-seed soaked in canary-wine for the birds. They knew as well as possible-knowing little bullfinches! - that Joshua had something nice for them; and as he approached the cage they came as close to him as they could, and, to show their appreciation of his kindness, greeted him with a gush of the sweetest melody. What better beginning could there be for a happy holiday!

When Dan was dressed the lads went into the kitchen to have breakfast. And there was Ellen, as fresh as a daisy. The breakfast things were laid; and there was a clean cloth (not damask, mind!) on the deal table, and there, absolutely, were two new-laid eggs, one for Joshua and one for Dan, which Ellen had bought and paid for with her own money the day before, without saying a word about it. Ellen stooped and kissed Dan, and as she raised her head Joshua looked at her, and felt a huge longing to take her face between his two hands and kiss her, as he used to do in the time when they played sweethearts together. But he hadn't the courage. Yet he could not help looking at Ellen again and thinking, What a pretty girl Ellen is! and then, seeing Ellen's eyes fixed upon his, he turned away his head and blushed. And Ellen smiled at that, and, if she had been asked, really could not have told the reason why. Surely never was such a happy commencement to a holiday, and never was such a happy couple as Dan and Joshua! After all, are not simple pleasures the best? Are not those the sweetest pleasures that cost the least?

What put it into Joshua's head? Was it the sentiment of perfect happiness that actuated the wish? Or was it a passing shadow, lighter than the lightest cloud, that passed over Ellen's face, as the lads were talking of the coming delights of the day? It was there but a moment, but Joshua saw it, or thought he did, and thought also that there was regret in it. Or was it Ellen's pretty face, or the little piece of blue ribbon that she had put round her neck, the puss? For Ellen was fair, and knew what colors best suited her complexion. Whatever it was that actuated it, there was Joshua saying, just as they had sat down to breakfast and Ellen was pouring out the milk-and-water-you may imagine that there was not a great deal of tea drank in Stepney-there was Joshua saying, -

"Ellen, I wish you were coming with us."

Ellen's hand shook so that she spilt some of the milk-and-water, and a spasm rose in her throat, for she had wished the same thing fervently, but had never spoken of it. She checked the spasm, hoping that her emotion would not be noticed, and answered not a word. But she looked. Such a look!

Dan was biting into a slice of bread-and-butter, but directly he heard Joshua's wish, and saw the yearning, look that sprang into Ellen's eyes, he ceased eating, and leaned his head upon his hand.

"I think I am very selfish," he said, and hot tears gushed into his eyes.

In an instant Ellen was by his side, and Ellen's face was close to his. Any one who saw that action, any one who could understand the quick sympathy that caused her to put her face so close to Dan's, to show that she knew what he was reproaching himself for, might have been able to comprehend the depth of unselfish tenderness that dwelt in the soul of that little maid. Ah! it was only in a kitchen, but how beautiful it was to see!

"Don't bother about me, my dear," she said almost in a whisper. "If you are happy, I am happy." And then she added, pretending to be comically indignant, "You stupid Dan! I've a good mind to rumple your hair! You selfish, indeed!"

"I am selfish!" exclaimed Dan, looking up and thinking-just as Joshua had thought-that he had never seen her look so pretty. "I *am* selfish, Joshua!" he cried, so energetically that Joshua was quite startled. "What would the Old Sailor say?"

"But, Dan" – said Ellen.

"Seriously, Jo" said Dan, putting his hand over Ellen's mouth, "what *would* the Old Sailor say?"

"The Old Sailor would be delighted."

"Now, look here," said Dan, with a determination almost comical in its intensity when one considered what inspired it; as if it were a question of tremendous national consequence, or something in which mighty interests were involved; "are you sure?"

"I am sure he would be delighted, Dan," replied Joshua without the slightest hesitation.

"It's of no use, Dan and Josh dear," said Ellen, shaking her head. "You musn't think of it. I can't go. Mother wouldn't be able to spare me. Why, don't you know" –

"Don't I know what, Ellen?" asked Dan.

"Don't you know that it's washing-day?" said Ellen with a sharp nod, as if that settled the question.

Dan's head was still resting upon his hand. He pondered for a few moments, and then raising his head, said, "Good little Ellen;" and kissed her. "Now let us have breakfast."

Breakfast being over, Dan said he wanted to see Susan.

"Tell her I want to speak to her most particularly," he said to Ellen. "And, Ellen! when Susan comes, you go out of the room, and Joshua as well. I want to speak to her quite privately."

Ellen and Joshua left Susan with Dan, and went into the passage; which gave Joshua opportunity to ask Ellen if she remembered when he used to be pushed into the coal-cellar. Yes, Ellen remembered it very well indeed; and they both laughed over the reminiscence.

"How black your face used to be!" exclaimed Ellen.

"And yours too, Ellen!" retorted Joshua saucily.

Whereat Ellen blushed, and did not reply.

What passed between Susan and Dan was never divulged. It was nothing very dreadful, you may be sure; for when Dan called to Joshua and Ellen to come in, they found him smiling. Susan was gone, but presently she entered again with a radiant face and nodded to Dan, who nodded to Susan in return, and said gayly, –

"Thank you, Susey!"

When Susan went into the passage, she wiped her eyes, and did not once look round to see if any thing was behind her. That day, over the washing-tub, Susan was happier than she had been for a long time.

Then Dan rubbed his hands, and said, "I really think this is going to be the happiest day of my life."

The happiest day of my life! How often, and with what various meanings, are those words uttered! At dinner-parties when the invited guest rises to respond to the toast of his health, and commences by saying in tones which falter from emotion, "This is the happiest day of my life!" At wedding-feasts, if healths are being proposed, when the bridegroom, the bridegroom's father, and the bride's father, each in his turn declares, "This is the happiest day of my life!" At the presentation of testimonials, whether to humbug, worthy man, or fool, it is "The happiest day of my life!" with one and all of them. With copious use of pocket-handkerchief, and with face more suitable for a funeral than for a joyful occasion. But a fig for moralizing on such a day as this!

Dan's countenance was suffused with a flush of genuine delight, as he repeated, -

"Yes, Ellen, this is going to be the happiest day of my life."

She gave him a questioning, imploring look, which asked the reason why as plainly as any words could put the question.

"Come here, and I'll whisper," said Dan.

Ellen put her ear close to his mouth, but Dan, instead of whispering, blew into her ear, which caused her to start away with a pleasant shiver, and to cry out that he tickled her. Nothing daunted, however, she placed her ear a second time to his lips; and then he whispered something, which made Ellen jump for joy, and hug him round the neck, and tear out of the room as if she were mad. And almost before you could say "Jack Robinson!" there she was back again, her eyes all aglow with excitement, in her modest Sunday dress and pretty Sunday bonnet.

Susan's voice was heard calling out, -

"Here's the cart at the door!"

"She means our carriage, Jo," said Dan merrily, as Joshua carried him out.

And there they were, the three of them in the cart; Dan lying his full length on some straw between Joshua and Ellen, who sat upon a kind of bench in a state of perfect happiness. And there were the bullfinches in their cage, wondering what on earth it all meant, but very blithe and merry notwithstanding. And there was the cart moving, along slowly, so that Dan should not be jolted. And there they were, presently, looking at each other, and laughing and nodding pleasantly without any apparent cause.

Not among all the stars that gem the heavens (which some wise men assert are really worlds in which forms that have life fulfil the task ordained by the Master of all the worlds) could there be found a more beautiful world than this was to our young holiday-folk on that bright summer morning. Whitechapel the Dingy was as a flower-garden in their eyes; and as they rode through the busy neighborhood a great many persons turned to look at the crazy cart-the springs in which were the only uneasy part of the whole affair-and at the three joyful faces that peered about, enjoying every thing, and thankful for every thing, from the flying clouds to the lazy gutters.

Soon they were at the waterside; and soon they were on the barge, with the Old Sailor welcoming them in downright sailor fashion. Directly Dan put out his little hand, and felt it imprisoned in the Old Sailor's immense palm, and directly he looked at the great open face, pock-marked as it was, and into the staring pleasant eyes, which returned his look honestly and pleasantly, he nodded to himself in satisfaction. His delight was unbounded when the Old Sailor lifted him tenderly, and placed him in a hammock specially prepared for him. He was deeply impressed by the Old Sailor's thoughtful kindness. The mere fact of his lying in a hammock was entrancing. And there Dan swung, and, gazing in wonder upon the busy life of the flowing river, fancied himself in dreamland.

Before he gave himself up to that trance, however, there was much to be done and much to be observed. When the Old Sailor lifted him into the hammock and arranged him comfortably-Dan was surprised that those great strong hands could be so light and tender-he said to the Old Sailor, "Thank

you, sir;" and the Old Sailor replied, "Ay, ay, my lad," just as he had read of, and in just the kind of tone he imagined a sailor would use.

The next thing the Old Sailor did was to rest his hand upon Ellen's head. Thereupon Joshua said, "You don't mind, Mr. Praiseworthy, do you?" referring to the liberty they had taken in bringing Ellen without an invitation. "Mind!" the Old Sailor exclaimed. "A pretty little lass like this!" and he stooped and kissed her. And Ellen did not even blush, but seemed to like it. The Old Sailor seemed to like it too. There was something wonderfully charming in his manner of saying "Pretty little lass;" none but a downright thoroughbred old tar could have said it in such a way. And there was something wonderfully charming in the rough grace with which he accepted the bunch of flowers from Ellen. His first intention was to stick them in the bosom of his shirt; but second consideration led him to reflect that their circumference rendered such a resting-place inappropriate. So he placed them in a large tin mug, and sprinkled them with water, which glistened on their leaves as freshly as the dew-kisses which glisten in the early morning wherever Nature makes holiday. Then Dan took the cage containing the bullfinches, and asked the Old Sailor to accept the birds as a present from him and Joshua; and the Old Sailor thanked him in such cordial terms, that his heart was stirred with a fresh delight. Truth to tell, the Old Sailor was mightily gratified with the birds; but, at the same time, he was mightily puzzled as to what he was to do with them. Prettier little things he had never seen; but, small and beautiful as they were, they were a responsibility for which he was not prepared. He stood with his legs wide apart, regarding the birds with a perplexed expression on his face; and Dan divining what was in his mind, opened the door of the cage and out hopped the bullfinches looking about them with an air of having been accustomed to the water all their lives. As if impelled by a sudden desire to fly away and join their mates in distant woodlands, they took wing and fluttered around the hammock in which Dan lay; now coming tantalizingly near, and now sailing away with an independent air, as much as to say, "We're off!" But when Dan held out his forefinger, they came and perched upon it contentedly. The Old Sailor gazed on the little comedy in admiration. His admiration was increased a hundred fold when Dan, taking his hand, transferred the birds on to his forefinger. He looked at the birds timorously; the birds looked at him confidently. He was afraid to move lest some mischief should happen to the delicate creatures.

