

Mathews Joanna Hooe

Bessie in the City



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I.

LITTLE FRIENDS AT HOME

"MAMMA," said Maggie Bradford, as she sat upon the floor in her mother's room, lacing her walking boots, – "mamma, I wish I had another terrible fault."

"Why, Maggie!" said Mrs. Bradford.

"I do, indeed, mamma, – a dreadful fault, something a great deal worse than carelessness."

Mrs. Bradford was busy unpacking trunks and arranging drawers and closets; for the family had just come home from the sea-shore, where they had been spending the summer; but she was so surprised to hear Maggie say this that she turned around with her hands full, to look at her little daughter. She saw that Maggie was very much in earnest, and had some reason for this strange wish.

"And why do you wish that, daughter?" she asked.

"Because, mamma, if I had such a fault, people would be so very anxious I should cure it. Oh, dear! there's another knot in my shoe-string!" and Maggie gave a jerk and a hard pull at her boot-lace. "I do not at all wish to keep it, only to break myself of it."

"But why should you wish for a fault which would grieve your friends and trouble yourself only that you may be at the pains of curing it, Maggie? You have faults enough, dear; and if they are not what may be called very terrible, they are quite serious enough to need all your attention, and you should be thankful that it does not require a harder struggle to overcome them."

"I know that, mamma," answered Maggie, with a very grave face; "but then you see if my friends wished me very much to cure my fault, perhaps they would offer me money to do it. You know when I used to be so very, very careless, Grandpapa Duncan paid me for trying to do better, so that I might help earn the easy-chair for lame Jemmy Bent. And I want money very much, – a great deal of it, mamma."

"But that would be a very poor reason for wishing to rid yourself of a bad fault, my child. And why do you want so much money? It seems to me that you have everything given to you which a reasonable little girl can want; and besides you have your weekly allowance of six cents."

"Yes, ma'am," said Maggie, with another jerk at her boot-lace; "but Bessie and I want to save all our allowance for Christmas. We want to have two whole dollars, so that we can give presents to every one of the family and all the servants and Colonel and Mrs. Rush. And we have told every one that we are going to do it, so it would not be quite fair to take the money for anything else; would it, mamma?"

"Not if you have promised to spend it in that way," said Mrs. Bradford, with a smile at the thought of how much the two dollars were expected to furnish; "but it is wiser not to make such large promises. You should have been very sure that you wished to spend your money for presents before you said you would do so."

"But I do wish to use it for that, Mamma, and so does Bessie, but we have another plan in our minds. Bessie and I like to have plans, and this is a charity plan, mamma, and will take a great deal of money. There, now, there's that boot-lace broken! I just believe that shoemaker sells bad laces on purpose to provoke little girls. Something ought to be done to him. It's such a bother to lace my boots, and 'most always just when I have one done, the lace breaks. It's too bad!"

"Yes, it is too bad, Maggie, quite too bad that you should destroy so many laces; but I scarcely think Mr. White does his work poorly on purpose to vex his little customers. It is your own impatience and heedlessness, my daughter, which are to blame. You pull and drag at your shoe-strings, not taking

time to fasten them properly, and of course they knot and break. That is the second one this week, and last week, also, you destroyed two. You say you wish to learn to dress yourself, that you may be a useful and helpful little girl; but you make more trouble than you save when you tear the buttons and strings from your clothes, or knot and fray your shoe-laces. It would have been much more convenient for me to put on your boots for you than it is to leave what I am doing to find a lace among all these trunks and boxes. Do you see, Maggie?"

"Yes, mamma," said Maggie, looking very much mortified, "but do you not think my carelessness is any better?"

"Indeed, I do, pussy. I do not wish to take from my little girl any of the credit she deserves, and you need not look so distressed. You are much more careful than you were six months ago; you have tried hard, and improved very much; but you have still something to do in that way, dear. I think you will find the old faults quite troublesome enough without wishing for new ones to cure."

"Yes, ma'am," said Maggie, "but then – "

"Well, dear, but then – what?"

"Why, mamma, I wouldn't feel as if it was quite right to wish to be paid twice over for curing myself of the same fault, and Grandpapa Duncan might think it was not fair."

"You are right, Maggie," said Mrs. Bradford, "and I am glad to hear you say that; but I should like to understand why you and Bessie wish for a great deal of money. If it is for a good purpose, I think I can put you in the way of earning some."

"Oh, would you, mamma? That would be so nice! Bessie," – as her little sister came into the room, dressed for her walk, and followed by Jane with Maggie's hat and sack in her hand, – "Bessie, mamma thinks she can let us earn some money."

"Thank you, mamma," said Bessie; "that is *delightful*. I am so glad."

"I will tell you what it is for, mamma," said Maggie.

"Not now, dear," said Mrs. Bradford; "it is time for your walk, and you must let Jane put on your things. When you come home, you shall tell me, and meanwhile, I will be thinking in what way I can help you. But remember, I only promise to do so if I think well of your plan. You may think it a very wise one, while I may think it very foolish."

"Oh, mamma," said Maggie, "I am quite sure you will think this is wise. Mrs. Rush made it, and she is so very good that it must be quite right."

"Yes, I think any plan Mrs. Rush proposes for you will be a safe one," said Mrs. Bradford, with a smile.

"You mean you have trust in her, mamma?" said Bessie.

"Yes, dear. I can trust her. She is a true and faithful friend to me and to my little ones," answered Mrs. Bradford, as she stooped and kissed first one and then the other of her little girls. "And now good-by, my darlings. I will hear all when you come back. I hope you will have a pleasant walk."

"I shall not, mamma," said Maggie, with a solemn shake of her curly head. "I am so very anxious to tell you, and to hear what we can do, that I shall not enjoy my walk at all. I wish I could stay at home."

But Maggie found herself mistaken; for the day was so bright and pleasant, the park so cool, green, and shady, and so full, of other little children, that she not only enjoyed her walk very much, but for the time quite forgot her plan and her wish to earn money. And in the park, our little girls met a friend whom they were very glad to see. They were running down one of the broad paths, when Bessie saw an old gentleman coming towards them with a pleasant smile on his face. She stood still to take a second look, and then called to her sister.

"Oh, Maggie, here's our dear friend, Mr. Hall!"

"Why, so it is!" said Maggie, in glad surprise, for this was a very unexpected pleasure.

Mr. Hall lived but two or three doors from Mr. Bradford, and as he generally came for a walk in the park after his breakfast, Maggie and Bessie were almost sure to meet him when they were

out in the morning. But he was not apt to be there in the afternoon, and so they had not looked for him at this time.

It so happened that Mr. Hall had stepped out upon his front stoop just as Mrs. Bradford's little flock started for their walk; and there he saw them all going down the street. He put on his hat, took his gold-headed cane, and walked out after them.

"Mr. Hall, I am very pleased to see you," said Bessie.

"And so am I, Mr. Hall," said Maggie.

"And I am very much pleased to see you," said Mr. Hall; "but I should like to know what has become of two little granddaughters of mine, who went away to the sea-shore two months since. I thought I should find them in the park; but in their place I find two little strangers, who have no name for me but Mr. Hall."

"Oh, I forgot, – Grandpapa Hall," said Maggie.

"Dear Grandpapa Hall," said Bessie, "please don't let your feelings be hurt, 'cause we only forgot for one moment. You know it's so long since we saw you."

"And did you forget me while you were away?" asked Mr. Hall.

"Oh, no," said Bessie, "we thought about you very often, and talked about you too."

"Well, let us sit down and talk a little," said Mr. Hall, as he seated himself on a bench, and made Maggie and Bessie take their places, one on each side of him. "And so you came back from Quam Beach yesterday?" he said.

