

Leslie Madeline

Little Frankie at School



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CHAPTER I.

FRANKIE'S NEW TEACHER

When little Frankie Gray was nearly seven years old, a lady came to reside in the town where he lived, hoping to collect a small school.

Frankie's mother called upon her, and was so much pleased with her frank, cheerful manners, her sunny smile, and her Christian conversation, that she promised, with her husband's consent, to send Frankie and Nelly to be her pupils.

The young teacher's name was Fanny Grant. Nelly laughed merrily when she heard it, and said she should always think of her great doll, Fanny, when she saw her.

Papa had for a long time feared it was an injury to his wife to be confined so many hours as she thought it necessary to be in order to attend to the children's studies, and he was very glad to find a good teacher for them.

Miss Grant hired a pleasant room in a house only a short distance from Mr. Gray's. Then she commenced furnishing it to suit her own fancy. First she fastened white shades to the

windows, and then hung the walls with bright colored maps, and large pictures of animals and birds. On one side there was a nice blackboard, and next it a card containing the alphabet in large letters.

When all this was arranged, Miss Grant engaged a carpenter to work for her a day in making a gallery of four steps, and in drawing a large circle on the floor, which he marked by driving in large brass headed nails.

Nelly and her cousin, who had watched these arrangements with great interest, were very curious to know their use. The teacher, smiling, bade them wait and see.

"Is all ready now?" asked Frankie.

"Not quite," said the teacher. "I must have some small chairs for my little scholars; also some more apparatus."

"What is apparatus?" inquired Nelly.

"It is any thing by which we can illustrate or explain our ideas. This blackboard, and these cards, are apparatus. You will see, when school begins, how I shall explain to you many things by their help. Then I have a large globe, a numeral frame, and an orrery."

"I had an orrery once," shouted Frankie. "It was made of wire, with potatoes and turnips. Is yours like that?"

"O, no," said the teacher, with a hearty laugh. "The planets are made of wood, or plaster, and painted very prettily."

"I shall like to see it," said Frankie.

"So shall I," said Nelly.

The children then took their leave, after bidding the lady good by; but presently Frankie returned, all out of breath, to say, "Miss Grant, I have a whole box of beautiful great cards. They were my birthday present from papa and mamma. You may take them, if you want to, and hang them around the room."

"Thank you, my little friend," said the teacher, giving him a kiss. "I am going now to my boarding place, and you may walk with me, if you can stop until I put on my bonnet."

"I should like that," said Frankie. "I'll run out and tell Nelly to wait."

Miss Grant locked the door, and taking a small vase in her hand, joined the children who were waiting near the gate.

"What is that flower pot for?" asked Nelly.

"When school begins, I shall beg some flowers from the lady where I live," answered the teacher. "I like to have the room look cheerful and bright, so that the little scholars will like to be there."

"I wish Monday would come quick," exclaimed the boy. "I want to begin to go to school. I mean to carry a great big bouquet, out of my own garden. Did you know I had a garden, Miss Grant?"

"No, I did not; but I am very glad to hear it. I love flowers almost as well as I do good little boys and girls."

"I should think you would love your mother better than either. I do."

Miss Grant's lip quivered, and tears gushed to her eyes. "I do

love my mother," she said, softly, "but she is in heaven."

"I'm real sorry," said the sympathizing child, affectionately kissing the hand he held. "If you were little, like Nelly and me, mother would let you be her daughter, I guess."

When the children reached home, Mrs. Gray was most happy to see what an influence the young teacher had already established over them. She encouraged their love for her, and appealed to their sympathies by saying, "She is an orphan, without father or mother; we must all try to make her forget her sorrows by showing her that she has still many warm friends."

CHAPTER II.

ONE DAY AT SCHOOL

I suppose you will wish to know how Frankie and Nelly liked their new school, and whether they continued to love their teacher.

In answer to these questions, I shall give you an account of a day they passed about a week after the school commenced.