"Put them in the cage, sir," said Dan. The Old Sailor did so. "Now," continued Dan, "I will send you food for them regularly; and it will not be too much trouble for you to fill this well with fresh water every morning, will it, sir?"

"No," said the Old Sailor. "But how will the birds get at the water, my lad? It is out of their reach."

"Ah! you think so, sir. But have you ever been in want of water?"

"Of fresh water, I have, my lad; not of salt. Was for three days on a raft, with not a drop of fresh water among thirty-seven of us. Two drank salt water, and went raving mad; one threw himself into the sea."

"And the others, sir?" inquired Dan, immensely interested.

"The others, my lad, waited and suffered, and prayed for rain. And it came, my lad, and we were saved, by the mercy of God. It was awful suffering; our very eyeballs were blazing with thirst. It would have been a relief to us if we could have cried."

"But the heavens cried for you, sir," said Dan tenderly.

"Ay, ay, my lad," said the Old Sailor; "that's well said. The heavens cried for us; and we lay on our backs with our mouths open to catch the blessed drops. The salt water that was death to us dashed up from below; and the fresh water that was life to us came down from above. In five minutes we were soaked with the rain; and we sucked at our clothes. We caught enough rain-water to last us until we were picked up by a merchantman, homeward bound from the Indies."

"That was good," said Dan, feeling as if he had known the Old Sailor all his life. "Now, supposing you were wrecked, sir, on a high rock. Here is the rock," pointing to the perch on which the bullfinches were standing.

"Here is the rock," repeated the Old Sailor, chiming in readily with Dan's fancy.

"And here you are, sir, with another sailor," identifying Praiseworthy Meddler and the other sailor with the two bullfinches.

"And here am I, with another sailor," said the Old Sailor attentively, nodding familiarly at his new shipmate in the cage, who, making much too light of the calamity which had befallen them, winked saucily in return.

"And you are very thirsty."

"And I am very thirsty," said the Old Sailor, smacking his parched lips.

"And here, out of your reach, is the water," indicating the well, "you want to drink."

"And here, out of my reach, is the water I want to drink," said the Old Sailor, growing more parched.

"Now, then," said Dan, "you can't get at the water with your beak-I mean your mouth-and you can't reach it with your claws-I mean your hands. Now what do you do?"

"Ah what do I do?" repeated the Old Sailor, not seeing his way out of the difficulty.

"Why," exclaimed Dan enthusiastically, "you get a rope-or, if you haven't got one, you make one out of some strong grass, or out of strips of your clothes; and you get a bucket-or you make one out of a cocoanut," in his enthusiasm Dan took the cocoanut for granted; and the Old Sailor accepted its existence on the rock with most implicit faith-"and you attach the cocoanut to the rope, and you lower it into the water, and draw it up full. Here you are, doing it."

And, obedient to Dan's signal, the bullfinches lowered their tiny bucket into the well, and drew it up full, and dipped their beaks into the water, as if they were shipwrecked bullfinches, and were nearly dead with raging thirst.

A thoughtful expression stole into the Old Sailor's face.

"They are wise little creatures," he said. "I have seen a might of strange things and pretty things; but this is as pretty as any thing I have seen."

"You can learn them any thing almost, sir," said Dan, who was bent upon making the Old Sailor love the birds.

"To climb ropes like a sailor?"

"In a week they could. If I had a little ship, with two or three sails and a rope-ladder, I could teach them to climb the ladder and set the sails."

"I dare say, my lad, I dare say."

"Did you ever see a mermaid, sir?"

This was one of the questions Dan had made up his mind to ask the Old Sailor directly they grew familiar.

"Yes," answered the Old Sailor. "I wasn't very near her; and I was laughed at for saying I had seen her. But I saw her, for all that."

"Where was it that you saw her, sir?"

"In the South Pacific, where there are the ugliest images of men and women, and the most wonderful birds and flowers and trees, in the world. I have walked for miles through forests of wild flowers and strange trees, while thousands of parrots were flying about, with their feathers all blue and gold and scarlet and silver."

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Dan, twining his fingers together. "And they're there now, sir?"

"Surely. Your land-lubbers don't know any thing of the world."

"Those men and women, sir-are they very ugly?"

"As ugly as sin can make 'em-brown and copper-colored and nearly black; cannibals they are."

"That's very dreadful!" said Dan with a shiver. "What else have you seen, sir?"

"What would you say to gardens in the sea?" asked the Old Sailor enthusiastically. "What would you say to fields in the sky?"

"No!" said Dan in wonder.

"Yes, my lad. Gardens in the sea, with the flowers growing and blooming. I only saw land in the sky once; but it was a sight that can't be forgot. We were thousands of miles away from land; but there in the sky was the country, with fields and forests and mountains. We saw it for near an hour; then it melted away. What would you say to flying fish-showers of 'em. I heard of a talking fish; but I never saw it. I shouldn't wonder, now, if these pretty little birds could talk."

"No, sir," said Dan; "they can't talk, but they can sing."

With that he whistled the first stave of "Rule, Britannia;" and the bullfinches piped the patriotic song so spiritedly, that the Old Sailor roared out in a hoarse voice, "Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves!" and then stopped, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and exclaimed, "Lord, Lord!" with rapturous bewilderment. But when Dan whistled "And have you not heard of a jolly young waterman?" and the birds answered, "Oh, yes! we have heard of a jolly young waterman," and proceeded to narrate where that jolly young waterman plied, and how dexterously that jolly young waterman feathered his oars, the Old Sailor was fairly dumfounded, and sat down in silence, and watched and listened, while Dan put the birds through the whole of their performances.

Ah, what a happy day was that-never, never to be forgotten! As he lay in his hammock, with a delicious sense of rest upon him, he saw pleasure-boats and barges floating down with the tide, with a happy indolence in keeping with every thing about him. What else? Bright visions in the clouds; not for himself, but for his friend, his brother Joshua; bright visions of beautiful lands and beautiful seas. What did the Old Sailor say? Gardens in the sea, with the flowers growing and blooming! He saw them in the clouds; and each flower was bright with beauty, and each petal was rimmed with light. Fields in the skies! There they were, stretching far, far away; and some one was walking through forests of wild flowers and strange trees. Who was it? Joshua! And there were the parrots that the Old Sailor had spoken of; with their feathers of blue and gold and scarlet and silver. But Dan happened to turn his eyes from the clouds to the water, and dreamland faded. Joshua was rowing on the river.

Bravo, Joshua! How strong he looked, with his shirt-sleeves tucked up to his shoulders; and how well he managed his oars! Not that Dan was much of a judge; but he knew what grace was, and surely he saw that before him when he saw Joshua rowing. Joshua looked at Dan, and smiled and nodded; and Dan clapped his hands. And Joshua, to show how clever he was, made a great sweep with the oars, and fell backwards in the boat, in a most ridiculous position, with his heels in the air. But he was up again like lightning, and recovered his oars, and made so light of it, that Dan, who had caught his breath for an instant, laughed merrily at the mishap, and thought it was good fun. His laugh was echoed by Ellen, who was sitting by his side, and who had also been a little alarmed at first. The industrious maid was making holiday in her own peculiar way. She was not accustomed to sit idly down with her hands in her lap. By some mysterious means she had obtained possession of two of the Old Sailor's shirts which required mending; and there she was stitching away at them, as if it were the most natural thing in the world for her to do when she came out for a holiday. Did she have a design upon the Old Sailor? It really looked suspiciously like it, if one might judge from the demure glances she cast upon him every now and then, and from the admiring manner in which he returned her artful glances. One thing was certain: she had fairly captivated him; and there is no telling what might have occurred, if he had been thirty years younger.

What more beautiful phase of human nature can be seen than that of an old man with a young heart? Place, side by side, two pictures of old manhood: one, with crafty face; with cautious eyes that never rove; with compressed lips that keep guard on every word; with puckered forehead and eyebrows, from every ugly crevice in which the spirit of "You can't take me in" peeps out, as if the essence of a fox were in hiding there; – the other, with open face, which says, "Read me; I am not

afraid;" with eyes that, be they large or small, enjoy what they see; with full-fleshed wrinkles on forehead and eyebrows; with lips that smile when others smile.

No younger heart ever beat in the breast of an old man than that which beat in the breast of Praiseworthy Meddler. He had never mingled with children; yet here he was, at nearly seventy years of age, a hale and hearty old man, with a nature as simple as a child's. What was it that made him so? Was it because he had lived his youth and manhood away from cities, where the tricky webs of trade teach men to trick as their brethren do, or where the anxiety how to live, and with many, alas, how to get to-morrow's bread, stops the generous flow of a generous nature, and robs life's summer of its brightness? Or did he inherit it? If so, how deserving of pity are those children who are born of crafty parents! There are human mysteries which science has not dared to probe, and there are inherited ills and calamities which philanthropists, up to the present time, have not tried to get to the root of.

Anyhow, here was Praiseworthy Meddler sitting upon the deck of his barge by the side of Ellen, showing her, in the intervals of stitching, how to splice a broken rope, and initiating her into the mysteries a short-splice, long-splice, and eye-splice. Dan, looking on, begged some rope, and proved himself a wonderfully-apt scholar, which caused the Old Sailor to remark, -

"You ought to be a sailor, my lad;" forgetting for the moment that Dan's legs were useless.

