



FRISK AND HIS Flock

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FRISK AND HIS FLOCK

BY

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AUTHOR OF "PUSSY TIPTOES' FAMILY," "THE ROSE DALE BOOKS," ETC.



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Jima Morrissey'a*

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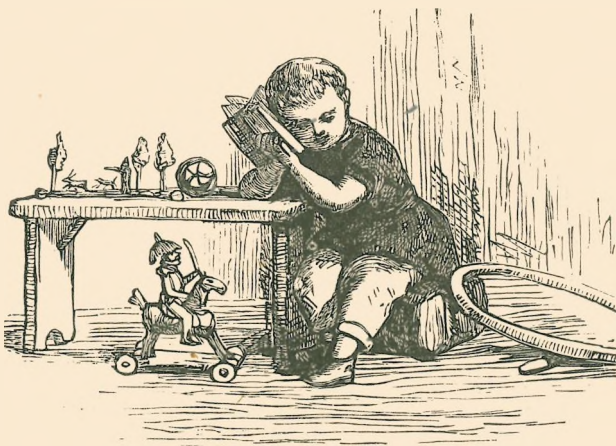
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To
EMMA LOUISE CLAPP,

AND OTHER PARTIAL LITTLE READERS OF "PUSSY TIPTOES' FAMILY,"

THIS NEW VOLUME IS INSCRIBED, WITH THE HOPE THAT ITS PAGES MAY AFFORD
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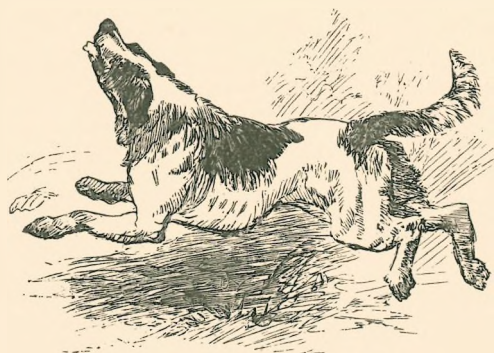




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FRISK AND HIS FLOCK.

CHAPTER I.

MISS AGATHA'S HOME.



PLEASANT, old-fashioned house, almost the last on the street. The street was the principal one of a country village; it was very wide, and shaded by noble trees,—elms mostly; but the trees directly in front of this house were maples.

The children knew; for they were sugar-maples, these trees. There was a double row of them bordering the lane which led down to the farm-yard,—famous trees they were in the sugaring time, and beautiful trees to play under at any time.

The children knew too what all the trees were around the house, inside of the fence: there were four cherry trees, and the tree that bore the spicy little red apples, and the early sweet apple tree; and, back of the barn, the old sour apple tree that was so full of crotches and so easy to climb.

The children could have told you too, in a minute, where the strawberry bed lay, and where the best currants grew; and of course they knew all about the flower beds, for those were Miss Agatha's especial care, and they were all proud to help her.

How many children lived in this pleasant old-fashioned house? Not one. Yet if you had gone by the place in the morning, or at noon, or in the afternoon, you would have been pretty sure to hear the echo of merry young voices, and to catch a glimpse of happy children playing about; for this was Miss Agatha's home, and the children were Miss Agatha's little scholars.

I called them happy children, and indeed they might well be pleased with their school, they had such a pleasant school-room, and such a dear, kind teacher.

The school-room was not in the house. When Miss Agatha began to teach, she said she was afraid her little scholars might sometimes disturb her father and mother, if she taught in the house. For although they loved little children dearly, they were growing old, and old people cannot always bear a noise about them.

So Miss Agatha said she would take the barn chamber for her school-room, and the children were always *so* glad she did.

The barn chamber was a room that had been finished off over the barn, in the days when old Mr. Deane's children were young and all at home; for then, if they had any company, the old house was apt to be very full; so they needed a spare room which could be used for a sleeping-room at such times.

There was room enough in the house now, for there was no one at home with the old people but Miss Agatha and one brother, who was lame, and sick a good deal of the time.

So the barn chamber was nicely papered, and whitewashed overhead, and the lame Mr. Deane made the desks for the children,—low desks placed against the wall around the room; and Miss Agatha bought a set of nice chairs, just the right height for the desks,—or perhaps the desks were built to suit the chairs,—either way they suited nicely, and were very comfortable.

The windows of the school-room looked out over the orchard, and away beyond, over the meadows that sloped down to the river,—the dear noisy little brook which bounded the home-farm on the east at the foot of the hill. But I must not stop to tell you about the river here.

The old crooked apple tree of which I have told you, grew so close to one of the windows that in the spring time the children could pick the blossoms from the nearest boughs.

The stairs which led up to the school-room had no carpet on them, of course; and so the merry little feet could shuffle as much as they pleased going up and down. Miss Agatha did not mind; and there was no one else to be disturbed, except old Dobbin, the horse; and he would turn his head around as far as he could to look through the slats at the children, and go on munching his hay, as who should say, "I have seen such doings before; and I was a colt myself once."

In stormy weather, when the children could not play outdoors at recess, there was plenty of fun to be had in the barn, and room enough to enjoy the fun without doing any mischief.

But on pleasant days, as I said before, the children were to be heard and seen all about the old place; and they thought it was one of the pleasantest places in all the world.

They were trusted to run all around in the yard and garden and orchard, and so they were very careful not to meddle with anything without leave; and old Mr. Deane seemed to like to have them about, and was sure to tell them to help themselves, when there were cherries on the trees, or apples or pears on the ground.

Miss Agatha did not need to watch the children at recess or at noon, because she felt sure that she could trust them, and besides there was *Frisk*.

It is quite time you should be told about Frisk. He was

Miss Agatha's dog; she called him her "shepherd dog," sometimes, because he helped her take care of her flock; but he was not as large as a real shepherd dog.

Frisk felt himself very important when the children were around. It was funny to see him watch out for them in the morning, except on Saturday or Sunday; he seemed to know quite well that there would be no children to look after on those days.

He generally had a fine romp with the boys and girls before school-time. But the moment the first tinkle of Miss Agatha's little bell was heard, Frisk was on his dignity at once, and he would drive the children all before him to the barn, and up the stairs. Old Mrs. Deane seemed never too busy to come to the door or window, and laugh at the sight.

One day little Sammy Thorpe remembered, just as Miss Agatha was about to ring, that he had left his reader at home, and he had leave to go and get it. But the bell rang before he was out of the yard, and Frisk scampered after him, barking loudly, to drive him back. Sammy laughed at first, but Frisk was so determined to make him go back that at last poor Sammy began to cry; and Mr. Deane came and called Frisk off.

If any of the children were late Frisk would miss them, and seem uneasy until they came. Then when he had driven the lambs all up to their fold, he would trot into the house with a

satisfied air, and mount up into a chair, — the best chair in the sitting-room, too, — to rest after his exertions.

Old Mr. Deane would say, "Taken care of 'em all, Frisk? Good dog, Frisk!" And Frisk would wag his tail with a "Bow-wow," which meant, "Of course I've done my duty, sir!"

CHAPTER II.

ROXIE.



OXIE was one of Miss Agatha's children. How well Miss Agatha remembered seeing her on her way across the fields, the first day she came to school, dressed in a clean white apron and pretty straw hat, with her school portfolio in one hand, while the other grasped a bouquet of wild flowers, gathered for the teacher.

She was half afraid of the teacher then, and of the scholars too; but she soon forgot her fears, and became one of the happiest of the children.

If you had asked any of Miss Agatha's scholars which was the best child in the school, the answer would have been, "Oh, Roxie Barton is the best!" But once, when Roxie herself heard

one of the girls say this, she looked very much troubled and said, "*Please* don't say that, Annie!" But one thing was certain: all the children loved Roxie; so did Miss Agatha; so did Frisk, and every one.

The little girl's name was Roxana. It was a long old-fashioned name, but its meaning just suited her. It means, "The dawn of day;" and when little Roxie came to live with her grandparents, it was just like the dawn of a fresh bright day to them. As her grandpapa said very often, "She was a sunbeam in the house."

Roxie's dear father was dead; and she had come with her mother and her little brother, to live at her grandpapa's. It was soon after she had come to this new home that she began to go to Miss Agatha's school.

She was about eight years old then, and she had never been to school before. Do you know how a child feels on going into a school-room for the first time? Does n't it seem as if it were at least a mile across the room; and as if the eyes of all the children were boring into the poor little stranger? I remember how it was, although it is a great many years since the day when I first went to school.