"Yes, sir," said Bessie, – "yesterday, in the afternoon. How did you know it?"

"Oh, I saw the carriages drive up, and papa and mamma and a whole regiment of little folks pouring out of them. I came out this morning, expecting to find you in the park, but you were nowhere to be seen."

"No," said Bessie, "mamma was so busy nurse and Jane had to help her, so we could not take our walk."

"Ah, to be sure, I might have thought of that, and called for you myself."

"But we helped mamma too, and she said we were of great use to her, so we could not have gone out," said Maggie.

"That was right," said Mr. Hall. "Always be of use to dear mamma when you can."

"We can't do much," said Bessie; "we are too little."

"I do not know about that," answered Mr. Hall. "These little hands and feet can help mamma a good deal, if they are only willing. If you can do nothing else, you can be quiet and patient when she is busy. If you do not make trouble, you save trouble."

"And we can 'muse baby," said Bessie.

"So you can. Halloa, little man! How do you do?" This was said to Franky, who had just come up with Jane.

Franky remembered Mr. Hall quite well, and he also remembered how the old gentleman used to give him sugar-plums out of his pocket.

"Welly well," he answered. "Me want sudar-plum."

"Oh, you naughty boy!" said Maggie.

"Dear, dear," said Mr. Hall. "I quite forgot the sugar-plums this afternoon. When I saw my little friends going up the street, I thought of nothing but the pleasure of joining them, and hurried out as quickly as I could."

"Dive Franky sudar-plums," said the child again.

"Oh, Franky!" said Bessie, "don't be so yude. You make us very mortified. Please to 'scuse him, Mr. Hall; he don't know any better, 'cause he's only three years old."

Mr. Hall laughed and offered Franky his stick to ride on, but the little boy would not take it; and when he found he could not have the sugar-plums, walked away with an offended air, which amused the old gentleman very much, though it distressed his sisters, who thought him very impolite.

"And now tell me about Quam Beach," said Mr. Hall. "You liked it very much, did you?"

"Yes, sir," said Bessie, "the sea is there."

"And you were fond of the sea?"

"Oh, yes, sir! it is beautiful, and it has waves, and they come up on the beach and bring the seaweed and shells, and make such a pleasant sound. And we could see so far, far away out over the water, and we saw the ships and steamers too. And there are yocks that we could sit on and play on, and we liked it so much. I wish there was a sea here, Grandpapa Hall. Did you ever go to the sea-shore?"

"Yes, often, and I have been to Quam Beach, and thought it quite as pleasant as you seem to have found it."

"We used to have clam-bakes," said Maggie.

"And go out in the boat," said Bessie.

"And in the wagon for straw rides, and to swing in the barn," said Maggie.

"And over to the hotel to see grandmamma, and Colonel and Mrs. Yush," said Bessie.

"Who are Colonel and Mrs. Rush?" asked Mr. Hall.

"Old friends of papa and mamma, and new friends of me and Maggie," answered Bessie; "and we love them – oh, so much!"

"Colonel Rush is an English soldier," said Maggie, "and he was shot in a battle, so his foot had to be cut off, and he has been very sick, but he's better now."

"And they came to the city with us yesterday," said Bessie, "and went to the hotel; and Mrs. Yush is going to have a class on Sunday, and we are to go to it."

"Are you going to leave your Sunday-school?" asked Mr. Hall.

"I never went to Sunday-school," said Bessie. "Maggie did, but mamma thought I was too little; but she said I might go to Mrs. Yush, 'cause it was not too far. Mrs. Yush can't go to Sunday-school, 'cause she must yide to church with the colonel, and she cannot come back for him in time. Maggie's teacher is going away, and she is to go to Mrs. Yush too, and Lily Norris and Gracie Howard."

"We are all to go to her on Sunday mornings," said Maggie; "and when she and the colonel go to church, they are to take Bessie, if it is too cold for her to walk; so now she can go to church 'most every Sunday. Last winter she went very seldom because mamma thought the walk too long for her, and was afraid she would take cold. Don't you think it is a very nice 'rangement, Grandpapa Hall?"

"Very," said Mr. Hall, smiling at Maggie's long word, – "a very nice arrangement; and I think Mrs. Rush must be a very kind, good lady."

"She is," answered Maggie, "she's lovely."

"Grandpapa Duncan says she is as good as she is pretty, and as pretty as she is good," said Bessie.

"And the colonel is very good too," said Maggie, "and they are both very fond of us."

"That shows them to be sensible people," said Mr. Hall. "I think I must make the acquaintance of this famous Colonel and Mrs. Rush. Will you introduce me to them?"

"Oh, yes, we will," answered Bessie, "and perhaps you'll see the colonel in the park some day. He says he shall come and walk here when he feels well enough. He's going to live over there in the hotel;" and Bessie pointed to the great white building that fronted the park.

"And how is Grandpapa Duncan?" asked Mr. Hall.

"Very well, and Uncle John and Aunt Helen are well too, and Nellie is better, and has ever so many new teeth. Quam Beach did her a great deal of good. Papa and mamma are going to Riverside the day after to-morrow, and Maggie and I are going with them."

"I think I know some one beside Nellie to whom Quam Beach has done good," said Mr. Hall. "There is some color in these little cheeks which were so pale when you went away, and you are stronger and more able to run about; while as for Maggie, she has become quite a roly-poly."

"Mr. Hall," said Bessie, "do you know what we are going to bring from Riverside?"

"No, how should I, when no one has told me?"

"Our little dog that Donald, the gardener, gave us," said Bessie. "His name is Flossy, and he's old enough to leave his mother now; so we are to have him at home."

"Oh, I remember you told me about him in the spring. So his name is Flossy; is it?"

"Yes, sir, and he's Maggie's and mine. Do you think he will be lonely without his puppy brothers?"

"Not with two such nice little playmates as you and Maggie," said Mr. Hall. "You must bring him out every day and let him have a run in the park."

"Yes, sir, and papa is going to buy him a collar with his name on it and where he lives, so people will know he is ours if he yuns away."

"Very good," said Mr. Hall, "and now suppose we walk around a little, or nurse will think I am keeping you quiet too long."

II. *MAGGIE'S PLAN*

MAGGIE thought of her "plan" again as soon as she reached home, and she and Bessie scampered away to their mamma's room to see if she were ready to attend to them. She was dressing for dinner, and so they knew they might go in and talk to her, for she said this was "Maggie's and Bessie's hour," and as she dressed, used to tell them stories, or teach them some pretty verses, or listen to them if they had anything to tell her.

"Mamma," said Maggie, "have you thought of any way that I can earn money?"

"You must tell me what it is wanted for, Maggie."

"We want to buy a library, mamma."

"What library, dear?"

"A mission library, mamma. You know my Sunday-school teacher, Miss Winslow, is going to marry a missionary; but he is not a heathen missionary."

"I hope not," said Mrs. Bradford, smiling. "You mean, I suppose, that he is not going to India to teach the heathen, but is what is called a home missionary."

"Yes, ma'am, that is it. Mrs. Rush says that he is going far out West, where the people have very few churches or Sunday-schools and scarcely any books, and they are very ignorant, and don't know much about God or how Jesus came to die for them, and I am afraid Miss Winslow wont be very comfortable out there, mamma, 'cause they don't have nice houses like ours, but just rough ones made of logs, which they call log cabins. You know Miss Winslow is a lady, and I am afraid she wont like to live in a place like that."

"Miss Winslow has thought of all that, my darling; but she is willing to put up with these hardships for the sake of carrying the glad message of salvation to those poor people."