"I should have to work in a hammock, sir," said Dan cheerfully.

The Old Sailor blushed.

"I forgot," he said in a gentle voice.

"There's the sailor for you, if you like," said Dan, pointing to Joshua, who, a couple of hundred yards away, was pulling lazily towards the barge.

"Ay, ay, my lad; Joshua has the right stuff in him. He will be a fine strong man."

"He is better than strong, sir," said Dan; "he is noble and tender-hearted. If you knew, sir, how good he has been to me, you would admire and love him more. If you knew how gentle he has been to me-how tender, and how self-sacrificing-you would think even better of him than you do. We have been together all our lives; every day he has come to me as regularly as the sun, and has been to me what the sun is to the day. I look back now that he is going away, and I cannot remember that he has ever given me a cross word or a cross look. And I have been very troublesome sometimes, and very peevish; but he has borne with it all. Look, sir," and Dan drew the Old Sailor's attention to two pieces of rope, one thin and one thick, the strands of which he had been interweaving, "this thin rope is me; this thick rope is Joshua. Now we are spliced, and you can't pull us apart. Joshua and me are friends for ever and ever!"

The Old Sailor listened attentively, and nodded his head occasionally, to show that he was following Dan's words, and understood them. Ellen, having mended the Old Sailor's shirts, sat with her hands folded in her lap, indorsing every word that Dan uttered.

Just then Joshua reached the barge, and having secured the boat, climbed on to the deck. As he did so, eight bells struck.

"Eight bells," said the Old Sailor. "Dinner."

With that, he lifted Dan out of the hammock, and carried him to where dinner was laid on a table which extended fore and aft down the centre of what it would be the wildest extravagance of courtesy to call a saloon, and where every thing was prepared in expectation of a storm. Joshua and Ellen followed, and the four of them made a very merry party. Lobscouse and sea-pie were the only dishes, and they were brought in by a Lascar with rings in his ears, whom the Old Sailor called a "lubberly swab," because he was unmistakably drunk; and who in return, notwithstanding his drunken condition, cast upon the Old Sailor an evil look, which flashed from his eyes like a dagger-stroke. This Lascar was the man who had struck eight bells, and who cooked for the Old Sailor, and did odd work about the barge, in return for which he got his victuals and a bunk to sleep in. A lazy, indolent rogue, who would do any thing, never mind what, for rum and tobacco; a cringing, submissive, treacherous rogue, ripe for the execution of any villainy on the promise of rum and tobacco; a rogue who would

fawn, and lie, and stab, and humble himself and play Bombastes for rum and tobacco. They were all he seemed to live for; they were his Thirty-nine Articles, and he was ready to sell himself for them any day. Of what quality might be the work proposed to him to do, so as to earn the reward, was of the very smallest consequence to him. He gave Ellen such an ugly look of wicked admiration that she was glad when he was gone.

Dinner over, they returned to the deck, and the Old Sailor told them stories of the sea-stories so enthralling, that the afternoon glided by like a dream; and the setting sun was tinged with the glories of the distant lands whither it was wending. They had tea on deck-a delicious tea, of shrimps, water-creases, and bread-and-butter. The task of preparing the tea was performed by Ellen and the Old Sailor; and during the performance of this task, it may be confidently stated that the conquest of the Old Sailor was completed, and that he was from that moment, and ever afterwards, her devoted slave. Then they went down, and sat two and two on each side of the table, Joshua and Dan being on one side, and Ellen and the Old Sailor on the other; and they had more sea-stories, and were altogether in a state of supreme happiness.

During the latter part of the evening the conversation turned upon Joshua's approaching voyage.

"Always bear in mind the sailor's watchword, my lad," said the Old Sailor. "Along the line the signal ran: 'England expects that every man this day will do his duty.' That's meant not for this day alone, but for always. What a sailor's got to do is to obey. Many a voyage has had a bad ending because of a sailor's forgetting his watchword. Don't you forget it, Josh."

"I won't, sir."

"The 'Merry Andrew,' that you're going to make your first voyage in, is a fine ship; the skipper is a fine skipper-a man he is, and that's what a ship wants-a man and not an image." The Old Sailor said this in a tone of exasperation, inspired, possibly, by some tantalizing remembrance of a ship commanded by an image instead of a man. "So stick to your watchword, my lad. It wouldn't be a bad thing now if we were to drink to it."

The cunning old rascal was only too glad of a chance to get at his grog.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Dan, clapping his hands.

No sooner said than done. Hot water, lemon, sugar, rum, compounded with the skill of an artist. A glass for Joshua, a glass for Dan, a glass for the Old Sailor, and a small glass for Ellen. Not one of them seemed afraid of it-not even Ellen.

"Now then," said the Old Sailor, smiling as the steam rose to his nostrils. "Now, then; the sailor's watchword-Duty, and may Joshua never forget it!"

"Duty, Jo," said Dan, nodding over his glass to Joshua.

"Duty, Dan," said Joshua, nodding to Dan.

Ellen said nothing aloud, but whispered something into her glass. Then they drank and sipped their grog, and resumed the conversation.

"Have you been to New Holland, sir?" asked Dan. The "Merry Andrew" was bound for New Holland.

"I was there when I was a youngster," replied the Old Sailor, mixing a second glass of grog for himself. "It was a wild country then; I am told it is growing into a wonderful country now. We were six months going out. We had nearly four hundred convicts aboard, most of them in irons. A miserable lot of desperate wretches they were! They were not well treated, and they knew it. We had to keep close watch over them; if they could have set themselves free by any means-they talked of it many a time among themselves-they would have captured the ship, and flung us overboard, or something worse. We landed them at Port Phillip, where the British Government wanted to form a settlement."

"Why New Holland, sir?" asked Dan, always eager for information.

"Discovered by the Dutch in about 1600," replied the Old Sailor oratorically. "Victoria was discovered by Capt. Cook; let us drink to him." They took a sip-all but the Old Sailor, who scorned sips. "Discovered by Capt. Cook in 1770, after he had discovered New Zealand."

"Any savages, sir?"

"Swarms. We were out in a boat exploring, and when we were close in shore, two or three hundred savages came whooping down upon us. We weren't afraid of them; we pulled in to shore, and they stopped short about twenty yards from us, jabbering like a lot of black monkeys. They soon got courage enough to come closer to us, and we gave them some grog; but the ignorant lubbers spit it out of their mouths at first. Then they began to steal things from the boat; and when we gave them to understand that what was ours wasn't theirs, they grew saucy. A black fellow caught up the master's-mate, and ran away with him."

"What did they want with him, sir?"

"To eat him, of course. We fired over their heads, and they dropped the master's-mate, who ran back to us, glad enough to get free, for he didn't relish the idea of being made a meal of. But when the savages found that the guns didn't hurt them, they came whooping up to us again, flourishing their spears. Their faces were painted, and they had swans' feathers sticking out of their heads. Some of them had skin cloaks on, painted all over with figures of naked men, and some of them had bones stuck through their nostrils. On they came, yelling and leaping like so many devils, thinking what a fine roast the fattest of us would make. Then we fired and killed one of them. Directly they saw him fall, they scampered off like madmen."

When the conversation flagged, they had music and singing. Joshua played, and Dan sang a song, and the Old Sailor sang a good many. The best of the Old Sailor's songs was, that they were all about the sea, and that every one of them had a chorus in which the company could join. Of course he sang "Heave the Lead," and "Yeo, heave, ho! To the windlass let us go, with yo, heave ho!" and "Saturday Night at Sea;" and when "Saturday night did come, my boys, to drink to Poll and Bess," he flourished his glass, and drank to those young ladies with a will. The number of lovely ladies with whom the Old Sailor made them acquainted was something astonishing. Poor Jack had his Poll, whom he addressed in a not very dignified manner, when he said to her, -

"What argufies sniv'ling and piping your eye? Why what a-(*hem!*) fool you must be!"

Out of respect for Ellen, the Old Sailor coughed over a good many words in the songs he sang; for it must be confessed that there was more swearing in them than was absolutely necessary. Poor Jack, however, who called his Poll a something fool, made up for it in the end by declaring that "his heart was his Poll's" (a very pretty though somewhat trite sentiment), and "his rhino's his friend's" (a very unwise and foolish sentiment, as the world goes). Then there was a Polly whom the lads called so pretty, and who entreated her sweetheart, before he sailed in the good ship the "Kitty" to be constant to her; and who, when he returned without any rhino, turned up her nose at him, as young women do now and then. Then there were Poll in "My Poll and my partner Joe" (it was wonderful how faithless the Polls were), and Poll in "Every inch a Sailor," who, when poor Haulyard came home in tatters, swore (very unfeminine of her) that she had never seen his face. But honest Ned Haulyard was a philosophical sailor, for he something'd her for a faithless she, and singing went again to sea. The Nancies were a better class of female: -

"I love my duty, love my friend,
Love truth and merit to defend,
To moan their loss who hazard ran;
I love to take an honest part.
Love beauty with a spotless heart,
By manners love to show the man;
To sail through life by honor's breeze-
'Twas all along of loving these
First made me dote on lovely Nan."

And so on, and so on, with gentle Anna and buxom Nan; and poor Fanny, who drowned herself in the waves near to the place where hung the trembling pines; and poor Peggy, who loved a soldier lad (a marine, without doubt); and bonny Kate, who lived happily afterwards with Tom Clueline. Ellen joined in the choruses with her sweet voice; but, strange to say, she had not been asked to sing until the Old Sailor, struck perhaps by a sudden remorse at monopolizing the harmony, called upon her for a song. Ellen, nothing loth, asked what song; and Joshua said, -

"Sing the song you learned of mother, Ellen."

"'Bread-and-Cheese and Kisses?'" inquired Ellen.

"Yes, 'Bread-and-Cheese and Kisses.' 'Tisn't quite a girl's song sir" (to the Old Sailor); "but it is a good song, and Ellen sings it nicely."