It was a lovely morning in June. After breakfast and prayers in the family of Mr. Gray, Frankie ran out into the garden to gather a bouquet for his teacher. He and Nelly kept her vase well filled with flowers. He put the bouquet into a pitcher of water to keep it fresh, and then ran to the sink to wash his face and hands very clean; after which he went into the nursery for Sally to pin on a clean collar, and to brush his hair.

While she was doing this, he called out to his mother, who was in the next room, "Mamma, mayn't I learn to part my hair myself? I'm almost seven, you know."

"Yes, indeed," she answered. "You may learn as soon as you please. Sally will show you how to hold the comb to make the parting straight."

"I wish my hair would lie down," exclaimed the boy, giving the brush a quick, impatient jerk. It curls up so close, I can't make it look smooth. And he brushed the front lock with all his strength.

"There, now, that looks well enough," said nurse in a comforting tone. "You might as well try to keep the wind from blowing as to try to keep your hair from curling. It will form little rings, do all you can."

"Now I'm ready!" shouted Frankie, taking his bouquet in his hand.

In the mean time, Nelly had been to her aunt's room, and had her long hair combed out smoothly, and then brushed over the curling stick. It was quite a tedious operation, and required to be very wet before the comb could be passed through it; but Nelly bore it patiently, as her aunt always tried to pass the time away agreeably, by giving her some easy example in arithmetic, or hearing a line of the multiplication table, or telling her a short story. By the time this was done, Sally had turned the mattress; and the little girl made up her bed, laying on the sheets and counterpane very smoothly, so that not a rumple could be seen. Then she hung up such of her clothes as were lying about the room, put her shoes into the bag on the inside of the closet door, then dressed herself in a clean apron, and was ready, by the time Frankie called, to take the flowers Willie had gathered for her, and walk out with him to meet their dear teacher.

Sometimes, when they were early, they went as far as the house where she boarded, and stood at the gate until she appeared; but generally they sat down on the stone wall under the shade of the large maple tree at the entrance to their avenue, and watched until she came in sight. Then they ran eagerly to give her

their morning kiss, and present their little offering of flowers.

On this pleasant June morning, they each took a hand as usual, and walked on rapidly toward the school, talking merrily as they went.

When they reached the building, they found nearly all the other scholars, eighteen in number, waiting the arrival of Miss Grant. They went into the school room, took off their hats and bonnets, hung them up in the closet, and then went quietly to their seats on the steps, the little ones on the lower steps, and the others above them on the higher.

When the church clock struck nine, the teacher rang the small bell, when every eye was closed, and every head was bowed for prayer. The little voices all joined in repeating the Lord's Prayer, after which they sung a verse of the hymn, —

"There is a happy land,
Far, far away,
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day."

After this, they pass down from the gallery, and march along to their seats. For the next half hour the school is quite still, while the pupils are studying the reading and spelling lessons: when the bell strikes again, they march out in order to the front of the chair where their teacher sits.

As soon as one class has recited, another is called, until every little pupil has read and spelled.

When this has been done, every face begins to brighten, for they know what the next exercise is; and they like it very much. The largest girl takes her place on the circle, and the others follow her according to their size, until they come down to the smallest one, who is a pretty blue-eyed little urchin of four summers.

Miss Grant then strikes up a lively tune to the words, —

"This is the way we wash our face,
This is the way we wash our face,
This is the way we wash our face,
So early in the morning," —

each little hand is vigorously employed in rubbing the face, as they merrily follow each other around the circle. As soon as they finish one verse, they stop a moment, to avoid being made dizzy, and then begin again: —

"This is the way we comb our hair,
This is the way we comb our hair,
This is the way we comb our hair,
So early in the morning.

"This is the way we brush our teeth,
This is the way we brush our teeth,
This is the way we brush our teeth,
So early in the morning.

"This is the way we clean our nails,

This is the way we clean our nails,
This is the way we clean our nails,
So early in the morning."

After this marching and singing, the children return to their seats to prepare a lesson in geography, which they recite standing near the globe, the teacher pointing out the places upon it.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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