"Yes, mamma, and Mrs. Rush says that most of them are very glad to hear it, and so glad to have the books the missionaries bring, and Mr. Long, the gentleman Miss Winslow is to marry, is going to try and have some Sunday-schools for the children who live in log cabins; and the other day, when Mrs. Rush was talking to us about having the little class in her room on Sunday, she asked us if we would not like to buy a Sunday-school library to send to those poor little children, when Miss Winslow and her missionary go out there. You can buy a nice little library for ten dollars, mamma; just think, ten dollars!"

"Yes, I know, Maggie; but ten dollars is a great deal of money for two such little girls as you and Bessie to raise in less than four months. Miss Winslow is to leave soon after the first of January, and this is now the tenth of September."

"But Bessie and I are not to do it by ourselves, mamma. Gracie Howard and Lily Norris are to help; it is to come from the class, and Mrs. Rush says if we cannot do it alone, she will help us; but she thinks the little log-cabin children will like it better if they hear it was all sent by other little children here, and we would like it better ourselves."

"And Gracie and Lily are going to try and earn money too?" asked Mrs. Bradford.

"They have their share, mamma. Gracie's grandmamma, who lives in England, always sends her some money on her birthday, – a – a – I forget what she calls it, but she says it is as much as five dollars."

"A pound?" said Mrs. Bradford.

"Yes'm, that is it. Gracie says she will give half of the money her grandmamma sent the other day, and Lily has a hundred dollars in her father's bank, and he pays her money 'cause she has it there."

"That is called paying interest," said Mrs. Bradford.

"And she has some of that saved up," said Maggie, "and she will have more before Christmas; so her share will be ready too; but Bessie and I have no money except our six cents a week, and that, you know, we promised to spend another way. And we don't want to be helped, mamma, but to try and earn the money by ourselves, if we only knew how. Do you not think it is a very nice plan, and that the log-cabin children will be very glad when they see the books?"

"I think it a very good plan, dear, and I will try to help you. You know, Maggie, we were saying this morning that you were still not quite as careful as you might be. Now I do not much like to *pay* you for trying to break yourself of a bad habit, but as this is for a good purpose, I will tell you what I will do. Every month between now and January, I will put by a dollar for your gloves and boot-laces. This is much more than enough to keep you well supplied, if you take proper care of them, but if you keep on losing your gloves, breaking your boot-laces, and so forth, as you do now, you will have none left for any other purpose. And remember, I cannot let you do without such little things as you may need, for the sake of the library. I cannot have you going without gloves, or with such as are torn or out at the fingers, or with broken or knotted shoe-strings. I must still keep you neat, and shall buy for you whatever I may think necessary. But if you care enough, as I hope you do, for the little Western children to be thoughtful and saving, you may still keep as much of this money as will go a good way toward your share of the ten dollars."

"And am I to have money put by for me, too, mamma?" asked Bessie.

"Yes, dear, if you wish it, I will do the same for you."

Maggie did not look as pleased as her mother had thought she would.

"What is it, Maggie?" she asked. "Does not this please you? Are you not willing to try both to help those little children, and to cure your own fault at the same time?"

"Oh, yes'm, I am willing, and I think you are very kind. But Bessie will keep a great deal more money than I shall. You know you said the other day that I had three pairs of gloves where Bessie had one."

"Never mind, Maggie," said Bessie, "I think I'll lose a few gloves."

"No, no," said Mrs. Bradford, laughing and shaking her head, – "no, no, that will not do. I cannot have one little sister trying to destroy or lose her things in order that she may be no better off than the other. And I am quite sure my Maggie would not be envious if Bessie saved more than she did."

"But I may say I will not give more money than Maggie does for the library; may I not, mamma? You know it is more hers than mine, 'cause she was Miss Winslow's scholar."

"You may do just as you please about that, dear. Each one may give as much or as little as she likes, if it is fairly earned or saved. And I can put Maggie in the way of earning money by work if she wishes for it."

"How, mamma?" asked Maggie, eagerly.

"I have several dozens of towels to be hemmed, and I intended that Jane should do them all; but I will keep out one dozen for you, and will pay you five cents apiece. And they must be done, not at your regular sewing lesson, but at other times."

Now if there was one thing more than another which Maggie disliked, it was sewing. She always called the half-hour during which her mother taught her to sew "the worst time of the day." It was strange, too, for she had quick and skilful fingers, and sewed remarkably well for a little girl of seven, and people generally like to do that which they do well. But it was not so with Maggie, and her face grew very sober when her mother said she might hem her towels.

"But, mamma," she said.

"Well, dear?"

"Mamma, you know I cannot bear to sew. I do so *hate* it! And a dozen towels, – that means twelve, don't it? – why, I should never, never have them done."

"It shall be just as you choose, dear. I do not say you *must* do them, only that you may. But, Maggie, we can seldom do much good to others without taking some trouble or using some self-denial ourselves."

"I do not know what self-denial is, mamma."

"Self-denial is to give up something we would like to have, or perhaps to do something that is disagreeable or troublesome to ourselves, for the sake of another. This morning I gave you two plums, – one for yourself, one for Bessie. One was much larger than the other, and I saw that you gave it to Bessie, keeping the smaller one for yourself. That was self-denial."

"But, mamma," said Maggie, "that was not anything much. I could not do such a greedy thing as to give my own Bessie the little plum and eat the big one myself. I would be too ashamed."

"I am glad to say that neither of my little girls is greedy or selfish," said mamma. "Do you remember the day at Quam Beach when your head was hurt, and Tom Norris came up to read a new book to you?"

"Oh, yes'm, it was so kind of him; and he read 'most all the afternoon."

"When he was on his way to our house, Mr. Howard met him and asked him to go with him to see the wreck, but although Tom had been wishing very much to go, he refused because he thought you would like him to come and read to you. That was self-denial. Mr. Long and Miss Winslow do not like to leave all their friends and their comfortable homes to go out West, but they are willing to do it, that they may teach those poor people who have no one to tell them of Jesus. That is self-denial. And if my Maggie were to take her time to hem towels for the sake of the little Western children who have no books, that would be self-denial. And there was one great self-denial, greater than any other the world can ever see. Do you know what that was, my darling?"

"When Abraham killed – I mean when he was going to kill Isaac," said Maggie.

"Well, there was some self-denial in that," said Mrs. Bradford, "but that was not what I meant. It was Abraham's great faith in God which made him willing to obey his word and sacrifice his only son; but there was a greater than he, Maggie, who offered a more wonderful sacrifice."

"Mamma," said Bessie, "do you mean when Jesus left his heaven and came to die for us?"

"Yes, dear; and when we find it hard to give up our own wishes for the sake of others, let us remember all the dear Saviour has done for us, and that will make the task easier and pleasanter. And the Bible says, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.' That means that when we are working for Jesus' people, or for his little lambs, we are working for him."

"And two little lambs can help some other little lambs," said Bessie, as if this thought pleased her very much.

"Mamma," said Maggie, drawing a long sigh, "I think I'll have a self-denial and hem those towels. How much money will twelve towels make?"

"Twelve towels at five cents apiece will make sixty cents," said Mrs. Bradford; "and perhaps by and by you will find some other way to gain money."

"May I earn money any way I can, mamma?" asked Maggie.

"I cannot promise that," said mamma, smiling. "You might wish to earn money in some way I might not think proper, even for a good purpose."

"And what can I do, mamma?" asked Bessie. "I want to work too, and I don't know how to sew."

"What shall we find for those little hands to do, Maggie?" said mamma, catching the two tiny hands Bessie held up and patting them softly against her own cheeks.