"Hooray, then, for 'Bread-and-Cheese and Kisses!'" cried the Old Sailor, casting a glance of intense admiration at Ellen, who, without more ado, sang as follows: -

BREAD-AND-CHEESE AND KISSES

One day, when I came home fatigued,
And felt inclined to grumble,
Because my life was one of toil,
Because my lot was humble,
I said to Kate, my darling wife,
In whom my whole life's bliss is,
"What have you got for dinner, Kate?"
"Why, bread-and-cheese and kisses!"

Though worn and tired, my heart leaped up
As those plain words she uttered.
Why should I envy those whose bread
Than mine's more thickly buttered?
I said, "We'll have dessert at once."
"What's that?" she asked. "Why, this is."
I kissed her. Ah, what sweeter meal
Than bread-and-cheese and kisses!

I gazed at her with pure delight;
She nodded and smiled gayly;
I said, "My love, on such a meal
I'd dine with pleasure, daily.
When I but think of you, dear girl,
I pity those fine misses
Who turn their noses up and pout
At bread-and-cheese and kisses.

"And when I look on your dear form,
And on your face so homely;
And when I look in your dear eyes,
And on your dress so comely;
And when I hold you in my arms,
I laugh at Fortune's misses.

I'm blessed in you, content with you,
And bread-and-cheese and kisses."

Thus ended the happy day.

CHAPTER IX

MINNIE AND HER SHELL

So the simple ways of Joshua's simple life were drawing to a close. He had chosen his career, and to-morrow he would be at the end of the quiet groove in which he had hitherto moved, and would step upon rougher roads, to commence the battle which dooms many a fair-promising life to a despairing death, and out of which no one comes without scars and wounds which art and time are powerless to heal. To-morrow he was to leave a father almost too indulgent; a mother whose heart was as true in its motherly affection for him as the needle is to the pole; a friend who gave him a love as tender and as pure as that which angels could feel.

During the past week he had been busily engaged in leave-taking, and he had been surprised to find what a number of friends he had. There was not one of the poor neighbors, in the poor locality in which he had passed his boyhood's days, who had not kind words and good wishes for him, and who did not give them heartily and without stint. Many a hearty handwillshake from men whose hands he had never touched before, and many a motherly kiss from women he had been in the habit of saying only "Good-morning" to, did Joshua receive. There is a stronger knitting of affection between poor people in poor neighborhoods than there is among the rich in their wider thoroughfares. Perhaps it is the narrow streets that draw them closer to each other; perhaps it is the common struggle to keep body and soul together in which they are all engaged; perhaps it is the unconscious recognition of a higher law of humanity than prevails elsewhere; perhaps it is the absence of the wider barriers of exclusiveness, among which the smaller and more beautiful flowers of feeling-being so humble and unassuming-are in danger of being lost or overlooked. Anyhow the ties of affection are stronger among the poor. Putting necessity and sickness aside, more mothers nurse their babes from love among the poor than among the rich.

The secret of this unanimity of goodwill towards Joshua lay in his uniformly quiet demeanor and affectionate disposition. The wonderful friendship that existed between Dan and Joshua was a household word in the poor homes round about; there was something so beautiful in it, that they felt a pride in the circumstance of its having been cemented in their midst; and many tender-hearted women said that night to their husbands, that they wondered what Dan would do now that Joshua was going away. "And Josh, too," the husband would reply; "do you think he won't miss Dan?" But the women thought mostly of Dan in that relationship. The romance of the thing had something to do with this general interest in his welfare. Here was a young man, one of their own order, born and bred among them, who, from no contempt of their humble ways of life but from a distinct desire to do better than they (not to *be* better; that they would have resented), had resolved to go out into the world to carve a way for himself. It was brave and manly; it was daring and heroic. For the world was so wide! Cooped-up as *they* were, what did they know of it? What did they see of it? Those of them-the few-who worked at home in their once-a-week shirt-sleeves, could raise their eyes from their work, and see the dull prospect of over the way; or, resting wearily from the monotonous labor, could stroll to their street-doors, and look up and down the street in a meaningless, purposeless manner: like automatons in aprons, with dirty faces and very black finger-nails, coming out of a box and performing a task in which there was necessarily no sense of enjoyment.

Those of them-the many-who toiled in workshops other than their homes, saw with the rising and the setting of every sun a few narrow streets within the circumference of a mile, mayhap. Moving always in the same groove, trudging to their workshops every morning, trudging home every night-it was the same thing for them day after day. The humdrum course of time was only marked by the encroachment of gray hairs and white; or by the patching-up of the poor furniture, which grew more rheumatic, and groaned more dismally every succeeding season; or by the cracking and

dismemberment of cups and saucers and plates; or by the slow death of the impossible figures on the tea-trays-figures which were bright and gay once upon a time, as their owners were upon a certain happy wedding-day. Here, as a type, are three small mugs, the letters upon which are either quite faded away, or are denoted by a very mockery of shrivelled lines, as if their lives were being drawn out to the last stage of miserable attenuation. Once they proclaimed themselves proudly, and in golden letters, "For George, a Birthday Present;" "For Mary Ann, with Mother's Love;" "Charley, for a Good Boy." George and Mary, Ann and Charley used to clap their little hands, and swing their little legs delightedly, when they and the mugs kept company at breakfast and tea-time; but now flesh and crockery have grown old, and are fading away in common. The hair on George's head is very thin, although he is not yet forty years of age; Mary Ann is an anxious-looking mother, with six dirty children, who, as she declares twenty times a day, are enough to worry the life out of her; and Charley has turned out any thing but "a Good Boy," being much too fond of public-houses. With such like uninteresting variations, the lives of George and Mary Ann and Charley were typical of the lives of all the poor people amongst whom the Marvels lived. From the cradle to the grave, every thing the same; the same streets, the same breakfasts, the same dinners, the same uneventful routine of existence, the only visible signs upon the record being the deepening of wrinkles and the whitening of hairs. But they were happy enough, notwithstanding; and if their pulses were stirred into quicker motion when they shook Joshua's hand and wished him good luck, there was no envy towards him in their minds, and no feeling of discontent marred the genuineness of their God-speed. When at candle-time they spoke of Joshua and of the world which he was going to see, some of the women said that it would have been better if "you, John," or "you, William," "had struck out for yourself when you were young;" and John and William assenting, sighed to think that it was too late for them to make a new start. Well, their time was past; the tide which they might have taken at the flood, but did not, would never come again to their life's shore. Joshua *had* taken it at the flood, and would be afloat to-morrow; good luck be with him! In the heartiness of their good wishes there was no expressed consciousness that there was as much heroism in their quiet lives as in the lives of great heroes and daring adventurers; which very unconsciousness and unexpressed abnegation made that heroism (begging Mr. Ruskin's pardon for calling it so) all the grander.

Joshua had bidden the Old Sailor good-by. The dear, simple old fellow had given Joshua some golden rules to go by; had enjoined him to be respectful and submissive; to learn all he could; to be cheerful always, and to do his work willingly, however hard it seemed; not to mix himself up in the men's quarrels or grumblings; had told him how that some officers were querulous, and some were tyrannical, but that he could always keep himself out of mischief by obeying orders; and had impressed upon him, more particularly than all, the value of the golden motto-Duty. "Keep that for your watchword, my lad," said the Old Sailor, "and you will do."

"I am glad it is nearly all over," said Joshua to Dan. "I have only two or three more to say good-by to, with the exception of mother and father, and Ellen and you, dear Dan."

"There's Susan, Jo," said Dan after a pause. "I wish you could see her before you go."

"I wish so, too. I am going now to say good-by to Minnie and her father."

"Is he better, Jo?"

"I haven't seen him for a week; but I don't think he is ever quite right here;" touching his forehead.

They were speaking of the street actor, whose name was Basil Kindred.

"And Minnie is very pretty, you say."

"Very pretty, but with such strange ways, Dan, as I have told you before."

"Yes," said Dan, looking earnestly at Joshua.

"Sometimes like a woman, which she is not; sometimes like a little child, which she is not. Yet for all she is so strange, one can't help loving her, and pitying her."

"Is she at all like Ellen, Jo?"

"Minnie is not like Ellen," said Joshua, considering. "Ellen's face is calm and peaceful; Minnie's is grander, larger. Minnie is the kind of girl for a heroine, and Ellen is not, I think. She is too peaceful. Say that Ellen is like a lake, Minnie is like the sea."

A quiet smile passed over Dan's lips, yet a regretful one, too.

"You don't know Ellen, Jo," he said "Give me the lake."

"And me the sea," said Joshua, not meaning it at all with reference to the girls, but literally, with reference to his choice of a profession.

From the first part of this conversation it will be gathered that Susan Taylor had left her home, and had chosen to keep her residence a secret from her family. She was not to blame for it; for she had been most unhappy in the family mansion of the Taylors. Although she earned her own living, and paid for her board and lodging, her father, a drunken, lazy mechanic, had lately been pestering her for small loans, to be spent, of course, at the public-house. These she could not afford to give him; and when he found that she would not assist him, he quarrelled with her. He twitted her about her ungainly person, jeered at her strange mannerisms, pricked her with domestic pins and needles, and made her life so miserable, that she was glad when the culminating quarrel gave her the opportunity to run away.

She had never had a friend. Nearly every girl has a girl-companion with whom she exchanges little confidences, and whom she consults as to the fashion of the new bonnet, and how it is to be trimmed, the pattern of the new dress, and how many flounces it is to have, the color of the new piece of ribbon, and how it should be worn, the personal appearance and intentions of the last new admirer, and how he is to be treated. Susan never had such a companion; worse than that, she never had a sweetheart. She had grown to woman's estate without ever having experienced the pleasures of courtship, either as a child or as a woman. No little boy had taken a liking to her when she was a little girl; and when she grew to be a young woman, no young man had cast a favorable eye upon her. Sooth to say, there was nothing singular in the circumstance; for she was as little attractive externally, as a young woman well could be.