Miss Agatha knew, too; she had been up street to the store, and was on her way home when she saw little Roxie coming across the meadow.

Miss Agatha walked a little faster, so as to be at the gate when Roxie came up. Then she said: "Here is my new scholar. Good-morning, dear!" and gave the little girl a kiss. Roxie looked up at the kind pleasant face, and said "Good-morning" very cheerfully, as she held out the flowers she had gathered.

Then Miss Agatha called the children who were there, in the yard, and told Roxie their names, saying she hoped they would be very happy together.

Frisk stood by, wagging his tail very earnestly, as if to say, "Don't forget me, mistress! You should introduce *me* to the new scholar!"

So Miss Agatha did; and she bade Frisk give his paw to Roxie, which he did in such a funny way that it made all the children laugh, and Roxie too. Then, when they had had a good laugh together, it was easy to get acquainted, and to talk and play.

It wanted half an hour yet of school time, so Miss Agatha went into the house, and left the children together.

Frisk kept running round and round in and out among the children; once in a while stopping before Roxie, and wagging his tail.

"See Frisk!" said Jimmy Brooks; "he knows you are to be one of the scholars as well as we do; is n't he a funny fellow?"

"Yes," said Roxie, and she ventured to pat his head. "Did

you say his name is Frisk? We had a 'Frisky' once; I mean, my cousin did."

"Was he just such a dog as our Frisk?" asked Jimmy.

"Oh no!" and Roxie laughed merrily, "he was not a dog at all; he was a squirrel."

"A squirrel? What kind? Was he a real gray?"

"Tell us about him, please! How did they get him? Did they keep him in a cage?"

By this time three or four more of the children had come, and they gathered around wondering what was going on.

Roxie seemed a little shy of talking before so many, but Jimmy and the rest were eager to hear about the squirrel, and she was too good-tempered to refuse.

"He was n't a gray squirrel. I saw one of those once, in a cage that went round and round. Frisky was a flying squirrel, and he was a little mite of a fellow. May, my cousin, said that the boy who gave him to them brought him in a glove."

"Oh!" cried two or three of the boys, as if they thought that could hardly be true.

"He *did*; and Frisky got up close into the thumb of the glove, so that they had to shake it hard to get him out when the boys had a box ready for him. It was a big man's leather glove, you know; and Frisky was only about as long as my hand, only his tail was longer."

"Where did the boy get him? *I* never saw a flying squirrel," said Georgie Ray.

"Why, a man was cutting down an old tree; the tree had a big hole in it, and when it fell down, out ran seven flying squirrels, — the whole family, I suppose. The man caught two of the young ones, and gave this one to Arthur, — that is the name of the boy that brought him to my cousins.

"Arthur said he saw their nest: it was as big as a water-bucket, and it was made of leaves, and partridge feathers, and dry straw. The old squirrels got away, and some of the little ones; perhaps they made a new home somewhere to spend the rest of the cold winter in."

"Well, tell us about little Frisky. How did they keep him?"

"They kept him in a box, and they brought him nuts to eat. I saw him eating once, and it was so funny! He sat up and held the nut in his fore paws, and he made a little hole in one end of the nut and got all the meat out. Sometimes the boys would think he had plenty of nuts in his box, and when they looked over them there would be nothing but empty shells.

"One day, when the boys first got Frisky, they thought they had lost him. You see, they made a box all lined with tin, but there was one place where the door was, where the tin did not come quite up to the top, and in the night the little rogue gnawed away at this crack and got out."

"Oh, oh! did they catch him again?" asked Sammy Thorpe, eagerly.

"Yes; I'll tell you. The box was in the study, and when the boys found it empty in the morning, they thought Pussy must have got poor Frisky, for they could not find him anywhere; and they almost cried. But by and by they heard something scudding about behind the books on the shelves, and they knew it must be Frisky. They couldn't catch him, but they put some nice nuts in his box and left the door open, and after a little while he went in."

"Was n't that nice! Did he ever get out again?"

"Yes, another time they found the box all gnawed on the outside, and they found that Frisky had got out in the night, and then he could not find the right place at first, and so he tried to gnaw a hole to get in again."

"So he liked his home after all."

"Oh yes, and he got real tame after a while. Why, at first he wouldn't come out and show himself in the daytime at all, and sometimes they had to poke over his bed with a stick to find him. But afterwards he would play in the daytime and did not seem a bit afraid of us."

"Some one told me that flying squirrels only come out at night," said Georgie.

"Well, *Frisky* did; perhaps it was because he lived with folks, and not with other squirrels."

"But why do they call them flying squirrels?" asked Annie More; "have they any wings?"

"No; and I guess what they call flying, means jumping very high. Because, after Frisky got so tame, the boys used to let him out into the room while they cleaned his box; and he would go around *so* fast, and jump over the highest things in the room.

"But oh, it was such fun when they tried to catch him and put him back! He would get into all sorts of places. Once he got into Ed's jacket,—it was on a chair,—and they folded the jacket over and called out, 'We've got him!' But he ran down the sleeve of the jacket, and out on the floor. Then he got into the bed, and there he gave them the greatest chase!"

"Have your cousins got him now?" asked Annie.

"Oh no, he was drowned, poor little fellow! One night, after he got so tame that the boys let him stay out of his box and run about the room, he got drowned in the water pitcher. They found him there in the morning, and they thought he must have been trying to drink the water, and so fell in. Oh, we were all *so* sorry!"

Miss Agatha had come out to go to the school-room while Roxie was telling about Frisky's sad death.

She did not know what they were talking about, but she smiled to see them so well acquainted already.



While the children were all saying, "What a pity!" the bell rang; and in a moment Frisk, the dog, began to urge and drive them on to the school-room in such a hurry that they could no longer think of poor Frisky, the squirrel.

CHAPTER III.

SOME OF THE CHILDREN.



MUST tell you now something about the other children, of whom Miss Agatha and Frisk had charge, because you will hear their names in our story, and you will want to know who they are.

Phil and Annie More had the longest walk to school, for they lived on a farm more than a mile out of the village. But they were quite as regular as any of the children. Their little sister Susy was one of the scholars too; it was a long walk for her to be sure, but she loved to go to school so much that she did not mind it, and was always very sorry if her mother said it was "too cold or too stormy for Susy to go."

Sometimes Mr. More would have an errand to the village, with his team, and would give the children a ride to or from school. And when they had to walk, Phil and Annie often made a chair with their clasped hands, and carried Susy a little way when she was tired.

Annie was two years older than her brother, but Phil was almost as tall as she, for he was large of his age, and a good, strong, healthy boy. His father would say sometimes, as the children were starting for school, "Hurry up, Phil, my boy, and learn as fast as you can this year. By next year I may have to keep you at home in the summer time, to work on the farm."

"Then I can get ahead of you, Master Phil!" said Annie, once.

"But I'll catch up with you in winter, sis, you'll see! I can study all the harder when I've been working on the farm all summer!"

Phil was a pretty bright boy, whether at study, at work, or at play. He was a pretty good boy, too, on the whole, although like most children he had some faults. Perhaps we may be able to guess at these as we hear more of him by and by.

Georgie Ray was the oldest boy in Miss Agatha's school. The other boys quite looked up to him, for he was old enough to go a fishing alone; and once or twice he had been off into the woods hunting with his big brothers. But Georgie was not twelve yet, and he did not feel at all too old for the games which the other children liked best.

Jimmy Brooks and his sister Ruth lived in the village; their father was a physician; everybody knew Dr. Brooks, and almost every one knew the Doctor's children.

Their mother was dead; and the Doctor used to take them with him in his chaise a great deal, when they were not in school. He thought they must be lonely at home; and he liked to know that they were all safe and out of mischief, for they were rather lively little people and somewhat apt to get into scrapes.

Very thankful indeed was the good Doctor for Miss Agatha's pleasant school. Ruth and Jimmy were always satisfied to go, and their father was quite sure that they were well off while there.

Sammy Thorpe, and his cousin Lenny Dickson, were of about the same age: chubby, roguish-looking little fellows; almost always together, although they did not live together. Sammy's father lived in the largest house in the village; he was a rich man, people said. Leonard's mother was a widow, and she was not at all rich. Leonard looked older than Sammy, because he was dressed in jacket and pants; and Sammy's mother, as the little boy complained, "*would* make him wear frocks." He thought now that he was old enough to go to school, he might be dressed in boy's clothes.