"Work for those little hands to do?" said papa, who just then came in and heard the last words. "I should think they were at their proper work now, – petting mamma. Papa would not mind coming in for a share too."

"And so he shall," said Bessie; "but petting you and mamma is nice play, not work; and these little hands want to be useful, papa."

"I think they do pretty well for five-year-old hands," said Mr. Bradford, as he sat down and took Bessie on his knee. "They bring papa's slippers and rock baby's cradle, and sometimes I see them trying to help mamma when she is busy. I think we may call them rather useful for hands of their size."

"But they want to make money, papa."

"Ho, ho! that is it; is it? Well, I do not know that they can do much at that business, or that they could hold any great sum if they made it. Let us see what they can do in that way;" and putting his hand into his pocket, Mr. Bradford pulled out a number of bright new pennies. "Put out both hands."

Bessie put her hands together and held them out, while her father counted the pennies into them.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. There, I think that is as much as they can hold at once," said Mr. Bradford. "Is there another pair of little hands that would like to try if they can do as well?"

Maggie was standing at her father's knee with a very eager face, for she knew her turn would come next.

"One, two, three," began Mr. Bradford, and counted out fifteen pennies into Maggie's hands. "And now what is to be done with all that money?" he asked, looking from one to another of the bright faces. "It is not to be wasted, I suppose, since mamma seems to be in the secret."

"We want to buy a library," said Bessie.

"A library?" said Mr. Bradford. "Well, I'll promise to read every book in any library you may buy for the next ten years."

"But it is not a big library with stupid books in, like yours, papa," said Maggie; "but a nice little one with pretty Sunday-school books; and it is not for ourselves we want it."

Then papa was told about Mr. Long and Miss Winslow, all of which he knew before, though he listened as though it was quite new to him, and of the plan for the library, which he thought a very good one, and of which he had as yet heard nothing.

"Mamma," said Maggie, "will you take care of our money for us? I know I shall lose some of mine if I keep it myself."

Mrs. Bradford opened a drawer, and took from it a curious little box. It was made of blocks of red and black wood, and had no cover; but if a certain block were pressed, out flew a drawer which moved on a spring. This box had been Mrs. Bradford's when she was a child, and Maggie and Bessie thought it a great curiosity.

"There," said mamma, "put the pennies in this, – fifteen of Maggie's and twelve of Bessie's make twenty-seven. Pretty well for a beginning. All the money you earn may go in this."

"And the glove money too, mamma?" asked Maggie.

"No, not the glove money. I shall keep that, and at the end of each month will give you what remains to put in the box."

"And you will keep it, mamma?"

"Yes, there it is in the corner of this drawer. You may come and take it when you want to put anything in it."

"Papa," said Bessie at dessert that day, "will you please take the fretful off my peach. I can't eat it so."

Bessie could never bear to eat or even touch a peach unless all the furze or down which grew upon it had been rubbed off, and the restless, uncomfortable feeling it gave her made her call it "the fretful."

Mr. Bradford took a peach from his little girl's plate, and as he rubbed it smooth, said to his wife, "Margaret, my dear, peaches are very plenty and very fine, and I, you know, am very fond of peach preserves."

"Very well," said Mrs. Bradford, "I will put up as many as you choose to send home."

Bessie heard, and a new thought came into her little head.

"Mamma," she said a while after, when she could speak to her mother alone, – "mamma, you told Papa you would make a great many peach preserves for him."

"Yes, dear."

"And, mamma, you know he likes the inside of peach-stones in the preserves."

"The kernel, you mean."

"Yes'm, and last summer Harry kept all the peach-stones and cracked them for you, and you paid him for them. Could you let me do it this time?"

"My darling, you would crack those little fingers; it is too hard work for you."

Bessie looked very much disappointed, and her mother could not bear to see it, for she knew how anxious she was to earn money for the library.

"You may gather up the peach-stones, dear, and dry them, and Patrick shall crack them for you, and I will pay you five cents for every hundred."

"Oh! thank you, mamma; that is very nice, and I will put away every one I can find."

And from this day it was quite amusing to their papa and mamma to see how carefully Maggie and Bessie guarded every peach-stone they could find; and to hear them constantly talking over plans to gain a few pennies to add to their store.

"Margaret," said Mr. Bradford to his wife that evening, "would it not be better for you to lock up that money-box of the children?"

"I think not," said Mrs. Bradford. "They will want it half a dozen times a day. You know how such little things are, and they will always be counting their money. I believe every one we have in the house is quite honest, and the box cannot well be opened by one who does not know the secret of the spring."

So the box was not locked up; but the time came when Mrs. Bradford was very sorry she had not taken her husband's advice.

III. *THE MISER*

"FRED," said Harry, as the little sisters came into the breakfast-room the next morning, – "Fred, what have you done with my new top?"

"I declare," said Fred, after thinking a moment, "I do not know."

"That's what a fellow gets for lending you his things," said Harry, crossly; "you never give them back, and never know where you leave them. I sha'n't let you have anything of mine again in a hurry."

"I know where it is, Harry," said Maggie. "I'll bring it to you. I saw it last night."

And away ran Maggie, always ready and willing to oblige; but as she reached the door, she stood still with the knob in her hand. "Harry, if I go for it, will you give me a penny?"

"Well," said Harry, "no, I will not."

"If you don't choose to go for it, tell me where it is, and I will go myself," said Fred.

But Maggie went without another word, and came back with the top in her hand.

"There's your penny," said Harry, throwing one on the table.

"That's as mean a thing as ever I knew," said Fred, "to want to be paid for going upstairs for a fellow who has a sprained leg and can't go for himself. You know mamma said he must not go up and down much till his ankle was well."

"I'd have thought anybody would have done such a thing sooner than you, Maggie," said Harry, reproachfully.

Maggie stood with crimson cheeks and a shaking lip. "I sha'n't have the penny!" she said, angrily. But just then papa and mamma came in and the bell was rung for morning prayers, which prevented any farther quarrelling.

But Maggie's troubles were not yet at an end for that morning. Breakfast was over, mamma gone to the nursery, papa to his library, and the children were alone in the breakfast-room.

"Midget," said Harry, "you know that pink fluted shell of yours?"

"Yes," answered Maggie.

"If you'll give it to me, I'll give you any two of mine you may choose."

"Oh, Harry, I can't! Aunt Annie gave me that shell, and I want to keep it for memory of her. Besides, it's my prettiest shell."

"Aunt Annie isn't dead," said Harry. "You don't keep a thing in memory of a person unless they're dead."

"She'll die one of these days," said Maggie; "every one has to die sometime, and I'll keep it till then. But I meant I wanted it because she gave it to me, Harry, and I can't let you have it." But presently, having forgotten about the penny, and thinking of the library box, Maggie added, "I'll give it to you for ten cents, Harry."

"Indeed, I shall not give ten cents for it!" said Harry. "It's not worth it and – why, Mag, you are growing as mean as, – as mean as –" Harry stopped, for he saw Maggie's color rising and the tears coming in her eyes, and he was not an unkind boy, who would willingly hurt or grieve his little sisters.

"She is a real miser," said Fred.

Poor Maggie! This was too much, and she burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Maggie," said Harry. "I did not mean to hurt you, but I do not know what to make of you."

"What's all this wonderful fuss about money, Bessie?" asked Fred.

"Ask me no *lies*, and I'll tell you no *questions*," said Bessie, holding up her head and looking at her brothers with a grave, reproving air, "You talk very improperly to my Maggie."

At this, the boys shouted and laughed so loud and so long that Bessie felt as badly as her sister, and saying, "Let's go away, Maggie," they ran off.