If it were necessary to define and describe her with brevity, a happy definition and description might be given in two simple words-Joints and Knobs. Susan Taylor was all Joints and Knobs, from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet. There was not a straight line about her; every square inch of her frame was broken by a joint or intersected by a knob. Her face did not contain one perfect feature. Bones, with sharp rugged outlines, asserted themselves in her cheeks, in her chin, in her nose (most aggressively there), and in the arches of her eyes. Her shoulders were suggestive of nothing but salt-cellars; her fingers were covered with knuckles; her arms were all elbows; and her knees, as she walked, forced themselves into notice with offensive demonstrativeness. There was nothing round and soft about her. Every part of her was suggestive of Bone; she was so replete with mysterious and complicated angles that she might be said to resemble a mathematical torture. Her angular proportions, broken here by a joint, or intersected there by a knob, did not agree with one another. As not one of them would accept a subordinate position, they were necessarily on the very worst of terms: like a regiment in which every soldier insisted on being colonel, and struggled for the position. The result was Anatomical Confusion.

Cupid is popularly represented to be a mischievous young imp, who delights in tying persons together who are not in the least suited to each other, and as being so reckless and indiscriminate in the use of the metaphorical arrow, which he is everlastingly fixing to that metaphorical bow with such malicious nicety, that the right man seldom finds himself in the right place, and the right woman is similarly unfortunate. As a consequence of this eccentric and inhuman conduct, long men and short women and long women and short men, get absurdly matched, and the mental disparity is often found to be no less than the disparity in limb and bulk. But never, surely, did that tricky youngster (who is so convenient to writers as a reference, and in various other ways, that they cannot be sufficiently grateful for his mythological existence) play a stranger prank than when he made Susan Taylor and

Basil Kindred acquainted with each other. The evening on which Susan, for the first time, saw Basil Kindred act the Ghost scenes in "Hamlet," marked an era in her life not less important than that sad era which was commenced by her letting her brother Daniel fall from her arms out of the window on to the cruel stones. For if ever woman fell in love (which is so violently suggestive that it may well be doubted) with man, Susan Taylor, on that evening, fell in love with Basil Kindred.

But Susan was not the woman to exhibit her passion in words. In another fashion she did exhibit it: in the best fashion that devotion can show itself-in deeds. She was not a cunning woman, nor a wise one either. Being from the very infirmities of her nature a kind of social outcast, she was not likely to consider what the world would say of any action of hers. And here was an anomaly; she was neither foolish enough nor wise enough to consider what the world would say; yet had she considered that her conduct was open to censure, she would not have swerved a hair's breadth because of the world's opinion; and this very independence proceeded not from a hardened nature, but from a nature utterly simple. So she did what a very considerable majority of the busy bees in this busy world would consider either a very foolish thing or some thing worse. When she left her home she rented a room in the miserable house in which Basil Kindred and his daughter resided. She did this because she loved him; and yet looking for no return of her passion, she did it so that she might make herself useful to him and to Minnie. The living she earned as a dressmaker was a poor and a scanty one enough; but she managed, out of her small earnings, to contribute some little towards the comfort of the couple whose acquaintance she had so strangely made.

Joshua was always certain of a warm welcome from Basil and Minnie; an affectionate intimacy had sprung up between them, and he had spent many a pleasant hour in their company. But in the first flush of their intimacy he had been sorely puzzled by Basil Kindred's strange ways and oft-times stranger remarks; the wandering restlessness of his eyes, and the no less wandering nature of his speech, engendered grave doubts whether he was quite right in his mind. And as Joshua looked from Basil's fine mobile face to that of his daughter, so like her father's in all its grand and beautiful outlines, it distressed him to think that her intellect also might be tainted with her father's disease. It might not be; it might be merely the want of proper moral training that induced her to be so strangely incoherent, so reckless and defiant, and yet at the same time so singularly tender in her conduct. With Minnie every thing was right or wrong according to the way in which it affected herself. She recognized no general law as guiding such and such a principle or sentiment. There was this similarity and this difference between Minnie and Susan: they both ignored the world's opinion and the world's judgment of their actions. But where Susan would be meek, Minnie would be defiant; where Susan would offend through ignorance, Minnie would offend consciously, and be at the same time ready to justify herself and argue the point; which latter she would do, of course, only from her point of view. Supposing that it could be reduced to weights and measures, Minnie would have been content to place herself and her affections on one side of the scale, and all the world on the other, with the positive conviction that she would tip the scale.

She was very affectionate and docile to Joshua; she looked up to him with a kind of adoration, and this tacit acknowledgment of his superiority was pleasing to his vanity. He was her hero, and she worshipped him, and showed that she did so; and he, too, dangerously regarding her as a child, received her worship, and was gratified by it. And so she drifted.

Now as he entered the room, Minnie sprang towards him with a joyous exclamation, and taking his hand, held it tightly clasped in hers as she led him to a seat. The room was not so bare of furniture as it was when he first saw it. He looked round for Basil Kindred.

"Father is not at home, Joshua," said Minnie. "He will be in soon, I dare say." She pushed him softly into a chair, and sat on the ground at his feet. "I am so glad you have come!"

"But I don't think I have time to stay."

"You mustn't go; you mustn't go," said Minnie, drawing his arm round her neck. "I shall be so lonely if you do."

"But you were alone before I came in, Minnie."

"Yes," returned Minnie; "but I did not feel lonely then. I shall now, if you go away."

"Then I will stop for a little while," said Joshua, humoring her.

"Always good!" said Minnie gratefully, resting her lips upon her hand, "always good!"

"Why did you not feel lonely before I came, Minnie?"

"I was thinking."

"Of what?"

"Of long, long ago, when father was different to what he is now."

"It could not have been so long, long ago, little Minnie," – here came a little caressing action from the child, – "you are only-how old?"

"Fourteen."

"And fourteen years ago is not so long, long ago, little Minnie."

Minnie repeated her caressing action.

"To you it isn't perhaps, but it is to me. It seems almost," she said, placing Joshua's hand upon her eyes, and closing them, "as if I had nothing to do with it. Yet I must have had; for mother was mixed up with what I was thinking.

"But I shall think of something else now that you are here," she said presently. "I am going to listen."

With the hand that was free she took something from her pocket, and placing it to her ear, bent her head closer to the ground. She was so long in that attitude of watchful silence, that Joshua cried "Minnie" to arouse her.

"Hush!" she said; "you must not interrupt me. I am listening. I can almost hear it speak."

"Hear what speak?" asked Joshua, wondering.

Minnie directed his fingers to her ear, and he felt something smooth and cold.

"It is a shell," she said softly, "and I am listening to the sea."

"Ah," said Joshua in a voice as soft as hers, "that is because I am going to be a sailor."

"For that reason. Yes. Call me little Minnie."

"Little Minnie!" said Joshua tenderly; for Minnie's voice and manner were very winsome, and he could not help thinking how quaintly pretty her fancy was.

"Little Minnie, little Minnie!" whispered Minnie in so soft a tone that Joshua could scarcely hear it, – "little Minnie, little Minnie! The sea is singing it. How kind the sea is! and how soft and gentle I should like to go to sleep like this."

"Does the shell sing any thing else, little Minnie?"

"Listen! Ah, but you cannot hear! It is singing, 'Little Minnie, little Minnie, Joshua is going to be a sailor. Little Minnie, little Minnie, would you like to go with him?'"

"And you answer?"

"Yes, yes, yes! I should like to go with him, and hear the sea always singing like this. I should like to go with him because" – But here Minnie stopped.

"Because what?"

"Because nothing," said Minnie, taking the shell from her ear. "Now the sea is gone, and the singing is gone, and we are waiting at home for father."

"What for, Minnie? What am I waiting at home for father for?"

"To see him of course," answered Minnie.

"And to wish him and you good-by," said Joshua.

"Good-by!" echoed the child, with a sudden look of distress in her large gray eyes. "So soon!"

"Yes. My ship sails to-morrow."

"And this is the last day we shall see you," she said, her tears falling upon his hand.

"The last day for a little while, little Minnie," he said, striving to speak cheerfully.

"For how long?" asked the child, bending her head, so that her fair hair fell over her face.

"For a year, perhaps, Minnie," he answered.

"For a long, long year," she said sorrowfully. "You will not do as mother did, will you?"

"How was that?"

"She went away from us one afternoon, and was to come back at night. And it rained-oh, so dreadfully! – that night. We were lodging under some trees, father, mother, and I. Father was ill-very ill, but not with the same kind of illness that he has now sometimes. He had a fever. And mother went into the town to get something for us to eat-as you did that night when the bad boys threw a stone at father, and you brought him home. When father woke we went in search of her. But I never remember seeing mother again. And you are going away, and perhaps I shall never see you again."

"What does the shell say, Minnie?"

Minnie placed the shell to her ear.

"I cannot make out any thing," she said in a voice of pain. "It isn't singing now; it is moaning and sighing."

He took the shell and listened.

"It will speak to me, because I am a sailor."

"And it says?" asked Minnie anxiously.

"And it says-no, it sings-'Little Minnie, little Minnie, Joshua is going to sea, and Joshua will come back, please God, in a year, with beautiful shells and wonderful stories for you and all his friends. So, little Minnie, little Minnie, look happy; for there is nothing to be sorrowful at.'"

"Ah!" said Minnie in less sorrowful tones, "if I was a woman and loved anybody very much, I would not let him go away by himself."

"Why, what would you do?"

"I would follow him." And she pulled Joshua's head down to hers, and whispered, "I should like to go to sea with you."

"Would you indeed, miss!"

"Yes; for I love you, oh, so much!" whispered the child innocently in the same low tones. "But you wouldn't let me go, would you?"

"I should think not. A nice sailor you would make; a weak little thing like you!"

The girl sprang from her crouching attitude, and stood upright. As she did so, expressing in her action what her meaning was, Joshua noticed for the first time that she was growing to be large-limbed and strong. She tossed her hair from her face, and said, -

"Father says I shall be a tall woman."