The truth is that Mrs. Thorpe thought her little boy was rather too young to go to school; but Lenny went, and Jimmy Brooks; and Sammy begged hard to go too. To comfort him, his mother promised that as soon as he could read one page of his primer without a mistake, he should have some clothes like Jimmy Brooks's, with two pockets in them. So Sammy studied very hard, or *thought* he did,—in hope of the new suit.

Rosa Clay, Mattie Lawrence, and Phœbe Barker were in Miss Agatha's oldest class. They all lived in the village; and they generally came to school together. Then there was Sylvia Ellis, the minister's little daughter; she liked to walk down to school with Rosa, and the other girls; but they always went early, and Sylvia was such a useful little body at home that she could not often be spared in the morning until just time for school. Besides, there was little Gerty, her sister: Gerty went to school, too, but Mattie and Rosa called her a "chatter-box," and an "interrogation point." So Sylvia felt that they would rather not have her go with them, since Gerty must come too.

Sylvia's brother, Ralph, two years younger than herself, went to the school too; but he always watched for Georgie Ray, or some of the boys to go with.

Then there was Norman Sands; poor Norman! I think Miss Agatha had more trouble with him than with any other one of her scholars.

But she was very patient with him, for she knew that Norman was often ill; and she knew of some other troubles he had, although she never spoke of this to the other children.

Let me see, were these all? No: for the summer when our story begins Miss Agatha had more than twenty scholars.

But these of whom I have told you were the regular scholars. The others came to school for a short time perhaps; and we shall hear about them.

Miss Agatha did not have a great many rules for her scholars. But they all knew that she expected them to be quiet and orderly in school hours, and to study like good, faithful children.

When any child was idle or disobedient, or troublesome in school, a mark was put down in Miss Agatha's conduct book, and a grieved look came over her face which made the naughty child feel worse than for the mark; for every child in school loved Miss Agatha.

One morning, when Georgie Ray came to school, it was just time for the bell to ring. Georgie did not know it though, and he called out to Phil More: "Come here, Phil, I want to tell you something!"

"Bow wow wow!" said Frisk, jumping upon Georgie, and pushing him with his paws.

George tried to drive him off. "Down, Frisk!" said he. "I don't want to play with you!"

"There's the bell; don't you hear it?" said Phil, laughing as he ran up: "Frisk saw Miss Agatha come to the window with it."

"Bow wow wow!" said Frisk again; but then he ran off to the further end of the yard after two of the little boys, and so George and Phil had a word together as they went to the school-room.

What Phil heard pleased him so much that he could not wait to repeat it. As soon as the texts were said, and the prayers were over, he whispered something to Rosa Clay. As Rosa looked up and smiled, Annie More nodded at her as if to say, "I know what you are talking about!" So in two or three minutes nearly all the older children were whispering or nodding.

Miss Agatha saw all this, and presently she laid down her pencil and said: "Come, children, what is this important matter? Let us attend to it at once, and then put it out of our minds until after school."

Georgie stammered a little when he was asked to tell what the whispering was about.

He had got hold of a little book that told the meaning of many Christian names, and he had been finding out his own and others.

"And it says," said Phil, "that *Agatha* means 'Good;' and we all think that is true."

Here one or two of the children began to clap their hands, and in an instant all the rest joined in,—clapping hands, and laughing too. Lame Mr. Deane, down in his workshop in the barn, wondered what was going on.

"Well," said Miss Agatha, when the children were quiet again, "I am glad you like my name, and I must try to deserve it better."

"But if I am to be a 'good' teacher, I must keep my scholars quiet and attentive in school-time; so now let me see you all busy with your lessons, at once!"

The children all obeyed; but every one of them told at home the meaning of their teacher's name, and each one asked, "Isn't that true?" "Yes," added Jimmy Brooks, "Miss Agatha is the *goodest* lady that ever lived!"

CHAPTER IV.

ONE DAY IN SCHOOL.



T was a rainy day. Poor little Susy More could not get to school, for Annie could not have gone but for the fact that her father had bought her, at the time it was so muddy in the spring, a nice pair of rubber boots, like Phil's. She had a water-proof cloak too, with a hood, so that she could go through the rain as well as her brother. They both rather enjoyed the fun, only they felt sorry to leave poor little Susy with tears on her cheeks.

I must say for Susy, that she soon dried her tears, and set about "helping her mamma," as she said, "to make the rainy day go off *very quickly*." That was a wise little girl!

How very silly it would have been to spend all the morning with her face pressed against the window pane, fretting because she could not do the thing she liked best! I don't know how much the little hands could really do to help; but I am quite sure her mother was pleased with the cheerful little girl who *tried* to make herself useful.

There was another little face all bedewed with tears that morning. Gerty Ellis did not want to go to school in the rain. She was generally very willing to go, and very happy at school; but I think the little girl had some small plan of her own that she wanted to carry out, and the rain was just a good excuse for staying at home.

But her mother said, "The rain cannot hurt you to-day, Gerty; you had a bad cold the last time I kept you at home, but you are quite well now, and this is a warm summer rain. Sister will hold the umbrella over you; make haste now, and get ready."

Gerty knew she must obey, but she brought her hat and sack and overshoes rather unwillingly, and it was a forlorn looking little object that trudged along under Sylvia's large umbrella; rain-drops pattering down on the friendly shelter, and tear-drops trickling down underneath.

"O Gerty, for shame!" said Sylvia at last. "See, we are almost at the school, and do you want Miss Agatha to see you crying because you could not stay at home?"



THE RAINY WALK. — Page 26.

Gerty brushed away her tears at this, and tried to draw on a pleasanter face. But when a child has been indulging in a fretful, naughty temper, it is not such an easy matter to look pleasant all at once. So it happened that Miss Agatha easily discovered that something was wrong with her little scholar, although she did not say much about it.

All the rest of the children were there, for all it rained so hard at school-time.

Miss Agatha had a little fire in the stove, for fear the children should have dampened their clothes or their feet, coming through the rain. The boys and girls gathered around it as they came in and seemed to find it quite comfortable.

Frisk had followed them up-stairs as usual, and he too seemed to like the looks of the stove, for he pushed into the room and curled himself down behind it. Pretty soon Miss Agatha came in.

"I think I need not ring the bell," said she, "for you all seem to be here. Ah Frisk! are you here too? I think we can spare you now, good fellow!"

"Oh, please let him stay just this once, Miss Agatha!" pleaded the little boys; "he likes the fire, and we won't play with him!"

So Frisk was allowed to lie still behind the stove, while the children took their seats for the opening of school.

"It is *Monday*, Miss Agatha," said Annie More.

"Yes, my dear; and our new texts are ready."

At this each of the older children drew a Bible out of his or her desk, and the little ones cuddled expectantly upon their seats and glanced towards the black-board, which their teacher was turning so that they could see what was on the other side.

Miss Agatha gave her children three texts every week, which they were to repeat each morning. The boys who could read repeated one, the older girls another, and the little ones another, which was always an easy one, so that they could spell it out and learn it from the black-board.

Shall I tell you what texts were given out at this time?

The girls' text was: "Let us not be weary in well doing."

The boys' was: "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

And the little ones learned these words: "Ye serve the Lord Christ."

Miss Agatha did not say much about the texts then; she only repeated some lines which the children liked very much. One of the girls asked her to say them once more; but Miss Agatha said she would pin up the card which had the lines on it, where they might all read them.

These were the lines:—

“Up and doing, little Christian ;
Up and doing while 't is day.
Do the work the Master gives you, —
Do not loiter by the way.
For we all have work before us,
You, dear child, as well as I :
Let us seek to learn our duty,
And perform it cheerfully.”

Then the children sang their morning hymn and were very still during prayers, and then their lessons began.

Frisk had been so very still behind the stove that the children had almost forgotten he was there. But good dog Frisk always kept one eye open when the children were around, and so it happened that he was the first to spy out something which he thought was not quite proper.

“Bow wow wow!” said he suddenly. It was such a sharp decided “Bow wow!” that the teacher and all the children looked up to see what was the matter.

Frisk was wagging his tail and looking straight at Jimmy Brooks. So all the children looked at Jimmy too.

Ah, Jimmy was playing. He had a little wheel tied to a string, and he had dropped it over his desk and was making it swing back and forth.

Jimmy looked ashamed, and well he might, to be reproved

by a little dog for playing in school. I don't suppose Frisk really knew that Jimmy was idling; but he saw the wheel fly back and forth, and he was anxious to attend to it.