When Mr. Bradford came out of his room, he saw his little girls sitting at the head of the stairs looking very unhappy. Maggie had been crying; Bessie had her arm around her waist, as though she were trying to comfort her, but looked as if she wanted comfort herself.

"Why, what ails my singing birdies this morning?" asked papa. "In trouble so early in the day?"

"Papa," said Bessie, in a grieved little voice, "we are having very *misable* times to-day."

"That is bad," said Mr. Bradford, sitting down on the stairs beside them; "but tell papa what it is, and see if he cannot help you into pleasanter times."

"People say things to us," said Bessie.

"And do you not wish people to speak to you?"

"Oh, yes, papa, if they say nice things; but first, nurse called our shells and sea-weed, 'truck.'"

"Very poor taste in nurse," said Mr. Bradford; "but I would not fret about that. Is there anything more?"

"Yes, papa," – Bessie hesitated, – "but I do not like to tell tales."

"But I want to know what the trouble is. I shall not think you are telling tales when I ask you."

"Harry called me 'mean,' and Fred said I was 'a miser,'" said Maggie, beginning to cry again. "And I wouldn't be such an ugly thing, now!"

"What is a miser, Maggie?" asked papa.

"An ugly old man, who makes believe he hasn't any money, when he has a whole lot in bags in a chest, and doesn't eat anything but crusts, with an ugly, thin cat who hunches up her back," said Maggie.

Maggie's idea of a miser was taken from a picture she had once seen.

"Then my rosebud does not look much like a miser," answered Mr. Bradford, patting Maggie's round, smooth cheek.

"But he meant I was *like* a miser, and they laughed at Bessie," said Maggie.

"But I quarrelled and said a cross thing to them, papa," said Bessie, who was always ready to own when she had done wrong.

"What did you say?"

Bessie repeated what she had said to the boys, making the same mistake she had done before, and her father could not wonder that they had laughed. He asked a question or two more, and soon knew the whole story of the penny and the shell.

"And it is very hard to have people say such things when it is a good purpose, papa," said Maggie, wiping her eyes as she finished.

"So it is, Maggie; but it is what we must all look for, more or less in this world. When we are trying to do good, other people will sometimes misunderstand us, think that we are doing the wrong thing, or perhaps doing the right thing in the wrong way; and they may tell us so, or make unkind remarks about us. But if we feel that we are doing right, and know that we are about the dear Saviour's work, we should not mind that. Yes, and we must bear to be laughed at too, my Bessie. I do not think though that your brothers have meant to grieve you so much. Fred, I know, will sometimes tease, but Harry is not apt to be unkind or provoking."

"No, papa," said Maggie. "Harry is a very good, kind brother."

"So I think," said papa. "Do the boys know why you are so anxious to earn money?"

"No, papa. I did not tell them, 'cause I thought maybe they would laugh at me."

"They shall not laugh at you, I will answer for that. But, although they were not very polite or kind in their way of telling you so, you can scarcely wonder that your brothers were surprised at your wish to be paid for any little favor you might do them. You are generally so obliging and willing, so ready to run and to do for the pleasure of helping others, that I myself might have thought you selfish and disobliging, had I heard you asking for pay without knowing your reason. And I would not do so

again, dearie. Whatever you may be able to save by denying or taking any pains with yourselves, or may make by doing any little extra work for mamma or any one else, well and good; but I would not ask to be paid for such small things as you are in the habit of doing every day for those around you. You must not be too eager to gain money for *any* purpose."

"Not for a good one, papa?"

"No. Never do wrong that good may come of it."

"Do you think I was like a miser this morning, papa?"

"No. I do not think Fred quite understood the meaning of the word himself when he used it in that way. To be miserly, or like a miser, is to try to save and put by money only that we may look at it, and count it over, taking pleasure in the thought that we have it, not in using it for our good or pleasure, or that of others. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, papa. You mean if Bessie and I were to put all our money into that box of mamma's, and just count it and count it, and never take any out, or spend it for the library or anything else, we would be little misers even if we are not old men?"

"Papa," said Bessie, "yesterday morning at prayers, you yead about the lord who went away and gave his servants money to take care of, and how one of them put his money in a napkin, and dug a hole in the ground and hid it there; and when his lord came home, he was angry with him, and punished him. Was that man a miser?"

"Yes, dear, I think we may call him a miser; and I am glad my little girl remembers so well. We may be miserly with other things than money. If we do not use any of the gifts which God has given us as he intended we should do, for our own good and that of others, we are misers; and it is as wrong to do so as it would be to waste them, or throw them away. Suppose you were to say, 'These are very small hands and feet which God has given to me; they are not nearly as large as papa's or mamma's, or even as strong as my brothers; they cannot do much work, so they shall do none at all; I will not run up and down stairs, or go little errands: I will not rock the baby, or amuse Franky, or do any other thing which might save my mamma some trouble; I will not even play about, or go out to walk, but just sit still and do nothing all day long. Or, this is a very young mind of mine, it knows very little, and cannot understand everything, so I shall not try to learn and add more knowledge to that which I have. I cannot do much for the praise and glory of God who made me and gave me every good thing I have, so I shall not try to please him at all. I will take and keep all he gives me, but I will not use it or enjoy it, nor let others do so.' This would be like the poor foolish man who buried his talent, instead of making use of it for his lord. It would be like a miser."

"But, papa," said Maggie, "I don't think I *could* be a miser with my hands and feet. Why, I would think it was dreadful to sit still all day and do nothing. They will move sometimes even when I don't mean them to; and if I want them to keep still, they seem to forget and just move of themselves."

Mr. Bradford smiled as he remembered how true Maggie's words were. It did indeed seem impossible for those restless little hands and feet to keep still; they must always be busy about something, and he knew that she could scarcely have a greater punishment than to be forced to sit quiet for ten or fifteen minutes at a time.

"Papa must take his hands and feet away now," he said, "or they will be late at the office. The hands and the head, too, have a good deal to do to-day if they are to feel at liberty to go to Riverside to-morrow; so kiss me for good-by."

Mr. Bradford stopped in the breakfast-room, where the boys still were, and telling them of what their sisters were trying to do, and how earnest they were about it, said he hoped they would neither tease nor laugh at them, but would do all in their power to help them.

Harry and Fred were really sorry when they heard how distressed the little girls had been, and promised to do nothing more to trouble them.

"I cannot quite promise not to laugh at Bessie, papa," said Harry. "She says such droll things in such a droll way, or twists something about, and comes out with it with such a grand air for such a mite of a thing as she is, that a fellow can't help laughing."

"The greater the difficulty, the greater the kindness to your little sister, my son. I know it is hard, sometimes almost impossible, to help smiling, or even laughing outright, at some of Bessie's speeches; but you may avoid doing so in a loud, boisterous, mocking way. Put yourselves in her place, boys, and think how you would like it."

"I'm sure I do not mind being laughed at, papa; at least, not much," said Harry.

"No," said Fred, "that he don't; so he never is laughed at. The other fellows say it's no fun teasing him, he's so cool about it."

"But Bessie does mind it," said his father, "and so does Maggie; and we are not to judge that a thing is right and kind because it is not disagreeable to ourselves. You know your Aunt Annie is exceedingly afraid of a mouse."

"Indeed, she is," said Fred. "She'll squeal and jump on a chair, and turn as white as a sheet, if she only suspects there is one in the room."

"It is real honest fear, too," said Harry, "no make believe about it. I am real sorry for her, too; it must make her so uncomfortable."

"Yes," said his father. "She was frightened by one when a child, and cannot overcome her fear of them. Now I am not in the least afraid of mice; indeed, if they were not so mischievous, I should enjoy seeing them play about the house; but would you not think me cruel and unfeeling if I were to allow a mouse to be in the room with Annie, while I either amused myself with her fears or was quite careless of them? Would you think I was doing as I would be done by?"