"Well?"

"Well," she repeated half-proudly and half-bashfully. "I should not make such a bad sailor, after all." And then with a motion thoroughly childlike, she knelt on the ground before him; and placing her elbows on his knees, rested her chin in her upturned palms, and looked steadily into his face. "If I was a woman," she said slowly and earnestly, "I would go with you, even if you would not let me."

"How would you manage that?"

"I would follow you secretly."

"You must not say so," said Joshua reprovingly; "it would be very, very wrong."

"To follow any one you loved?" questioned the child, shaking her head at the same time to denote that she had no doubt whether it would be right or wrong. "Wrong to wish to be with any one you loved? It would be wrong not to wish it. But" – and she looked round, as if fearful, although they were alone, lest her resolution should become known-"nobody should know; I would not tell a living soul."

Joshua was silent, puzzled at Minnie's earnestness. Minnie, with the shell at her ear, soon broke the silence, however.

"Has your friend-the boy you have told me about" -

"Dan?"

"Yes, Dan. Has Dan got a shell?"

"No. I don't suppose he ever thought of it."

"And yet he loves you very much, and a shell is the only thing that can bring the sea to him."

"Who gave you the shell, Minnie?"

"No one."

"How did you get it, then?"

"I took it from a stall."

"O Minnie!" exclaimed Joshua, grieved and shocked; "that was very wicked."

"I know it was," said Minnie simply; "but I did it for you. Two days afterwards, when father had money given to him, I asked him for some, and he gave it me. I went to the stall where the shells were, and asked the man how much each they were. 'A penny,' he said. I gave him two pence and ran away. That was good, wasn't it?"

Joshua shook his head.

"It was very wicked to steal the shell; and I don't think you made up for it by paying double when you got the money."

But Minnie set her teeth close, and said between them, "It was wicked at first, but it wasn't wicked afterwards, was it, shell?" – She listened with a coaxing air to the shell's reply. – "The shell says it wasn't. Besides, I did it for you; Dan wouldn't have done it."

"No, that he wouldn't."

"Shows he doesn't love you as much as I do," muttered Minnie with jealous intonation. "If he did, he would have thought of a shell, and would have got it somehow. If he did, he would go with you, and would never, never leave you!"

"Now, Minnie, listen to me."

"I am listening, Joshua." She would have taken his hand; but he put it behind his back, and motioned her to be still. She knew by his voice that something unpleasant was coming, and she set her teeth close.

"You know that it is wrong to steal, and you stole the shell."

"I did it for you," she said doggedly. "That does not make it right, Minnie. I want you to give me a promise."

"I will promise you any thing but one thing," she said.

"What is that."

"Never mind. You would never guess, so you will never ask me. What am I to promise?"

"That you will never steal any thing again."

"Do you think I ever stole any thing but the shell, then?" she asked, with an air that would have been stern in its pride if she had not been a child.

It was on the tip of Joshua's tongue to say, "I don't know what to think;" but her manner of putting the question gave the answer to it. "No," he said instead, "I don't think you ever did, Minnie."

Her head was stubbornly bent; and she had enough to do to keep back her tears. She would not have succeeded had his answer been different.

"No, I never stole any thing else. Stole is the proper word, I know; but it is a nasty one, and makes me ashamed."

"That is your punishment, Minnie," said Joshua, wondering at himself for his tenaciousness.

"That is my punishment, then," said Minnie not less doggedly than before; "but I did it for you" – nothing would drive her from that stand-point – "and I promise you, Joshua, that I will never steal any thing again – never, never!"

He gave her his hand, and she took it and caressed it.

"And now, Minnie, about Dan," he said. "You must not say or think any thing ill of him. He is the best-hearted and the dearest friend in the world; and I cannot tell you how much I love him, or how much he loves me."

"Why doesn't he go to sea with you, then?"

Joshua looked at her reproachfully.

"Your memory is not good, Minnie. He is lame, as I told you."

"I forgot. He can't go because he is lame. Would he go if his legs were sound?"

"I think he would."

"Don't think," Minnie said, with a sly look at him; "be sure."

"I am sure he would then."

"Caught!" cried Minnie, clapping her hands, the sly look, in which there was simplicity, changing to a cunning one, in which there was craft. "Caught, caught, caught!"

"I should like to know how," said Joshua. "How ridiculous of you, Minnie, to cry 'Caught!' as if I was a fox!"

"No, I am the fox," she cried, shaking her hair over her face with enchanting grace. "I am in hiding-just peeping round the corner." She made an opening in her thick hair, and flashed a look at him; a look that was saucy, and cunning, and charming, and wilful, all at once. "Am I a good fox?"

"You are a goose. Tell me how I am caught."

"Listen, then," throwing her hair back, and becoming logical. "Dan loves you as well as any man or woman could love another, you said."

"Did I say as well? I thought I said better. I meant better."

"That's no matter. Dan loves you," – she held up her left hand, and checked off the items on her fingers-"that is one finger. And Dan would go to sea with you; and it would be right, because he loves you-that is two fingers. But Dan can't go because he is lame-that is three fingers. Now I love you, and I am not lame-that is four fingers. And it would not be wrong in me to follow you-and that is my thumb, the largest reason of all. So you are caught, caught, caught, you see."

"I do not see," said Joshua in a very decided voice. "Dan is a boy, and you are a girl; and what is right for a boy to do is often wrong for a girl. I do not see that I am caught."

But Minnie had relinquished the argument. She was satisfied that she was right.

"And you would really be very angry with me if I did it?" she asked.

"I should be very angry with you now, Minnie, if it were not that you were a stupid little girl, just a trifle too fond of talking nonsense. Such nonsense, too! Why, there's Ellen, Dan's sister, *she* wouldn't talk so."

All the brightness went out of Minnie's face, and a dark cloud was there instead.

Joshua noticed it with surprise. He took her hand gently; but she snatched it away.

"Ellen would not behave like that," he said; "she is too mild and gentle." There came into his mind what he had said to Dan of the two girls-that Ellen was like a lake, and Minnie like the sea; and he thought how true it was. "It would do you good to know her."

"I don't want to know her," said Minnie sullenly, "and I don't want to be done good to."

"I didn't think you would be cross-tempered on my last day at home," said Joshua in a grave and gentle voice. He paused, as if expecting her to speak; but she remained silent. "Ah, well," he said, rising, "I shall go and see if I can find your father."

She jumped up and walked with him to the door.

"Say that you are not angry with me," she said in a voice of the softest pleading, raising her face to his.

He would have made a different reply, but he saw that her face was covered with tears.

"Angry with you!" he said kindly. "Who could be angry with you for long, little Minnie?"

She smiled gratefully and thoughtfully as he kissed her; and when he had gone, and she had heard his last footstep, she returned to her old place upon the floor, and crouching down, placed the shell to her ear, and listened to the singing of the sea.

CHAPTER X

GOODBY

Minnie's obliviousness of what was right had never before been presented so clearly to Joshua. He knew well enough that Minnie, although she was aware that it was wrong to steal, could not understand that she did wrong in stealing the shell. At the same time he could not help feeling tenderly towards her because of that wrong action. After all, how much she was to be pitied! Could it be wondered at that she was hard to teach, and that she was wayward and wilful, living such a lonely life as she lived, with no friend to counsel, no mother to guide her? How quaint was her fancy, and what a pretty thing it was to see her as he saw her in his imaginings-sitting alone in her room, with the shell at her ear, listening to the singing of the sea! With what a daintily-caressing motion she nestled to him when he called her "Little Minnie!" He repeated the pet words to himself, "Little Minnie, little Minnie!" as he walked along, and smiled. As for her telling him that she would like to go to sea with him, what was it but a childish whimsey? If he had not contradicted her, and made a matter of importance of it, she would have said it, and there an end. She would like to go to sea with him, and would follow him if she were a woman: Well! she was but a child, and the wish was as innocent as her declaration that she loved him.

When he had thought out all this, he thought of to-morrow, and looked round upon the familiar streets and the familiar houses with a pang of regret. To-morrow he would be far away from them, and every succeeding day would take him farther and farther away from them and all that he loved. From mother, father, the Old Sailor, his pet birds, and from Dan-ah! dear, dear Dan! Did ever boy or man have such a friend? Then there was Ellen, his dear little sweetheart in the days when they were children together. Was there ever such another unselfish little maid as that? So devoted, so tender, so loving! How quickly she had won the heart of the Old Sailor! He remembered that old salt saying, pointing his great finger at Ellen as he said it, "Joshua, my lad, that little lass there is the prettiest, the best, the truest and the kindest-hearted in these dominions." And he remembered himself looking at Ellen's mild face-peaceful as a lake-and saying, "So she is, sir," and meaning it heartily; and he remembered the Old Sailor saying, "That's right, my lad; all you've got to do is to mind your bearings." Although he had answered, "Yes, sir, I will," he wondered afterwards, and he found himself wondering now, what on earth the Old Sailor meant by saying, "Mind your bearings." But what matter? Ellen *was* the prettiest, the best, the truest, and the kindest-hearted lass in these or any other dominions. God bless her!

As he thought of these things, he felt himself growing so soft-hearted, that he stopped and stamped his feet upon the pavement, and thumped himself upon the chest, saying as he did so, between laughing and crying, "This won't do, Josh; this won't do."

He had given himself a score of thumps, and had said, "This won't do, Josh," half-a-score of times, when loud cries for help fell upon his ears. He had been walking in the direction of the river, through some of the streets where he would be most likely to find Basil Kindred; and he was in a locality where there was a number of low public-houses, patronized by the worst class of seamen. Turning in the direction of the cry, Joshua saw a woman run swiftly out of a narrow thoroughfare. Pursuing her was a man, a dark-looking fellow, with glittering eyes, and rings in his ears, and a knife in his hand, and with all his copper-colored fingers and black-serpent locks of hair flashing in the air with evil intent. Impelled by the unmistakable air of terror in the form of the flying girl, and the unmistakable air of mischief in the form of the pursuing man-partly, also, by the impulsion born of the hunting spirit implanted in man and beast, Joshua started off at a great pace, and flew after the flying couple.