Jimmy rolled up the string and put the wheel in his pocket.

"Now, little boy," said Miss Agatha, "attend to your spelling lesson, and do not oblige Frisk to call you to order again!"

The other children laughed, and Georgie said, "Shall Frisk be monitor, Miss Agatha?"

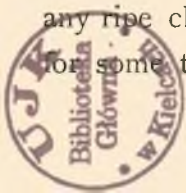
"It seems he can act the monitor sometimes," said Miss Agatha; "but my dear scholars have a better monitor, and I hope they will heed the little voice within."

I cannot say how it was, exactly, but the lessons did not get on as well as usual that morning. Jimmy and Gerty were both sent back with their spelling lessons; and Norman complained of a headache, and could not or would not try to learn his lessons, although Miss Agatha made them very easy; and there were some others behindhand, too. When it was time to dismiss, the teacher looked tired, and the children did not seem as happy as usual.

They thought it was all because of the rain: do you think it was?

"It's raining harder 'n ever!" said Lenny, peering out at the storm; "we've got to stay here, Sammy!"

"And we can't go out to the swing, nor to see if there's any ripe cherries!" said Ralph; "Mr. Deane said we might try for some to-day."



"Well, maybe it will be all bright to-morrow," said Roxie Barton, in her gentle way. "Let's eat our dinners, and then think of some nice play!"

"That's a good idea, Roxie!" said Ralph. "Who'll play 'Hide the handkerchief' down in the barn?"

All agreed to this; even Mattie and Rosa; the luncheon pails were soon emptied — Frisk getting many a nice bit; and then the boys and girls, and Frisk too, ran down into the barn.

They took Sammy's little handkerchief to hide, because it had a red border. They showed it to Frisk, and he entered into the game as well as any of them, and made a deal of fun for them all.

Once when it was Phil's turn to hide it, he stuffed it down into his own pocket. When the seekers came in, Frisk ran about with the rest for a minute or two, and then he jumped upon Phil, and poked his nose down into that very pocket. It was of no use for Phil to say "Down Frisk!" Out came the little handkerchief, and Frisk ran about with it, shaking it with all his might, while all the children shouted, "Hurrah for Frisk! He's found it!"

CHAPTER V.

THREE O'CLOCK.



WHEN the bell rang again for school, the little folks all felt better for their merry romp in the barn.

They all seemed to try to do better, too, with their lessons; but when we lose time in the morning, it is very hard to make it up in the afternoon.

"It is three o'clock, Miss Agatha!" said two or three voices at once.

"Yes, I see; but we are not quite ready for our talk. How is the lesson, Norman? and is Gerty ready with her table?"

All the other scholars looked anxiously at the two who were spoken to. I must tell you why.

It was not time to dismiss school; but, whenever the lessons were finished by three o'clock, the last hour was a privileged time with Miss Agatha's scholars.

They were allowed then to ask any questions they pleased, and their teacher would kindly answer. Sometimes, too, Miss Agatha would talk to them about something which they had been learning; or she would tell them a story; or perhaps they would learn a new school-song, for they had a singing exercise two or three times every day.

When there had been any dulness, or naughtiness, about the lessons, of course this pleasant time was very much shortened; and sometimes — not often — Miss Agatha was obliged to deny the children their last hour privileges altogether.

When Norman Sands saw the scholars all looking at him, he began to cry, and said again, "My head aches!"

"My dear boy," said his teacher, "you have only to read that lesson over once, *carefully*, and I know you will be able to say it well.

"Come now, be a man, and stop crying; you are making your head ache worse."

When Norman found that he could not get rid of his lesson by crying, he stopped, and began to look at his book in good earnest.

It was a wee bit of a lesson; and, sure enough, in two or three minutes he looked up and said, "I know it now, Miss Agatha!"

"Oh, please, Miss Agatha, may I take Gerty out on the stairs, and hear her table? I'll hear it very carefully!"

It was Rosa Clay who asked this; and Miss Agatha knew she would not slur over the lesson. So she nodded "yes;" and by the time Norman's lesson was said, Gerty was ready too.

"Put away the books and slates, children."

This was quickly done, except at one desk. Annie More

was bending over her slate, ciphering away so busily that she did not notice what was said.

Sylvia pulled her sleeve. "Annie, have n't you done? We are all putting up our things!"

"Annie need not put up her slate unless she chooses," said Miss Agatha, smiling.

"Oh, it is only one of to-morrow's examples!" said Annie, smiling too, as she put her slate in the desk. "I saw I had a little time, and I thought I would work at it; but it would n't come right, and I did n't like to give it up."

"That's just like Annie, is n't it, Miss Agatha? She never likes to give up!" said Rosa.

"We say at home, 'Annie's hunting the calf!'" said Phil, roguishly.

"'Hunting the calf?' What does that mean, Annie, my dear? That is a proverb I never heard."

Annie blushed and laughed, and said, "Now, Phil, you're too bad!" but Phil went on:—

"You see, Miss Agatha, it was two or three years ago, so she need n't mind it now!

"Father missed a calf that he was raising, one day; it was Annie's pet; she always wanted to feed it, and the calf would follow her all about the lot.

"Well, we just hunted after that little thing until we were



tired,—that is, father and Jake did, and I suppose I thought I was helping.

“At last they had to give it up, and go to the field; but mother missed Annie pretty soon after, and she kept on missing her for three or four hours.

“When it came dinner time, mother said, ‘I can’t think what has become of Annie.’

“‘Oh,’ said father, ‘I saw her starting off into the woods after the calf; has n’t she come back?’

“‘No; and I don’t believe she will until she finds it!’ says mother.

“Sure enough, Annie came home along in the afternoon, leading the calf. A man told us afterwards that he was coming through the wood and saw her just when she found it,—away off, towards Ditson’s. He said the calf seemed as glad to see Annie as she was to see him.”

“Phil has told that story so many times that he has it by heart!” said Annie.

“Well, my dear, you need not be ashamed of it; ‘perseverance’ is a hard word, is n’t it, Jimmy? but it means a good thing.”

Jimmy smiled, for he had come near missing that word, in the spelling class, that day.

“What *does* it mean, Miss Agatha?” said Gerty.

"I know! please may I tell, Miss Agatha? It means 'Try, try again!'"

"That is right, Jimmy! And keep on trying. That is the meaning of perseverance, Gerty: not giving up easily, even

"'If you find your task is hard.'"

"Miss Agatha, does it mean, too, 'Endure hardness as a good soldier?'"

"Yes, Ralph, that is the best kind of perseverance," and the teacher looked pleased as she spoke.

"But, Miss Agatha, I did n't think persevering was a *good* thing!" said Ruth; "because I went to Mrs. Noyes's yesterday for milk, and her little boy kept creeping to the door as fast as he could go. She set him back two or three times, and then she said, 'You are a persevering little rascal!' and I thought she was vexed!"

"Very likely, my dear; you see we must be sure we are in the right way, first, and then persevere; that baby's perseverance would have cost him a sad fall if his mother had not looked after him.

"And now, if you are all ready, we will try our new song.

While the children were busy practising their song, a bright gleam of sunshine stole across the school-room floor, to let them know that the rain was over.

Yes, it was all clear and bright again out-doors, and a brisk stirring breeze was doing its very best to dry off the walks, so that the children might have a pleasant time going home.

They were all so glad to see the sun, and in such a hurry to be out, that they did not wait to tie on hats properly, and so when they all rushed out of the door the breeze made stirring work with their things.

"Oh, my cape!" cried one. "There goes your hat, Ruth!" and Sylvia exclaimed, "Oh, dear me! there goes a leaf out of my Arithmetic!"

Frisk saw that, and he sprang after it. The breeze had the leaf and seemed determined to keep it; but Frisk was as fully determined to bring it back.

Over the fence he went, and through the barn-yard, barking and jumping at the leaf; but just as he almost had it the saucy breeze would snatch it up and whirl it away again.

"There! Over the cow-shed! Now it's beyond the well! Over another fence, Frisk; good fellow!"

Thus the boys shouted, following after as fast as they could for the mud.

Miss Agatha came down from the school-room, wondering what amused her flock so much, and she also stood to watch Frisk and laugh at the chase.

"There, he has it!" she said; and home came the little

dog, holding the leaf which he had chased half way down to the river, and giving it a little shake as he fetched it along, as much as to say, "You'll not get away again!"

"Good dog, Frisk! Good fellow!" said Sylvia, as he gave the truant up to her.