"No, sir," said both the boys.

"Then you see the golden rule teaches us not only to avoid doing those things to others which are painful to ourselves, but also to put ourselves in their places, and to say, 'How should I wish to be done by if I felt as they do?' There, I have given two little lessons this morning, – one to my girls, and one to my boys, – and shall have to read a third to my self on the meaning of the word punctual if I do not hurry away. Good-by to you."

As soon as their father had left them, Maggie and Bessie ran away to mamma's room. Maggie, always eager for anything new, begged that she might have one of her towels to begin to hem it at once. But mamma said it was time for their walk, and they must go out first. They found not only Mr. Hall, but also their friend, Colonel Rush, in the park, and Bessie introduced them to each other, saying, gravely, "Mr. Hall, please to know Colonel Yush; Colonel Yush, please to know Mr. Hall."

The two gentlemen smiled, shook hands heartily, and certainly seemed well pleased to know each other. Perhaps it was partly because they were both so fond of the dear little girls who stood beside them.

When the children went home, mamma had a towel neatly folded and begun for Maggie. She sat down at once, sewing away in a great hurry, and saying to Bessie that she was going to finish it that day. Presently mamma, seeing that she was moving along the hem pretty fast, came and looked at her work.

"Oh, Maggie, Maggie!" she said, "this will not do, my dear child. Such long, crooked stitches! Why, you can sew much better than this."

"Yes, mamma, but then I am in such a hurry to finish it."

"But you must not be in such a hurry, dear, that you cannot take time to do it neatly. Suppose, when the towel is done, I were to hand you three cents and say, 'I am in such a hurry, Maggie, I shall only give you three cents.' Would you think that quite fair?"

Maggie laughed. "No, indeed, mamma; but you would not do such a thing."

"I hope not; and when you come to think about it, I am sure you will see that it is not fair for you to do my work poorly if I am to pay you for it."

"Must it all come out, mamma?" asked Maggie, as her mother took the work from her hand.

"I am afraid so, dear. See there, those stitches would not hold at all. I think we will take half of one side of a towel for each day's task. That will finish them in time, and you will soon tire of the work if you try to hurry through it in this way."

"Mamma," said Bessie, as her mother handed back the towel to Maggie to make a fresh beginning, "could not I learn to sew?"

"Yes, I think you are old enough to begin, if you will be patient."

"Oh, yes, mamma, I will be patient to learn, if you will be patient to teach me."

There was not much doubt about that, so the dear kind mother found a little piece of work and fixed it for Bessie. But she had no thimble of her own, and for that day had to use an old one of Maggie's with a piece of paper wrapped round her finger to make it stay in its place. Mamma promised to buy her one that very day, and after this, whenever Maggie hemmed her towels, Bessie would sit beside her learning to put in stitches that grew neater and neater every day.

IV. *FLOSSY*

"AUNT HELEN! Aunt Helen!" said Maggie, almost as soon as they reached Riverside the next day, "may we run down in the garden and find Donald?"

Donald was the old Scotch gardener who lived at Riverside. He had been there for a great many years, long before Maggie and Bessie were born, long enough, as Maggie said, "to learn to talk American," if he had chosen to do so. But Donald loved the dear old Scotch brogue which reminded him of his fatherland so far away, and was at no pains to drop it; and our little girls liked him none the less that they sometimes found it hard work to understand him. And they had good reason to like him, for he was glad to see them when they came to Riverside, and tried all he could to make their visits pleasant to them. They were in a great hurry to find him this morning, and could scarcely rest till they had permission to do so.

"Well, well," said Grandpapa Duncan, "this is a nice thing. Have you grown so fond of Donald since you have been away that you have hardly time to speak to me before you run away to see him?"

"Oh, no, grandpapa," said Maggie, "we like Donald very much, but you know we like you a great deal more; but you see we are so anxious about the puppy."

"Oh, ho! then it is the puppy you like better than me? I do not see that that mends the matter."

"Now, grandpapa!" said Maggie.

"Couldn't you come with us, grandpapa?" asked Bessie, coaxingly.

"Yes, do," said Maggie, "it's such a nice, pleasant day. It will do you good."

"And it will do us good to have you," said Bessie.

Grandpapa was very much pleased, but though there was a smile on his lips and in his eye, he wrinkled up his brow and pretended to think it was very hard he should be asked to go out. Perhaps he wanted to be coaxed a little more.

"I have no hat or cane here," he said, gruffly.

Away ran Maggie and Bessie into the hall, and presently came back, the one with grandpapa's hat, the other with his cane. Maggie climbed on his chair and put his hat on his head, pretty well down over his nose too, while Bessie placed the cane in his hand.

"Now you are all ready," said Maggie.

"But I have a bone in my knee; how am I to get up?" said grandpapa.

Maggie took hold of one hand and Bessie of the other, and after a great deal of pulling, with some pretended scolding and grumbling from grandpapa, he was upon his feet.

"A nice thing, to be sure," said the old gentleman, "for two little city damsels to come out here to my quiet country home, to pull me out of my comfortable easy-chair and trot me around after puppy dogs and other nonsense!" and he frowned harder than ever, shaking his cane fiercely at the laughing children, who knew very well that this was only fun, and that he was really glad to go with them. They thought it a fine joke, and went skipping merrily along, one on each side of him. They had gone but a few steps from the house, when Bessie stood still, exclaiming, —

"Oh, how pretty, how pretty! Look, grandpapa! look, Maggie!"

It was indeed a pretty sight that she saw. Just in front of them stood two tall trees which grew straight upwards for some distance and then leaned a little towards each other, so that at the top their branches wove themselves together, making an arch. Over each tree ran a Virginia creeper, or grass vine, winding round and round the trunks, spreading over the branches, and when they could find nothing more to cling to, throwing out long sprays and tendrils, which waved gracefully about in the gentle breeze coming up from the river. Although it was only the middle of September, there had

been several cool, frosty nights, and the leaves of the vine were already of a bright crimson. The trees were still quite green, and the contrast between their color and the red of the vine was very beautiful.

"Oh, who did it, grandpapa?" said Bessie. "Who painted those leaves? Did Donald?"

"No, darling, no hand of man could paint that. This is the Lord's doing, and it is indeed marvellous in our eyes."

"Do you mean our Father in heaven did it, grandpapa?"

"Yes, dear, it was the great and loving Father, who has not only made his earth to bring forth food and drink for all his creatures, but has also made it so beautiful that it may please and delight our eyes."

"But," said Maggie, in great astonishment, "that vine used to be all green just like the tree. How did it come red?"

"I will tell you," said grandpapa. "Do you know what the sap is?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Duncan looked around him, and then, taking his knife from his pocket, cut a slip from a tall plant which grew near. He pressed it with his thumb and finger, and a small whitish drop oozed slowly out from the end which had been cut.

"See there," he said, "that is the sap or juice of the plant. It is in every tree or bush, and goes running through the trunk, branches, and leaves much as the blood runs through the veins in your body. All through the summer it keeps the branches moist and the leaves fresh and green; but it does not like the cold, and when the frost comes, it runs away from the leaves. Then they begin to turn, some red, some yellow, some brown. Our pretty creepers here are among the first to feel the cold; and they turn sooner than the trees over which they grow. As the weather becomes colder, the sap goes farther and farther away, back through the branches and down through the trunk till it reaches the roots, where it lies snug and close in its winter home under the warm earth. Then the leaves shrivel up and lose their bright colors and fall to the ground. If you break a branch from a tree in winter, it will snap more easily than it will in the summer, because it is dry and brittle from the loss of its sap. All through the cold weather the sap keeps hidden quietly away in the roots; but in the spring when the air grows mild and pleasant, it begins to stir and move upward again. Up, up it goes through the trunk and branches, till, as the weather grows warmer and warmer, the little buds which hold the young leaves and blossoms begin to show themselves, and at last unfold. Then the small tender leaves peep out and gather strength and life from the soft air and bright sunshine and gentle rain, till the trees and bushes are covered with their beautiful green dress and make a pleasant shade for my Maggie and Bessie when they come out to see their old grandpapa at Riverside."