It was that part of the day when the neighborhood was most quiet. All the men were at work in the dockyards, and the few women about (having a wholesome horror probably of a man with an open knife in his hand, and being perhaps accustomed to such diversions) seemed disinclined to take part in the chase. With the exception of one drunken creature, with a blotched and bloated face, who made a frantic motion to follow, but being tripped up by her dragging petticoats, stumbled, more like a heap of rags than a woman, into the gutter, Where she lay growling indistinctly.

The flying woman and the pursuing man were fleet of foot, but Joshua was younger and more nimble than they. As he gained upon them, a dim consciousness stole upon him that he knew them; and, as he approached nearer, the doubt grew into conviction. The almost breathless woman, throwing affrighted looks behind her, as if a dozen men were pursuing her instead of one, was Susan; and the evil-looking man who was bent on running her down was the Lascar who served the Old Sailor, and who cooked for him, and would have poisoned him for rum and tobacco. Some other than those, the ruling cravings of his existence, influenced him now. All the passions of love and hate, and the desire to achieve his purpose by striking terror, were expressed in every motion of every limb: they were so eloquent and earnest in the savage pursuit that they seemed to proclaim their owner's intention, as he raced after the panting girl.

He was almost upon her, and she felt his ugly lips reeking their detestable flavor of rum and tobacco upon her neck, when Joshua, coming up to him, seized him by the throat. He had been so savagely vindictive in the pursuit, that Joshua's hand upon his throat was the first indication he received that he was being himself pursued; but, wasting no look upon his pursuer, he slipped from Joshua like an eel-his neck was redolent of grease-and with an inarticulate cry of rage and baffled lust, he sprang after Susan again, who had gained a few steps by Joshua's ineffectual interposition. But Susan, thoroughly bewildered and terrified, turned into a blind alley, and perceiving that there was no thoroughfare, and that she was trapped, fell upon the rough stones, prostrate from fear and exhaustion.

On one side of the blind alley were four or five houses, in which no signs of life were visible. They seemed stricken to death by disease. On the other side was a black dead wall, which shut out the sky. Before the Lascar could reach Susan-what the man's intention was, or what he would have done in his wild fury, he, being more beast than man, might probably not have been able to explain-Joshua had knocked the knife out of his hand, and had knocked him down with a blow, the force of which astonished Joshua himself, even in the midst of his excitement. Almost before Joshua could realize what had occurred, the cowardly Lascar was crouching by the side of the dead wall, as if his lair were there, and Joshua was on his knee assisting Susan to recover herself; keeping a wary look, however, upon the knife, which was lying in the road at an equal distance from him and the Lascar. The Lascar saw it too-saw it without looking at it, and without seeming to see it. A surprising change had taken place in him. A minute since a volcano of delirious lust was raging in his breast, and every nerve in his body was quivering with dangerous passion; now, as if by magic, he was coiled up like a snake, with no motion of life in him but the quiet glitter of his eyes, which watched every thing, but seemed to watch nothing.

"What is it all about, Susan?" asked Joshua in wonderment, after a pause. But, before Susan could reply, a crawling motion on the part of the Lascar towards the knife caused Joshua to spring into the road. The snake had no chance with the panther. The Lascar was knocked back to his position by the dead wall, and Joshua stood over him grasping the knife. This was the most eventful transaction that had ever occurred to Joshua; and, as he stood over his antagonist palming the knife, a strange sensation of pride in his own strength tingled through his veins. There was blood upon the Lascar's face; Joshua had struck him so fiercely as to loosen one of his teeth-so decidedly to loosen it, that the Lascar put his finger into his mouth and drew it out. He said nothing, however, but kept the tooth clasped in his hand.

"You black devil!" exclaimed Joshua, gazing upon the crouching figure with a kind of loathing amazement. "What do you mean by all this?"

The Lascar wiped the blood from his mouth with his sleeve, and shaking the hair from his eyes, threw upon Joshua a covert look of deadly malice—a look expressive of a bloody-minded craving to have Joshua helpless on the stones beneath him, that he might press the life out of his enemy. His eye spoke, but his tongue uttered no word. Raging inwardly as he was with bad passion, he had sufficient control over himself to suppress any spoken manifestation of it. But his attitude and demeanor were not less dangerous for all that.

"He follows me everywhere," said Susan, still gasping and panting for breath. "He dogs me by day and by night. He waylays me in the dark, and I can hardly get away from him."

"What for?" demanded Joshua, with his eye upon the Lascar, who was sitting cunningly quiet, nursing his wounded mouth.

"I don't know," replied Susan, with an appalled look over her shoulder, as if she were haunted by a fear that the spirit of the Lascar was there, notwithstanding that he was crouching before her in the ugly flesh. "I am afraid to think."

"Afraid! in broad daylight!"

"Day or night it is all the same," moaned Susan. "Whenever he sees me, he dogs me till I am ready to die. You don't know his power—you don't know his power!"

"What were you doing before I saw you?"

"I was looking for some one."

"For whom?"

"For Mr. Kindred," with a curious hesitation.

"For Mr. Kindred!" exclaimed Joshua, more amazed than ever; "why for him?"

"He is ill. I will tell you about it by and by," replied Susan nervously. "I thought I should find him in this neighborhood, and while I was looking for him, he" — pointing to the Lascar with a shudder—"he saw me and spoke to me, and would not leave me—wanted me to go with him and drink with him, and when I refused, he seized me, and then—then—I scratched him—and—I don't remember any thing more, except that I was afraid he wanted to kill me."

Joshua looked up at the Lascar's face, and observed the scratch for the first time. It was a long scratch downwards from the eye to the wounded mouth. The Lascar made no attempt to hide it, but sat still, with his hand on his mouth.

"Serve you right, you black dog!" exclaimed Joshua. "What do you mean by dogging her? What do you mean by following her with a knife? Why, you Lascar dog, for two pins" — he raised his hand indignantly, and advanced a step towards the Lascar, who made a shrinking movement backwards, although in truth he could not get nearer to the dead wall than he was already.

"Don't, Joshua, don't!" cried Susan, seizing his arm, and clinging to him imploringly. "Don't touch him, for God's sake, or" — with another scared look behind her—"he'll haunt you as he haunts me."

A taunting wicked smile crossed the Lascar's lips, but it was gone a moment afterwards. It might have been the shadow of an evil thought finding expression there.

"How does he haunt you more than you have already told me he does?" demanded Joshua in a great heat. "You don't think he can frighten me as he frightens you, Susan, do you? The black dog! Look at him! He's frightened of a white man's little finger!"

"Hush!" implored Susan. "He haunts me when he is not near me."

"How can he do that, you foolish girl?"

"He does it—he *can* do it—with his double!"

"His double?"

"He has a double—a spirit, a wicked spirit" — she turned her head slowly and trembled in every limb; "and he told me it should haunt me, and follow me wherever I go. And it does! I feel it behind me when I don't see him. It is there now! It is there now!" And wrought to the highest pitch of mental

terror and excitement, Susan threw up her hands, and would have fallen to the ground but for Joshua's protecting arm.

The taunting smile came again upon the Lascar's lips, as he secretly watched Susan's terror. With a special maliciousness he flashed his fingers towards her, as if he were issuing a command to his double not to leave her. It was evidence of the power he possessed over her weak mind that, notwithstanding her almost fainting condition, a stronger shuddering came upon her when he made even that slight motion.

Feeling that, for Susan's sake, it was necessary to put an end to the scene, Joshua, with an indignant motion, commanded the Lascar to leave them. The Lascar rose submissively, like a whipped dog, and so stood with bent head before Joshua.

"Now then, what are you waiting for?" asked Joshua.

"My knife," answered the Lascar doggedly.

"Not likely," said Joshua; "I know you too well to let you have it."

"What do you know of me?" asked the Lascar in a low guttural voice.

"I have heard enough of you from Mr. Meddler" – the Lascar grated his teeth with tigerish ferocity—"you and the likes of you. I know how free you are with your knives, you Lascars, on land and on sea. Be off!"

"My knife!" again demanded the Lascar, with his eyes directed to Joshua's feet; but he saw Joshua's face and every motion of Joshua's body. "My knife! It is mine. I bought it and paid for it."

"Stole it more likely," said Joshua with a sneer.

"It is a lie. I bought it. Even if I did steal it, you have no right to it. Give me my knife, and let me go."

"Joshua reflected. Clearly he had no just claim to the man's knife, and had no right to retain it. His mind was soon made up. Releasing his hold of Susan, he placed the blade beneath his foot, and broke it off close to the handle. Then he threw the handle and the blade over the Lascar's head. A dangerous fire gleamed in the man's downcast eyes and a cold-blooded grating of teeth came from his mouth. He stood silent for a few moments, with his hands tightly pressed, striving to master the devil that was raging within him. But he could not restrain his passion.

"Curse you!" he hissed; "I owe you something; I will pay it you, by hell!"

He crouched to receive the blow which he expected Joshua would give him, in return for his curse. But no blow was given nor intended; yet he quivered as if he had been struck before he spoke again.

"See you!" he cried; "I never forget-never-never! My turn will come. You called me black devil" -

"So you are," said Joshua scornfully. "And black dog-dog of a Lascar!"

"So you are."

"You shall pay for it! If it is years before I can pay you, you shall be paid for it! See you-remember!" With all his fingers menacingly, as if each was possessed with a distinct will, and was swearing vengeance against Joshua. "Your life shall pay for it-more than your life shall pay for it!" He spat upon the ground and trod savagely upon the spittle. "I mark you-see!" With his forefinger he marked a cross in the air. "I put this cross against you-curse you!"

Susan, gazing on with sight terror-fixed, saw the infuriated man stamp upon the stones, as if he had Joshua's life-blood beneath his foot, and then saw the cross marked in the air. The fire of her fevered imagination gave red color to the shadowy lines; and when the Lascar lowered his forefinger, she saw the recorded cross standing unsupported in the air-a cross of bright red blood. Fascinated, she gazed until the bright color faded into two dusky lines, and so remained. Joshua laughed lightly at the vindictive action and the curse; yet he did not feel quite at his ease.