"*Frisk* is persevering, is n't he, Miss Agatha?" asked Jimmy.

"He certainly is!" she answered, laughing; "he sets a good example to his flock in that respect."

CHAPTER VI.

ELSIE.



ONE day, when Miss Agatha's children were all busy in their pleasant school-room, they heard a loud barking from Frisk. A moment after the barking sounded nearer, and at the same time there was heard the *pat pat* of tiny feet toiling up the stairs, and a shrill little voice cried, "No, no! Naughty doggie! S'ant bite Elsie. Elsie going to school now!"

The children laughed, and Miss Agatha went to the door. In came a funny little object, a wee child, less than three years old, with a man's white beaver hat on her head.

"Why Elsie, little girl, did your mamma let you come here?"

"I guess s'e did n't know!" said small Elsie, folding her little hands and looking around at the scholars.

"Miss Agatha, please ask her where she got so much hat?" said Phil.

Elsie heard, and answered gravely, "Grandpa's hat. *Mamma* had Elsie's *sun-bun*."

Sun-bonnet she meant. It proved, as Miss Agatha suspected, that the mother had put her little sun-bonnet out of reach on purpose: so Miss Elsie had taken her grandpa's hat for her walk.

"Well," said Miss Agatha, "Elsie may sit here and be very still a little while. At recess," she added, turning to the children, "one of you may lead her home."

Elsie sat quite still for a few moments, only swinging her feet, which did not reach the floor. Frisk, who had followed in, stood this as long as he could, then he made a rush at them, and barked.

"Stop, naughty doggie! Let Elsie's foots alone!"

This was said in such a funny, grave way, that the scholars all laughed.

"Naughty chillen!" said Elsie, looking at them with a wise shake of her head.

Miss Agatha was thinking she must send some one home with the child at once. But her brother had been busy near the door and perceived the trouble.

He rapped at the door. "I will take this little visitor down into the house with me," said he. "Come Elsie; come and see 'Grandma Deane;' and we will see what this naughty doggie can do; come Frisk! Here sir!"

Miss Agatha's little ones had recess ten minutes before the others were ready. They scampered down stairs, and to the house door, to see what had become of Elsie.

When they ran up to the door they saw Elsie on Mr. Deane's knee, laughing merrily at Frisk, who was sitting up, patiently holding a cake upon his nose.

When Frisk heard the little boys and girls laugh too, he began to whine, and beg to be let down; he wanted to be off and see to the children, or have a frolic with them. So Mr. Deane said, "Eat your cake, Frisk; good fellow!" and Frisk obeyed in an instant, and was off.

"Come, little Elsie!" said Leonard, coaxingly; "come play with us!"

"Come see the chickies!" said Sammy.

But Elsie shook her head; she was beginning to feel a little strange and sober.

"I guess I wants to go home to mamma!" said she.



"You must wait a little while; your hat is up in the school-room!" said Mr. Deane. He knew his sister meant to send some one home with her.

Very soon Miss Agatha came down with the rest of her scholars.

"O Miss Agatha! Don't you remember, you said the first pleasant day you would go down to the river with us, at recess, and let us read down there; it's lovely to-day: *may* we?"

"Oh, yes, yes! Oh, *please* do!" all the children cried.

"But what shall we do with this little truant? I ought to send her home; her mother will be worried about her."

"Oh dear, what *did* she come for? it is too bad!" said one of the girls.

"I should think her mother would come and look for her, if she is anxious!" said another.

"Perhaps I can get the little one home," said Mr. Horace Deane; "it is a pity for the young folks to lose their treat."

"No, brother, you are too lame to walk so far to-day," said Miss Agatha; "I think my scholars must wait one day longer."

"Please, teacher, may n't I take little Elsie home, and let the others go to the river?"

It was Roxie who spoke.

"Oh, that would be too bad!" said Sylvia.

"Roxie, you'd miss reading and lose a mark, you know!" said Phil.

"No; for if her teacher will trust me, I will hear Roxie read when she comes back," said Mr. Horace, kindly.

"Please may I go?" asked Roxie again.

"Yes, my love, you may, for I am quite sure it will give you pleasure to do this;" and Miss Agatha gave the unselfish child a loving kiss, and then described the small house where Elsie lived.

"May I have a veil to tie over her head, and carry the hat?" asked Roxie.

The other children laughed, and thought that was a bright idea. But they could not stay to watch Roxie's proceedings; they were impatient to get their Readers, and be off to the river.

Miss Agatha tied a veil over the little girl's head. "Now will Elsie go with this kind little girl, and carry back her grandpa's hat, and see her mamma?"

The child looked up at Roxie, and nodded contentedly, taking hold of her hand.

Roxie led her carefully along the road, talking to her all the while.

"Don't you think your mamma wonders where her Elsie is?" said she.

"My mamma's sick; in 'e bed!"

"Oh dear, then she could not get up to look for you! Poor sick mamma! Is n't Elsie sorry she ran away?"

"Yes; Elsie solly; go home and kiss poor mamma!"

The "poor sick mamma" was very thankful to see her truant safe. She had had no one to send in search of the child, for her husband had gone off to his work, and Elsie's "grandpa" was quite feeble. Still he was preparing to go out after her, and was just looking for his hat when Roxie brought the little girl in and the hat, too.

When Roxie got back, she brought down her Reader, and Mr. Horace heard her lesson. He was very kind, and talked to her about what she read; and then he gave her some nice ripe cherries.

Presently the voices of the children were heard coming up through the meadow, from the river.

"O Roxie!" cried two or three at once; "we had such a nice time! It is so pleasant down by the river!"

"Yes, and it was so nice to read there!"

"But I've had a real nice time, too!" said Roxie; and so she had.

CHAPTER VII.

PLAYS AND PLANS.



HE next morning the children all came early to school, or rather to the school-yard. They all enjoyed a good play before school in such a pleasant place, with Frisk to help the fun. Besides, there were a few cherries yet left on the trees, and the boys had leave to glean all they could find; of course they shared with the girls.

Miss Agatha, busy around the house, heard their voices in the merry game of *honey-pots*. She smiled as she heard Georgie ask, in the tone of an anxious father:—

“Alack a day!

Oh, tell me, I pray,

Have you taken my dear little girl away?”

And the merchant answered:—

“That would be funny!

When I paid my money

For no little girl, but for pots of honey!”

But suddenly the voices were hushed, and looking out Miss Agatha saw the father, merchant, honey-pots and all, huddled together under a tree, while Frisk had planted himself in front of them and was barking with all his might.

What was the matter? Ah, Tippling Tony was coming into the yard. Poor Tony was a half-witted fellow who lived in the neighborhood. The boys had given him the name of Tippling Tony, because he would drink whenever he could get any money to spend. The children thought he had been drinking that morning, and they were afraid of him, for he was apt to be very cross at such times. Frisk did not like his looks at all, so he had mounted guard over his flock, and was barking at the intruder.

Mr. Horace came out and spoke to Tony. He saw that the poor fellow was not drunk; he had come to ask for something to eat. So Mrs. Deane gave him a good plate of breakfast and let him sit on the door-step in the shade to eat it.

Then the children gathered around. "Hallo, Tippling Tony!" began Phil. But Mr. Horace shook his head. "You must not call him names or tease him here," said he; "it is not right."

Tony was too busy with his breakfast to hear what Phil said, and Phil was glad of it, for he felt ashamed when Mr. Horace spoke to him.

To make up for his rudeness he offered to bring Tony a cup of water from the well; at which Tony bowed and waved his hand, saying, "A very good lad! A very kind lad indeed!"

Miss Agatha came out now to ring the bell, and the children clustered around her.

"Well, have my scholars recovered from their alarm?" said she. "You and Frisk reminded me, just now, of a picture in that book Ralph brought to school to select a piece from."

"What is it, teacher?" asked Roxie.

"Oh, I know! Miss Agatha means the dog and the ducks. I'll show you!" said Ralph, running ahead for the book.

The children all laughed at the picture.

"But Frisk is n't big enough to mount guard over us in that way," said Phil.

"And we're not ducks!" added Gerty.

"Perhaps Miss Agatha thinks we are *geese*, to be afraid!" said Georgie, laughing.

Miss Agatha laughed too. "Not exactly," said she; "but I really do not think you need be afraid of poor Tony; he is very harmless and very good-tempered, generally, unless he is teased by thoughtless children."

Phil blushed a little. "He gets drunk sometimes," said he.

"Not often, for people do not trust him with money, and those who know him will not sell him drink; they would be cruel if they did, and much more to blame than he."