"And give us pretty flowers to smell and look at, and nice fruit to eat," said Bessie.

"Yes, and see how our Father thinks of us and cares for our comfort at every season. If we had not this pleasant shade in the summer, with the soft green for our eyes to rest upon, we could scarcely bear the heat and light of the sun. But in the winter we need all the heat and light we can have; and then, the leaves drop away and let the rays of the sun fall upon the earth to warm and cheer us."

While grandpapa was talking, they had been walking on; and now, as they turned a corner, they saw Donald. He was tying up some dahlias. The little girls ran forward.

"How do you do, Donald?" said Bessie.

"How is the puppy, Donald?" asked Maggie.

"And how's yersel'," said Donald. "Eh, but I'm blithe to see ye aince mair."

"We're well," said Bessie, "and I can yun about now, and my feet don't get so tired as they used to."

"That's gude news," said Donald; "an' noo ye'll be wantin' the wee doggie hame wi' ye. Weel, he's big eneuch; and I think ye may tak' him if yer mither's willin'."

The children understood enough of what Donald was saying to know that he meant they could take the puppy home if their mother would not object; and Maggie hastened to say, "Oh, yes! mamma will let us have him; she quite expects us to take him home, Donald. Could you let us see him now?"

Donald was quite ready, and they all went over to his cottage, where the first thing they saw was Flossy himself, playing on the grass with his two puppy brothers. They all came running up to Donald, as if they were glad to see him, and then went snuffing and smelling about the feet of the children, as if they wanted to find out who these little strangers could be.

In five minutes they were all the best of friends, and Maggie and Bessie were seated upon the grass with the three little dogs jumping, capering, and tumbling about them and over them. Such a frolic as they had, and how the children laughed, and how the puppies barked and yelped and frisked about, while it was hard to say who enjoyed it most, the little girls and the dogs, or grandpapa, Donald, and Alice, who watched them from the cottage steps.

The puppies were all pretty, but Flossy was certainly the prettiest of the three. He was beautifully marked in brown and white, and his coat was already becoming long, silken, and glossy. He was also the most playful and mischievous; and grandpapa told Maggie and Bessie he thought they would have their hands full to keep him out of harm. Once, in the midst of their play, Maggie's hat fell off, and in an instant Flossy had pounced upon it, and, when Maggie tried to take it from him, ran away, dragging it after him. Round and round the house he tore, and they had quite a race to get it from him. At last Donald caught him and took the hat from him; but, alas! it was none the better for its rough journey over the gravel walks. He was next at his own finery. Alice, Donald's wife, had tied about his neck the red ribbon which she kept to dress him with when his little mistresses came to Riverside, but his brothers seemed to think he had no right to be finer than they were, and were all the time pulling and snapping at the ribbon, till at last it came untied. But Flossy had no idea of letting another puppy have that which belonged to himself, and pretty quickly snatched it from them. Off he went again before the children could stop him, and running down in the cellar and behind some barrels, soon had the ribbon torn to bits. Alice was quite vexed when at last she pulled him from his hiding-place, and found the ribbon entirely destroyed; but the children thought him very smart, and did not see why he should not have his fun.

"Eh, but you're an ill beastie!" said Alice, giving Flossy a cuff on the ear.

Bessie's little tender heart was quite grieved. "Alice," she said, "I was 'fraid maybe you'd be sorry when we took Flossy away; but I guess you don't care much; do you?"

"Na, na!" said Alice. "I canna be fashed wi' the three o' them, an' this ane's the warst o' them a'. He's aye in mischief. Didna he lick a' the cream for my mon's breakfast?"

Scarce a word did the children understand, except that Flossy had drank the cream meant for Donald's breakfast, and that Alice was rather pleased to be rid of him.

"Perhaps he don't know any better," said Bessie. "He'll have to be taught."

"Deed does he," said Alice, as if she were glad she was no longer to have the teaching of him.

"Grandpapa," said Maggie, "may we take Flossy up to the house now, so that he may be used to us before we go home?"

Grandpapa said they might, and Maggie told Bessie that she should carry him.

"I'll only carry him half the way," said Bessie, "and you can carry him the yest."

But Flossy had no mind to be carried at all. He liked to frisk about on his own four feet, and was quite ready to run after his little mistresses. Indeed, the puppies were all so well pleased with their new playmates that the other two wished to go also, and Donald had to shut them up to prevent them from following.

Grandpapa said they would not go directly home, but through the orchard, and so down to the river bank. In the orchard the men were picking the early apples and packing them in barrels, and grandpapa, going to one of them, chose two large rosy-cheeked apples and gave one to Maggie and one to Bessie. They stood a while watching the men, and then turned to go on.

Between the orchard and the river lay a broad green field, and in this field several cows and a large flock of sheep were feeding. Now Bessie, although she was not a timid child about many things, was afraid of cattle; and as Mr. Duncan opened the gate into the field, she drew back.

"Grandpa," she said, "bettern't we go the other way?"

"I think not," said grandpapa. "This way is the pleasantest, and I have something to show you down by the water."

"But if we should be bucked, what would our mamma say?" asked the little girl, still looking timidly at the cows.

"We shall not be bucked, dear," said grandpapa, smiling. "Does my Bessie think I would take her or Maggie where there was danger?"

"No, grandpapa, but – " Bessie still hung back.

"You shall not go this way, dear, if you do not wish; but these are our cows, and I know them to be all peaceable and good-tempered. But if we turn back and go through the garden again, I shall be too tired to take you down to the river."

"I think we'll go this way," said Bessie, and so they went on; but as they passed the cows, grandpapa felt the little hand he held nestle itself very tightly in his own, and as he saw how her color came and went, he was sorry he had not turned back. The cows did not notice them at all, not even when Flossy, who seemed to think it would be a very fine thing to bark at something so much larger than himself, ran up to one and began woof woofing in a very absurd manner. The cow just lifted up her head and looked at him for a moment; then, as if she well knew that such a tiny thing could do her no harm, put it down and began to eat again.

"Isn't it er-dic-u-lous, grandpapa," said Maggie, "to see Flossy barking at that great cow?"

"Rather ridiculous," answered grandpapa. "Look at those little lambs, Bessie."

Bessie quite forgot the cows when she saw the lambs playing by the side of their mothers. But when Flossy found the cattle cared nothing for him, he thought he would try to make a little fuss here, and away he ran after one of the lambs. The sheep did not take it as quietly as the cows; the lamb was frightened, and the mother, who did not understand that this was Flossy's fun, and that he could not have hurt her child even if he had wished to, put it behind her, and lowering her head, stamped her foot at Flossy as if she were very angry. Mr. Duncan called the puppy away, but he would not mind, and Maggie ran to take him up in her arms. The poor sheep saw her and thought here was something else coming to hurt her baby, so she must fight a little herself. She ran at Maggie, and butting her head against the little girl, threw her over upon the grass. The other sheep had stood looking on; but now, as if afraid of being punished for what one of their number had done, the whole flock turned and scampered away to the opposite side of the field.

