

Leslie Madeline

Little Frankie and his Mother



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CHAPTER I

FRANKIE'S SILVER CUP

Do you wish to know who little Frankie was, and where he lived? Come and sit down in your pretty chair by my side, and I will tell you. Frankie was not the real name of this little boy. When he was a tiny baby, not much larger than black Dinah, his father came home one night from his store, and asked, "Have you named the baby yet, mamma?"

"No," she answered, "I have not; but I have been thinking that if you are pleased, I should like to call him Frank."

"Frank, Frank, Frankie," said his father, repeating it over and over again, to hear how it would sound. "Yes, I like the name; and then my friend, Mr. Wallace, is called Frank. Yes, Frank it shall be."

"While he is a baby, we will call him Frankie," said his mamma. So that was the way he obtained so pretty a name.

About a week after this, there came one day a man on horseback riding up to the front door. He jumped briskly down upon the wide stone step, and rang the bell with a loud, quick

jerk, which seemed to say, I am in a hurry. Margie, the errand girl, ran to the door, when the man gave her a box wrapped nicely in a piece of yellow paper, and tied with a small red cord. Then he sprang upon the saddle, and galloped away down the avenue into the road.

Margie carried the box into the parlor, and gave it to her mistress. Mamma looked at the name on the paper, and her bright, loving eyes grew still brighter. She took her scissors and cut the cord which held the paper around the box, then pulled off the cover, and what do you think was there? Why, a large piece of pink cotton nicely folded about a beautiful silver cup, on one side of which was marked the name *Little Frankie*.

Mamma laughed as she read it, and felt sure the pretty present came from Mr. Wallace. She ran gayly up stairs into the nursery, where the baby was sitting in the lap of his nurse, shaking his coral bells. "Here, my darling," she said; "see what a nice cup has come for you; look! it is so bright I can peep at your rosy face in it."

Baby crowed and stretched out his tiny hands, but he could not quite reach it; and if he could he would have tried to crowd it into his mouth. So mamma took him in her arms, and squeezed him very tight, and kissed him ever so many times, until the little fellow was quite astonished. Then she held him off a little to look at him; and her eyes were so brimful of love that Frankie was never tired of gazing into them.

By and by, mamma carried the baby and the new cup down

to the parlor; for papa had just come in, and was already calling for them.

Papa admired the present very much, and said that his friend, Mr. Wallace, was a noble fellow, and he should be glad if their little Frankie made as good a man. Then papa danced around the room, "to give his boy a little exercise," he said, "and make him grow." But mamma screamed, and was afraid so much shaking would take away her baby's breath.

"Come, then," said papa, "we will sit down and trot a little." He seated the little fellow on his knee, and began, "This is the way the lady rides, trot, trot, trot, trot. This is the way the gentleman rides, de canter, de canter, de canter, de canter. This is the way the huntsman rides, de gallop, de gallop, de gallop."

Frankie laughed and cooed, and as soon as his papa stopped, kicked his little feet to have it go again.

CHAPTER II

FRANKIE'S LITTLE NURSE

Frankie lived in a quiet, pleasant village about twenty miles from the city. His home was a pretty cottage with a steep roof rising above the windows of the second story. In front there was a smooth, green lawn, and at the side a lovely flower garden, with nicely gravelled walks leading through it. Then back of the house there were beds of peas, and beans, and turnips, and beets, and all kinds of good things for the table.

Frankie had a brother whose name was Willie, and who was five years older than he. There had been a dear sister, too, but when she was only one year old, the Saviour called her home to heaven; and she went with a sweet smile upon her lip.

Beside his father, and mother, and Willie, there were in Frankie's home, Jane, the cook, Sally, the nurse, and Margie, a little girl seven years of age, who loved dearly to dance about and amuse the baby boy. She was the daughter of Jane, and her father had been dead many years. She had begun to go to school; but as soon as the teacher rang the bell for the scholars to go home, Margie caught her bonnet from the hook, and ran away as fast as she could go, she was so impatient to see little Frankie.

Early in the morning, long before his mamma was ready to awake, the little fellow would open his eyes and crow, and sing

his morning song. Then he would try to get his tiny toes into his mouth. As soon as Margie heard him, she would knock softly at the door, and ask, "May I come in and play with Frankie?"

If you were to see her, you would think she was quite an old lady; she went around so steadily, and not at all like a school girl. First, she took all the pillows from the cradle, and shook them up. Then she laid them back so that the baby could sit up and see her play to him. When all was ready, she would go to the side of the bed, and Frankie's papa would put him carefully into her arms, and then turn over to take another nap.

It was very strange that with all Margie's singing and laughing, and crying "catchee, catchee, now catch baby;" and with Frankie's happy shouts of delight, papa and mamma could sleep quite soundly. But the instant the little fellow cried, as he sometimes did when he hurt his gums against his coral ring, and Margie said, "O dear! has he hurt him? Margie's sorry," mamma would spring from bed and be wide awake in a minute.

There was one other member of the family whom I have not yet mentioned. It was not a brother, nor a sister, but a large black dog, whose name was Ponto. He was a very handsome fellow, with his shining black hair, and his white ring about his neck; and he held his head up and looked you right in the face, as if he knew that he was above common dogs. Ponto liked to run in the garden with Willie, and catch the sticks his young master threw to him between his teeth. But best of all he liked to follow him to the nursery, and watch the motions of the new comer. Frankie's

eyes grew very large the first time he felt Ponto's cold nose on his arm; and he cried, when the great, black creature began to lick his hands and face. Mamma tried to push Ponto away, and Willie laughed most merrily.

This, you know, was Ponto's way of showing that he was fond of the dear baby; and from this time a strong affection sprang up between them. While Frankie slept, the dog lay down by the cradle, to be sure that no harm came to his precious charge; and when he awoke, Ponto made a noise, meaning, "I'll take care of you, baby."

CHAPTER III

FRANKIE'S JUMPER

Frankie was now six months old. He had begun to sit upon the floor. First he could only sit there by having pillows placed all about him. Then one day nurse took away the pillows, and said the little fellow must learn to do without them. She set him up very straight, and put a large book outside his clothes between his feet, so that he could not easily fall over. Then she took her sewing and sat down on the floor beside him.

Frankie laughed, and thought this was very fine; but in one minute he reached a little too far, and over he went right on to his nose.

Nurse caught him up before he had time to cry, and tossed him up and down until he had forgotten his trouble; then she set him down again. So that by the time mamma came home from a long walk, he had almost learned to sit alone.

O, how much pleased mamma was! She took off her bonnet and shawl, laughing all the time, and then she stopped ever so many times while she was giving the little fellow his dinner, and squeezed him closer to her side, and told him he was getting to be a brave boy indeed.

Hearing so much that was merry, Ponto roused himself from his sleep, and began to rap with his tail on the floor. Then, when

Frankie crowed out a pretty sound, he sprang upon his feet, and looked around a minute with his great, black eyes, when he gave a loud bark, "*bow, wow, wow*"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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