"Never tease or provoke a poor helpless creature like Tony, my dear boys. I would rather see you, like our good little Frisk, always ready to defend the weak."



J. GREENAWAY SC

This made the children laugh again. "Isn't it funny, Miss Agatha, how he always thinks he can take care of us! Roxie, you ought to have seen him when we were down at the river the other day; he wouldn't let any of us go near the edge without barking and rushing around, as if he thought we were sure to fall in!"

"O Miss Agatha! we boys have all got leave to go down to the river for a bath after school, if you say we may; so please do!"

"Well, Georgie, it bids fair now to be warm enough, and I hope I shall not be obliged to refuse on account of any wrong doing in school. I *think* not, from the looks of these bright faces. Now we must go up to the school-room."

In the afternoon, when the scholars gathered again, there was a great deal of animated talk among them. When Miss Agatha appeared, Sammy Thorpe ran up to her crying:—

"O Miss Agatha! Only think! I'm going to *Sea-side* next week!"

"To the sea-side, Sammy? Are you, indeed!"

"Yes ma'am, and Mattie, too. Cousin Mattie is going with us."

Mattie Lawrence was Sammy's cousin, but not Leonard's. Poor Lenny stood by, looking very grave and sad.

"What is the matter, Lenny?" asked Miss Agatha, kindly.

"I sha'n't know what to do without Sam! I wish *I* was a-going with my aunty, instead of Mattie!"

"I think Aunt Ella would have her hands full with *two* such children!" said Mattie, rather scornfully. "*I* can help her take care of Sammy, you see, Miss Agatha; and besides, I have not felt very well this spring, and uncle and aunt say it will do me good to go."

"Well, dear, I am glad you have such a pleasant opportunity. But you must not be unkind to poor Lenny," Miss Agatha added in a low tone. "He and his little cousin are so constantly together that he will be very lonely without Sammy."

"And I shall be lonely without you, Mattie," cried Rosa.

"Yes, and it will spoil our class, almost. I think it's too bad for you to go before vacation, Mattie Lawrence!" said Phœbe.

"So it is. I'm real sorry about leaving school; but then, girls," and Mattie's eyes sparkled at the thought, "would n't either of *you* go if you had the same chance?"

"I suppose we would," laughed Rosa; "but, all the same, we shall miss you!"

"Lenny," said Miss Agatha, "suppose we engage Mattie and Sammy to write us a letter every week while they are at the sea-side?"

"Oh, but I can't write!" said Sammy.

"No, but your cousin will write for you, I am sure. You tell her just what to say and she will put it down.

"Your letter can be written to Leonard; and Mattie can write hers to me and to her classmates. We shall all be pleased to hear from our absent scholars. And the letter-writing will be a good exercise, as you are leaving off your studies, Mattie."

"Oh, do promise to write Mattie; that will be real nice!"

"Well, I'll try, if Miss Agatha will make one of you answer my letter every week."

"Yes, we'll take turns — our class. Won't we?"

"I don't know about that. Do you, Phil?" said Georgie, — for they belonged to the class. "I say the girls speak for themselves!"

"Then we will not let you hear Mattie's letters, if you will not help answer them!" said Rosa. "Shall we, Miss Agatha?"

Miss Agatha seemed to think it would be easier for Mattie's girl friends to carry on the correspondence; but it was time for school to begin, so the question was not settled.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRISK IN DANGER.



LEONARD and Sammy did not go to the river with the other boys; their mothers thought they were too young to be trusted, for there were some deep places in the river, although in some places the boys could easily wade across. Jimmy Brooks was allowed to go; but Jimmy was nearly seven; and besides, Ralph always took care of him when they went bathing, and Ralph could swim pretty well.

Leonard and Sammy generally lingered, when the boys were going to the river, to watch them start off down through the meadow, and to wish they might go too. But this afternoon they did not seem to care for the fun so much; Sammy's thoughts were all on the expected delights of the sea-side; and Lenny's too, in a different way.

"I'll have a bath in the big sea, every day; mamma says I shall! That will be ever so much better than the river. Won't it, Lenny?"

"Yes; it'll be splendid fun!" said Lenny.

"I wish you could go too, Lenny, so we could play in the sand together. And there'll be shells, mamma says, real pretty



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Leonard and Sammy generally lingered, when the Frisk was going to the river, to watch them start off down the meadow, and to wish they might go too. But this they did not seem to care for the fun so much; the boys' thoughts were all on the expected delights of the seawalk: little Lenny's too, in a different way.

"I'll have a bath in the big sea, every day; and I shall! That will be ever so much better than the river. again after it, Lenny?"

"Yes; it'll be splendid fun!" said Lenny.

"I wish you could go too, Lenny, so we could play in the sand together. And there'll be shells, mamma says, real pretty



He was not a good boy, and Micky knew he ought not to ask him to come about the place; but Micky liked to talk with Pat.

"Hi! Whose dog have they got there?" said Micky, as he saw the children with Frisk.

"It's the Deane dog,—little wretch!" muttered Pat. He had a spite against poor Frisk, because he had hindered him several times from helping himself to fruit and vegetables from Mr. Deane's place.

"Look here, Micky!" said he suddenly; "I'll make it worth your while if you will manage to catch that dog and give him to me here. Try now, quick! Get those youngsters at something else, can't you?"

Thus urged, Micky stepped forward toward the children.

"O Micky, see Frisk! He's our *school* dog, you know; is n't he nice?"

"And Micky," added Leonard, "would n't it be nice if Sammy could take him to the sea-side? Maybe Miss Agatha would like to have him go!"

"Splendid!" cried Micky. "Why don't you shut him into the barn till you can ask her? Then he'll be gettin' used to it here, you know!"

"Would you, Lenny?" asked Sammy doubtfully.

"I don't know;—we might just a little while, to see how he likes it."

"Here, I'll hold him, and you two just run round to the front, and find that nice soft string you had for reins yesterday, to tie him with."

"He don't need to be tied!" said Sammy.

"He's got a ribbon on; see! The girls tied it on to make him look pretty," said Lenny.

"Ah, sure that's no good! Don't I know how to fix a dog? Go find the string if you want me to help you!"

The little boys were not quite sure that they did; they did not exactly like Micky's plan; but when he spoke in that sharp *big boy* tone, they were very apt to do as he said.

Away they ran to hunt for the reins, and Micky caught up Frisk, and brought him to Pat.

They were standing close by the side gate which opened on a lane. Pat had pulled off his old jacket, intending to wrap it over Frisk's head and run with him down the lane.

Poor Frisk! He struggled and whined as if he knew he had fallen into the hands of an enemy.

But just at that moment Miss Agatha recrossed the street, in plain sight of the gate. She was coming in to call on Mrs. Thorpe, and seeing the little boys in the yard, she spoke to them.

Pat and Micky drew back suddenly, close to the shed. But at the same instant Frisk heard his mistress's voice, and struggling with all his might, he got away from Pat, and bounded

over the gate; so the naughty boys were disappointed in their cruel plan.

"Oh, here comes Frisk!" cried Sammy and Lenny at once. They were glad he had got away from Micky, for when they saw Miss Agatha they both felt that she would think it was rather naughty to shut her little dog up in their barn.

And when they saw Frisk jumping around his mistress so joyfully they did not want to say anything about taking him to the sea-side.

CHAPTER IX.

AMONG THORNS.



SAMMY led his teacher into the parlor, and Lenny came in too, and sat down very quietly near her. Miss Agatha's little scholars were always glad to be with her.

Mrs. Thorpe was very busy up-stairs, and she sent word that she would come down very soon.

So Miss Agatha talked with the little boys while she sat waiting.

"Is this your book, Sammy?" she asked, laying her hand upon a pretty volume on the table.

"Yes, ma'am; and it is full of pictures. Shall I show them to you?"

Sammy turned over the leaves, telling Miss Agatha about the pictures, and Lenny came and stood by, for he wanted to see, too.

"I don't know what that picture means, Miss Agatha. Mamma did n't tell me that."

"It's a sheep, is n't it, teacher? and it has got into the prickly things, I guess," said Lenny.

"Yes; poor sheep! I think it must have gone away from the shepherd, and out of the right path, to get among thorns as it has!"

Lenny and Sammy bent their heads over the picture, looking earnestly at the poor stray sheep.

"Please tell more about it, will you, teacher?" said Lenny, raising his head.

"Are little boys and girls ever like this poor stray sheep?" asked Miss Agatha.