"Come, Susan," he said, "let us be going."

But Susan did not move. Every sense was absorbed in watching the dreadful cross and the Lascar's passion-distorted face. He, stooping to pick up the handle of the knife and the broken blade, turned again upon Joshua, and remained faithful to his theme.

"Don't forget," he said in his low, bad voice, the words coming slowly from a throat almost choked with passion. "By this" – placing his hand upon his wounded mouth – "and these" – holding up the pieces of the knife – "I will keep you in mind. If it is to-morrow, or next week, or next month, you shall be paid! The dog of a Lascar never forgets! See you-remember!"

"Storm away," said Joshua, drawing Susan aside to allow the Lascar to pass. "You will have to be very quick about it, for to-morrow I go to sea."

"You do, eh!" exclaimed the Lascar, with another harsh grating of his teeth, and stopping suddenly in his course. "See you now-take this with you for my good-by!" With a swift motion, he cut his finger with the broken blade, and shook the blood at Joshua. It fell in a sprinkle over his clothes, and a drop plashed into his face. The Lascar saw it, and laughed. "Take that with you for luck!" he cried. "By that mark I shall live to pay you, and you will live to be paid!"

So saying, he turned and fled. Joshua sprang after him, but the man was out of sight in a minute. Returning to Susan, Joshua found her sitting upon the pavement, nursing her knees and sobbing distressfully.

"O Josh!" she cried, "it is a bad omen."

"Not at all," said Joshua, cooling down a little, and wiping the spot of blood from his face. "What does the old proverb say? 'Curses always come home to roost.' Do you hear me?"

It was evident that she did not; her fright was still strong upon her. With a shrinking movement of her head, she looked slowly round, and clutching Joshua's hand, whispered, "For pity's sake, don't let him come near me! Hold me tight! Keep close to me! He is not gone!"

With a firm and gentle force, Joshua compelled her to stand upright.

"There is no one here but you and I," he said, in a firm voice. "You are letting your fancies make a baby of you. There is no one here but you and I. If you will not believe what I say-I can see, I suppose, and I am calm, while you are in a regular fever-if you will not believe what I say, I shall leave you."

"No, no!" she cried, clinging to him.

He compelled her to walk two or three times up and down the court. His decided action calmed her. She gave vent to a sigh of relief, and wiped her eyes.

"That's right," said Joshua as they walked out of the court. "Now I can tell you that I am glad I have met you. I join my ship to-morrow."

"I had no idea you were going away so soon."

"I am going now to see if Mr. Kindred is at home."

"I live in the same house as he does," she said, looking timidly at Joshua.

"That is strange. Are you and he intimate?"

"Yes. They are poor, you know, Joshua."

"So are you, Susey."

"But I can help them a little. He's often ill, and Minnie isn't strong enough to take care of him, and so I nurse him sometimes. Minnie and I are great friends."

When they arrived at Basil Kindred's poor lodging, Minnie met them at the door. With her finger to her lips, she motioned them to be quiet.

"Tread softly," she whispered; "father has come home, and is lying down."

They walked to the bed, and saw Basil Kindred lying on the bed in unquiet sleep. Susan placed her hand on his hot forehead, and said, -

"I have been afraid of this for a long time, Josh. He has got a fever. What would he do without me now?"

There was a touch of pride in her voice as she asked the question. The pride arose from the conviction that the man she loved really needed her help, and from the knowledge that she could make some little sacrifice for him.

"He is very, very ill, I think," whispered Minnie.

"We will make him well between us, Minnie," said Susan.

Al! the fears by which she was assailed but a few minutes since were gone. Joshua was glad to see that, at all events.

Minnie took Susan's hand gratefully, and kissed it.

"She has been so good to us, Joshua," she said.

Susan's eyes kindled, and she directed to Joshua a look which said, "Have I not done right in coming to live here? See how useful I can be, and how happy I am!"

"I shall tell them at home where you live, Susey," said Joshua.

"Very well. Give my love to Dan."

Joshua nodded, and bent over Basil Kindred. The action disturbed the sleeping man. He seized Joshua's wrist in his burning hand, and said, in a trembling voice, "She died in my arms, and the earth was her bed. The stars were ashamed to look upon her. Well they might be! Well they might be!"

"He is speaking of his wife," said Susan softly to Joshua. "He loved her very dearly, and would have died for her. When she died, his heart almost broke."

Sympathy and devotion made her voice like sweet music. Joshua looked at her with a feeling of wonder, and was amazed at the change that had come over her. An hour ago, she was crouching in drivelling terror, overpowered by absurd fancies; now she moved about cheerfully, strong in her purpose of love. But he had never in all his life seen her as he saw her now. He bade her good-by, and she wished him Godspeed, and kissed him. Minnie accompanied him to the door.

"Good-by, dear little Minnie," he said.

"Good-by," she said, with tears in her voice. "You forgive me, don't you, for what I said this afternoon?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Ah! I like to hear you speak like that; it sounds sweet and good. Say, 'I forgive you, little Minnie.'"

"But I haven't any thing to forgive, now I come to think of it."

"Yes, you have. You say that out of your good nature. You mustn't go away and leave me to think that you are angry with me."

"I am not angry with you, Minnie. After all, what you did, you did through love, and there could not be much wrong in it."

The brightest of bright expressions stole into her face, and she clasped her hands with joy.

"Say that again, Joshua, word for word, as you said it just now."

"What you did, you did through love," repeated Joshua to please her, "and there could not be much wrong in it."

"O Joshua!" she cried, pressing her hands to her face, "you have made me almost quite happy. I have heard father say the same thing, but in different words. Now I shall follow you to sea. Yes, I shall, with this," holding up her shell. "To-morrow night, and every night that you are at sea, I shall listen to my shell and think of you."

"Stupid little Minnie," he said affectionately.

"And you will come back in a year?"

"I hope so, please God."

"Then I shall be growing quite a woman," she said thoughtfully.

The next moment she raised her face quickly to his. The tears were streaming down it. As he bent to her, she caught him round the neck, and kissed him once, twice, thrice, with more than the

passionate affection, but with all the innocence, of a child. Then she ran into the house; and Joshua, taking that as a farewell, walked slowly homewards, to go through the hardest trial of all.

That hardest trial through which he had to go awaited him at home. All the members of the Marvel family, and Dan and Ellen Taylor, were assembled together in the old familiar kitchen. They were all of them sad at heart, and made themselves sadder by vain little attempts to be cheerful. The tea was a very silent affair, and the two or three extra delicacies provided by Mrs. Marvel—as if it were a feast they were sitting down to—were failures. The most remarkable feature about the tea was the pretence they all made to eat and drink a great deal, and the miserableness of the result. They pretended to accomplish prodigies, and handed about the bread-and-butter and the cake very industriously, as if it were each person's duty to be mightily anxious about every other person's appetite, and to utterly ignore his own. But every thing in the way of eating and drinking was a mistake. The bread-and-butter was disregarded, and was taken away in disgrace; the cake was slighted, and retired in dudgeon. It was a relief when the tea-things were cleared. Mrs. Marvel was the bravest of the party; she who had so strongly protested against Joshua's going to sea, did all she could to administer little crumbs of comfort to every one of them, and especially to her husband, who had so heartily encouraged Joshua not to do as his father had done before him, but who was now the most outwardly miserable person in the kitchen. Thus, Mrs. Marvel sang snatches of songs, and bustled about as if she really enjoyed Joshua's going, and was glad to get rid of him. When she had accomplished a good deal of nothing, she rose and did nothing else; and when that was done, she sat down and remonstrated with her good man, and would even have rejoiced if she could have worried him into blowing her up.

"Don't take on so, George," she said; "you ought to be cheerful to-night of all nights. What is the use of fretting? Joshua's going to make a man of himself, and to do good for all of us—ain't you, my dear?"

"I intend it, mother, you may be sure."

"Of course you do; and here is father in the dumps when he ought to be up in the skies."

"Some day, I hope," said George Marvel, mustering up spirit to have his joke in the midst of his sadness; "not just now, though. I want to see what sort of a figure Josh will cut in the world first. Give me my pipe, Maggie."

Mrs. Marvel made a great fuss in getting the pipe, knocking down a chair, and clattering things about, and humming a verse of her favorite song, "Bread-and-Cheese and Kisses;" and really made matters a little less sad by her bustle. Then, instead of handing her husband the pipe without moving from her seat, as she might have done, she made a sweep round the table, and pinched Ellen's cheek, and patted Dan on the head, and wiped her eyes on the sly, and kissed Joshua, and so worked her way to George Marvel, and put the pipe between his lips.

"You are as active as a girl, Maggie," said George Marvel, putting his arm round her waist, and gently detaining her by his side.

She looked down into his eyes, and for the life of her could not help the tears gathering in her own. She made no further attempts to be cheerful; and what little conversation was indulged in occurred between long intervals of silence. They had an early supper; for Joshua was to rise at daybreak. When supper was over, George Marvel took out the Bible, and in an impressive voice read from it the one hundred and seventh Psalm. They all stood round the table with bent heads, Joshua standing between his mother and Dan, clasping a hand of each. Very solemn was George Marvel's voice when he came to the twenty-third verse: -

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;
These see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.
For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the
waves thereof.

They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.

They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.

Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses.

He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven."

When the reading of the Psalm was over, and they had stood silent for a little while, they raised their heads, but could scarcely see each other for the tears in their eyes. Then they kissed, and said goodnight; and Joshua, casting a wistful glance round the kitchen, every piece of furniture and crockery in which appeared to share in the general regret, assisted Dan up to his bedroom for the last time.

They had scarcely time to sit down before the handle was gently turned, and George Marvel entered. In the room were all Joshua's little household gods-his accordion, his favorite books, and his dear little feathered friends.

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.