Maggie sat up upon the grass. She was not at all hurt, but rather frightened and very much astonished.

"Are you hurt, little woman?" asked grandpapa, as he lifted her up and placed her upon her feet.

"No, grandpapa, but – who did it?"

"Who did it? Why, the mother sheep there."

"She is very ungrateful," said Maggie, indignantly. "I came to help her, and she oughtn't to do it."

"She did not know that, dear," said grandpapa. "She thought you, too, were coming to hurt her lamb, and she could not tell what else to do. See there, Bessie, the cows which you were so afraid of did not even look at us, while this meek, timid sheep, of which you had not the least fear, has knocked over Maggie. Do not look so distressed, dear; Maggie is not hurt at all."

It was some time before Bessie could quite believe this. It seemed to her scarcely possible that her dear Maggie should have been thrown down in such a rude fashion, and yet not be hurt. But so it was; not a scratch nor a bruise was to be found. The ground was not very hard just here, and the grass quite soft and long; and beyond the fright and a streak or two of earth on her white dress, Maggie had

received no harm from her fall. It made her feel rather sober, however, and she walked quietly along by grandpapa's side without skipping and jumping as she had done before.

"Grandpapa," said Bessie, "don't you think the sheep ought to know better?"

"Well, Bessie, I think we must not blame the poor creature. She did not know that Maggie was her friend, and Flossy had frightened her and made her angry. If she had been alone, she would probably have run away; but she loved her child better than she did herself, and took the best way she knew to keep it from harm."

"You are very naughty, Flossy," said Bessie. "You did a deal of *misfit*. You frightened the poor little lambie, and made my Maggie be knocked down."

"Yes," said Maggie, "he'll have to be taught, 'to do to others.' Poor little fellow! He don't know much himself."

"Yes," said Mr. Duncan, "like all young things, he has much to learn, and his teachers must have a good deal of patience."

"Grandpapa," said Bessie, "are not lambs pretty good baby animals?"

"I rather think they are, Bessie. Perhaps their mammas sometimes find them troublesome; but we seldom or never hear of a lamb getting into mischief or naughty ways. So when a child is obedient and gentle, we say it is like a little lamb."

"Mamma taught us such a pretty hymn last week about a lamb," said Bessie.

"Can't you let me hear it?" said grandpapa. So Bessie repeated these verses: —

"Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and gave thee feed,
By the stream, and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight, —
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice.
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?"

"Little lamb, I'll tell thee!
Little lamb, I'll tell thee!
He is callèd by thy name.
For He calls Himself a lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I, a child, and thou, a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!"¹

She said them slowly and carefully, not missing one word, and grandpapa was much pleased.

"That is indeed pretty, my darling," he said, "and grandpapa is much obliged to you. What a dear, good mamma you have, always teaching you something useful or pretty."

"Oh, yes!" said Bessie, "she is just the most precious mamma that ever lived."

¹ William Blake.

Grandpapa looked down as if he thought the dear mamma's little daughter was rather precious, too; but he did not say so.

"I never saw such a good helper as our mamma," said Maggie. "She always can tell us how to do things."

Then Maggie told how mamma was helping them to buy the library, and of all their little plans. Grandpapa listened, and seemed very much interested; and by the time the story was finished, they had reached the river.

Mr. Duncan led them through a grove of locust-trees, and just beyond was the pretty sight he had brought them to look at. This was a pond into which the water flowed by a narrow canal cut from the river. Upon it were floating two beautiful white swans. The children had never seen them before, for the pond had been made, and the swans brought there, since their last visit to Riverside. Over the canal was a pretty rustic bridge, and below it a wire fence, which allowed the water to flow in, but through which the swans could not pass. On the other side of the pond was a little house, made, like the bridge, of boughs twisted together.

"Oh, grandpapa," said Maggie, "what beautiful birds! How did they come there? And that water, too? It did not use to be there."

"No," said Mr. Duncan. "The pond was made this summer, while you were at Quam Beach. Those birds are swans."

"And is that their little house?" asked Bessie.

"Yes," said grandpapa; and then taking from his pocket a couple of crackers which he had brought for the purpose, he gave one to each of the children, and told them they might feed the swans. The birds were not at all afraid of the little girls, and came swimming up to where they stood, arching their graceful necks as if they quite expected to receive something nice to eat. Indeed, they were so tame that when the crackers were broken up, they took pieces from the children's hands as if they had known them all their lives. Maggie and Bessie were delighted, and Maggie thought she would like to stay by the pond all day; but now Mr. Duncan said it was time to go back to the house, so they bade good-by to the swans.

By this time Flossy was tired, and was quite willing to let Maggie take him up in her arms and carry him. Before they reached home he was asleep, and Maggie laid him in a corner of the sofa in the hall, and covered him up with a shawl. After a while, Bessie seeing him, thought she was tired too, so she climbed on the sofa, took Flossy in her arms, nestled down on the cushions, and in five minutes she, too, was fast asleep. There Maggie, who had been down in the kitchen, begging the cook for some milk for the puppy, found her. She stood looking at her for a moment, then ran into the library where her father and Uncle John were sitting.

"Oh, papa," she said, seizing his hand, "come and see the prettiest thing you ever saw. Come, Uncle John, do come; but do not make any noise."

Papa and Uncle John followed the eager little girl, who led them to the sofa where Bessie and Flossy lay.

"Isn't she sweet?" whispered Maggie. "Isn't it just like a picture?"

It was indeed a pretty sight. The sleeping child in her white dress, with her curls falling over the red cushions, and the little dog clasped in her arms, his face cuddled up against her shoulder. But Mr. Duncan and Mr. Bradford thought that not the least pretty part of it was the affectionate little sister standing by, looking at Bessie with so much love in her eyes. Her father could not help stooping to kiss her. Just then Aunt Helen passed through the hall.

"Come here, Helen," said Mr. Duncan.

"Isn't that a pretty picture, Aunt Helen?" said Maggie, as her aunt paused to look. "I am going to call mamma."

"No, no," said Mrs. Duncan, "do not call her. You have given me an idea, Maggie. Can you keep a secret?"

Maggie promised, and her father said he thought she might be trusted.

Now Aunt Helen could draw and paint very beautifully, and her "idea" was to make a little picture of Bessie as she lay sleeping, and to give it to her mother as a Christmas gift. She ran to her room, and bringing paper and pencils, began to sketch her little niece.

Mr. Bradford looked over her shoulder.

"Could you not put the other one in?" he whispered, looking at Maggie, who still seemed as if she could not take her eyes from her sister. "We never separate them, you know, and it will be a double pleasure to Margaret."

So Mrs. Duncan drew Maggie, too, though Maggie did not know this, for her aunt said she should not let her see the picture until it was quite finished.

"And mind," said Uncle John, "if you say a word about it, I shall look at you with both my eyes, and put your nose between your ears."

Maggie laughed, and promised to be very careful; and now, as Bessie began to stir, Aunt Helen ran away with the picture.

Flossy was taken home in the carriage that afternoon, and I must say, he behaved very badly all the way. He was not used to riding, and he did not like it at all. On the first half of the road, he whined and fretted all the time; and when he became a little accustomed to the motion, he would not keep quiet; and either scrambled all about the carriage, or if Maggie or Bessie took him upon her lap, put his head out of the window and barked at every person he saw, so that his little mistresses were quite mortified.

"Mamma," said Bessie, "please don't think he's the troublesomest little dog you ever saw. We will teach him to behave better. If you hadn't teached us, maybe we would have been as full of *misfit* as he is."

Mamma said she did not doubt that Flossy would learn better in time, and she would have patience with him.

V.
THE COLONEL'S STORY

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