"Are they?" said Sammy.

"Sometimes, I think. When they go out of the right way and do naughty things, then they are apt to get into trouble, just as the poor sheep got among the thorns."

The little boys looked at each other. They were thinking of the same thing.



THE STRAY SHEEP. — Page 56.

"We '*most* did a naughty thing just now, teacher," said Lenny. He put his little hand in Miss Agatha's as he spoke, and looked up in her face.

"Yes," said Sammy, "we '*most* let Micky shut Frisk up in the barn, so I could ask you if I might take him to sea-side!"

Here Frisk began to wag his tail and whine, as if he wanted to help tell the story. Just then Mrs. Thorpe came in.

Mrs. Thorpe greeted Miss Agatha, and then she said: "Why Frisk, how do you do? Was it you that I heard crying out in the yard just now?"

"Did he cry, mamma? I guess he did not want to be shut up in the barn!"

"I should suppose not. What do you mean, my dear?"

Miss Agatha kindly explained the matter; then she said:—

"I think perhaps your friend Micky handled Frisk a little roughly, without meaning to hurt him I dare say; but Frisk looks as if he had been through quite a struggle."

"Micky did very wrong to propose such a thing, and I am sorry our little boys listened to him," said Mrs. Thorpe, when she had asked the children one or two questions. "But I am afraid there is something about this that we do not understand. I saw from my window just now, a large boy slinking out of the yard."

"Did he wear an old cap, mamma? I guess it was Pat."

"If you mean Pat Connor, Sammy, I do not think he loves Frisk very much," said Miss Agatha, smiling.

"Oh dear, dear!" cried Lenny; "if that big boy had hurt poor Frisk, then we *should* have been in troubles like the sheep, should n't we, Sammy?"

Mrs. Thorpe said she should question Micky about the matter. She did so, after Miss Agatha had gone home, and made him promise not to bring Pat Connor about the place again.

Micky had felt frightened and sorry when he found that Pat really meant to carry Frisk off and perhaps kill him. As Mrs. Thorpe talked to him about it, he began to feel how dangerous it was for him to go with such a bad boy, and he made up his mind to keep out of his way from that time.

"May Lenny and I walk just a little way down with Miss Agatha, mamma?" asked Sammy, when his teacher was going.

Mrs. Thorpe laughed, and said "yes." "I think," said she, "Miss Agatha will have to open a boarding-school and take all her scholars in, to satisfy them."

The little boys skipped along, one on each side of their teacher, but Frisk trotted behind very soberly.

"What's the matter, Frisk? Why don't you run and jump?" said Leonard.

"I guess Frisk is sorry he came after my cooky!" said

Sammy. "Why, Miss Agatha, Frisk got into the thorns too, did n't he?"

"He means to keep close to his mistress now," said Miss Agatha. "I don't believe he will go out of the way again to-day."

"He came just a *little bit* away from you," said Sammy.

"That is true, darling; and you and Lenny only meant to shut him up a *little* while. Perhaps the sheep in the picture only went a *little* out of the narrow path."

The children seemed to understand, but they did not say anything.

"We must all try to keep in the right way, and not go aside to do even a little wrong, must n't we?" said Miss Agatha. "And you know what our hymn says,—

"O Lord, our Shepherd, deign to keep
Thy little lambs, Thy feeble sheep;
And when our feet would go astray
Uphold and guide us in Thy way!"

CHAPTER X.

GOING AND COMING.



THE day before Mattie was to start for the sea-side, she came to school in the morning to say good-by. She would be busy packing in the afternoon, she said.

The girls gathered under the old apple tree for a last good talk.

"How pleasant it is here!" exclaimed Sylvia, looking around.

"Yes. I don't believe Mattie will find any pleasanter place, after all! Just hear those birds singing, 'Don't go! Don't go!'"

"And there are six weeks more of school before vacation. I don't mind coming to school, though, only we shall miss you, Mattie!"

"Well, we shall all be together again after vacation, I hope," said Mattie; "but there's the bell. Come girls!"

"Shall I leave my books and things in my desk, or take them home, Miss Agatha?" asked Mattie at recess.

"Perhaps you may as well take them home, my dear. I shall, most likely, want your desk for some one else while you are gone."





"For some one else? Who is coming, Miss Agatha?" two or three children asked at once.

Their teacher told them that she had received a letter from a lady, a cousin of hers, asking her to take charge of her two little girls, and let them attend her school. The children's parents were going to Europe as soon as they could feel that their little ones were safely provided for, and would be gone some months.

"And they will live with you all the time, won't they, Miss Agatha? I know they will like that!" said Gerty.

All the children had some question to ask about the expected strangers. How old were they? What were their names? And so on.

Their names were Kate and Eva Maxwell. Miss Agatha said she thought Eva was just about Ruth's age; Kate a little older.

"Yes, Annie; they have always lived in the city. I presume they will not know much about country ways. You will have to show them the wonders of the fields and garden."

"I wish they were not both girls. I mean, I wish some of the new scholars might be boys," said Ralph.

"There's a boy coming too," said Norman Sands. Miss Agatha looked at Norman, surprised at this assertion.

"I mean there's a boy coming up here to board at the

hotel this summer, and I heard some one say his father wanted him to come to your school. Can he, if he wants to?"

"Why yes, Norman; I dare say we can find room for him, if he is a good boy, and his friends want him to come."

Altogether this was quite an exciting day in Miss Agatha's school; parting with Mattie and Sammy, and hearing about the new scholars from the city.

The boy of whom Norman had spoken came to school the next Monday morning. His name was Donald Sterling, and he was about nine years old.

He was small of his age, but quite forward in his studies, so that he was placed with Phil and Georgie. He was very glad to get acquainted with the children, and very eager to learn all the nice plays they knew at recess.

"Oh, what a splendid place for a school!" he cried, as they all stopped to rest after a game of "I spy." "I wish there was n't to be any vacation. I'd like to come to this school all the time we are here!"

At noon, Ralph and Jimmy stopped to ask leave for Donald to go to the river with the boys after school. His mother said he might, and Donald was perfectly delighted with the permission.

The boys were all very careful to get their lessons well, so that they might be sure to be allowed to go.

When school was dismissed, away they went in high glee, running a race through the meadows which sloped down to the river. Frisk was with them, and made Donald laugh merrily with his antics.

Then the bath in the river; five or six little boys splashing around like ducks,—for this part of the river was quite out of sight of any house, and they could frolic in the water as much as they pleased.

No wonder the little city boy thought this was glorious fun.

"We don't have any such good times in the city," said he; "if we *had* such a nice little river we couldn't bathe in it, because there would be so many people around. Isn't this the best fun of anything you do?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Ralph. "I like fishing best,—or haying."

"And I like black-berrying; or nutting, when it is time for nuts," said Norman.

"I like best of all going out with my father," said Jimmy, "and the Lake road is the *nicest*;—we have such fun when he goes into the houses to see the sick people."

"Well," said Donald, with a sigh, "I wish we lived in the country!"

Some of the boys looked at him wonderingly; they had always thought it must be very grand to live in a great city; and here was a city boy envying *them*.

CHAPTER XI.

RUTH AND LENNY.



NE little boy stood gazing after the merry troop, as they started off for the river; and then, with a very disconsolate air, he slowly walked away, toward home. It was poor lonely Leonard.

Two or three of the little girls were just ahead of him, — Ruth, and Gerty, and Susy More. Susy was going up the street with the rest, for her father was in town with his team, and he had told the children that he would carry them home soon after school.

Lenny quickened his pace to a run when he saw them; he wanted to walk with them.

Gerty turned her head to see who was coming. As Lenny came up, she said in a rather cross tone, "Now, Lenny Dickson, just run along; we don't want you with us. Susy is going to stop at my house until her papa comes along."

Leonard drew back, and walked along by himself on the edge of the road. Ruth Brooks looked over at him once or twice; then she drew away her arm from Susy's neck.

"I'll walk with Lenny; he's all by himself."

"But, Ruth, you said you'd stop at my house with Susy!"

"Yes, but you know I ought to be kind to poor Lenny."

Ruth said this with an important air, as if she felt that she was a very kind, good girl, to leave Susy and Gerty, so that she might comfort a little boy; and she looked at Gerty as much as to say, "See how much better I am than you!"

She took Leonard's hand, saying, "Come, Lenny, let's cross over, and then we can see Mrs. Brown's banties, if they are out in the yard."

This pleased Leonard, and he watched eagerly for the banties. Yes; there they were,—such a funny little rooster, and two bantam hens. Lenny thought he had never seen such cunning little things before.

"I wish Sammy could see them!" said he, as they went on.

"You love Sammy, don't you?" said Ruth. "Won't you be glad when you get a letter from him?"

"Yes, but I don't b'lieve it ever will come!" said Lenny.

"Oh, but it is only three days since he went away, and one of those days was Sunday; you must wait patiently, child!" said Ruth.

Lenny looked up at her with a half smile; he knew that Ruth was not so very much older than he; but he did not say anything, because he thought Ruth was very kind to him that afternoon.

Presently they came up to Ruth's own home; and there was the Doctor, Ruth's father, at the gate, getting ready to start off in his chaise.

"Well, little daughter," said he, "I was thinking perhaps some little folks would like to ride with me. Where is Jimmy?"

"Oh, he's gone down to the river with the boys," said Ruth; "but, papa, let me whisper in your ear!"

Ruth's whisper was to ask her father to take Lenny to ride, as Jimmy was not there. "He don't have so many rides as we do!" said she.

"But what will Jimmy say?" asked the Doctor. "He likes to go with me on the Lake road, especially; and I am going that way now."

"Oh, I'm pretty sure Jimmy won't care to go to-day!" said Ruth.

"Well, perhaps not. Lenny can run home and ask his mother if he may go. And get your coat, little boy, for it is cool driving."

Lenny ran off, perfectly delighted. The Doctor found he had to go back into the house to see a man who had just come

to the door; so there was time enough for Lenny to run home and ask leave.

Ruth, too, went in to put on her cloak; then she came out and stood by the gate waiting.

The Doctor was kept in the house some time. Lenny came back with his coat, all ready to go, and stood watching the Doctor's white horse, as if afraid he might start off without him.

Presently up came Jimmy. "O Ruth, is papa going to take us to ride? Which way is he going? I'll run and get ready!"

"But, Jimmy," said Ruth, pulling him aside, "you can't go this time, 'cause Lenny Dickson is going with us; we are going on the Lake road."

"But, but," stuttered Jimmy, "who *said* he could go instead of me? You'd oughter have waited to ask me! I like the Lake road, the very best!"

Jimmy looked ready to cry. Little Leonard could not hear what they said, but he saw there was something wrong, and he looked very much troubled, for fear he should lose his drive after all.

"But, Jimmy, I should *think* you would let poor Lenny go in your place," said Ruth; "he is so lonely now, and he don't often have a ride!"

"But you did n't ask me," persisted Jimmy, "and I think it is mean. Why did n't you let him go instead of *you*?"

This was a new idea, to be sure. Ruth had nothing to say; she had not thought of that.

What would Gerty and Susy think of her kindness now, she wondered, if they could know that she had contrived to have Lenny taken in Jimmy's place?

Little Ruthie Brooks had been feeling quite well satisfied with herself, as a very generous girl; but was she so very generous, after all?

Poor Ruth; it was a hard moment for her. She stood between the two little boys; Lenny looking timidly at her with a very anxious face, and Jimmy pouting and vexed.

Just then the Doctor came out. "Well, little folks, I've kept you waiting a long time, but jump in now! Ha! Jimmy, my boy, have you come home? What will you do with yourself this afternoon?"

"I don't know!" said Jimmy, kicking his toe against a stone.

"Papa, Jimmy *does* want to go; and will you take him with Lenny? I'll get his sack in a minute."

"And leave my girlie at home?"

"Yes, papa, please; I guess Jimmy wants to go the most!"

The Doctor looked at Ruth a moment, and he saw that it had been very hard for her to do this, but she was quite in earnest now.

So he only said, "Very well, darling; Jimmy may go," — but



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he gave the little girl a kiss and a loving smile. Ruth was really generous now.

"Keep Rover at home, if you can, daughter," said the Doctor, as he took the reins; "I meant to have shut him up."

Ruth threw herself down on the door-step, and put her hand on Rover.

The Doctor looked back as he drove off. The little girl's loose water-proof cloak had fallen about her, making her look older than she was; and there was a thoughtful look upon her face as she watched Rover.

"Dear child!" said the Doctor to himself; "she grows like her mother. I hope she *may* be as unselfish as she was!"

"Poor Rover! Good fellow! Did you want to go too? So did I," said Ruthie; "but — I guess I'm glad that Jimmy came after all!"

"Why!" she exclaimed, releasing Rover, for his master was out of sight now, — "did I break off those roses, when I was thinking?"

It was a late and choice rose-bush. Ruthie felt sorry for the mischief she had done. She picked up the roses and carried them in.

"Cousin Maria, I did n't mean to break these off, but I believe I did," said she.

Cousin Maria kept house for the Doctor. She was usually

very grave and a little stern with the children, — “cross,” they said; but she did not mean to be cross.

She had been sitting by the front window, with her work, and had heard all about the drive.

“Yes,” said she, “you broke them; but never mind; we will put them in water.”

Ruth wondered that Cousin Maria did not seem to mind. The fact was, she thought the little girl's victory over her selfishness was worth more than the roses.

CHAPTER XII

LETTERS.



LEONARD did not have much longer to wait for his letter. It came the next day, inclosed in one from Mattie to her teacher and schoolmates.

Lenny wanted his letter read aloud; and then he laid it on the desk before him, where he could look at it all the time until school was out, when he ran home as fast as he could go to show it to his mother.

This was Sammy's letter. Mattie said she wrote just what he told her to say: —

"DEAR LENNY, — I wish you could be here. It's fun. We came in the cars. They went — oh, so fast! A boy came through the cars to sell candy and things. Mamma bought some. I did n't see how he could walk, for I could n't, we were going so fast.

"I've been in the big water, two times. Mattie took me; lots of boys and girls went in. I was 'fraid the first time, but I'm not 'fraid now.

"There's a girl here named Grace, and a boy named Willie. We play in the sand. I must go now. Good-by. SAMMY"

This was Mattie's letter: —

"DEAR MISS AGATHA, AND ALL MY SCHOOLMATES, — I wrote to my mother as soon as we got here, and now I will write to you, as I promised.

"It is beautiful here. The house where we are is near the water; we can see it from the windows. I never saw the sea before, and I want to look at it all the time.

'There are a good many people here, and some girls that I like. The best fun is the bathing; we go in every day.

"You should have seen Sammy the first time we tried to coax him in. He was so afraid! Aunt Ella could not get him to go in, so she left him standing by the bathing-house and went out with the rest. Pretty soon we saw him laughing to see us in

the water, and then I went back and coaxed him, and at last he let me lead him out. Now he likes it.

"I cannot write a long letter this time, for I cannot think of anything but the sea. I hope some of the girls will write to me soon. And please do not forget your loving

"MATTIE."

Annie More was to answer Mattie's first letter; the girls thought Annie wrote better than any of the rest, so they persuaded her to write first. The letter read thus:—

"DEAR MATTIE,—We were very glad to hear from you; we think you must be having a splendid time. Miss Agatha wants to know if you cannot bottle up a sea-breeze and send it to us. It would feel nice in the school-room to-day, for this is a very warm day.

"They have begun haying all around. Phil cannot come to school this week, for father wants him to help turn hay, and to wait on the men.

"They are haying in Mr. Deane's meadows too. Miss Agatha let us run out to the field at recess. Donald Sterling—that's the boy from the city—is *so* delighted with the haying, and with everything else. We did not know how many pleasant things we had about us, until we saw how pleased he was.





"And Kate and Eva are just so. They came Wednesday. They felt badly at first, because their papa and mamma are going so far away; but they like it at Mr. Deane's. Of course they could n't help it!

"We have two more new scholars: one is little Fan Mott; you know she is deaf, but her mother thought it would do her good to come to school. The other is a girl who boards at the hotel, like Donald; she wanted to come to school because Donald liked it so much, and told her about it. Her name is Olive; she is about as large as Roxie and Ruth.

"My hand is tired writing such a long letter. The scholars all send love to you, and so does Miss Agatha, and so does Frisk.

Your friend,
ANNIE."

Miss Agatha helped Leonard, at recess, to write to Sammy; she let him say what he wanted to write, and she wrote it down for him.

"DEAR SAMMY, — I felt bad when you were gone. I cried and I kicked Pussy; mamma said I was naughty; I guess I was.

"Ruth Brooks was kind; her father took me to ride. We saw lots of things, Jimmy and I. There was a boat on the Lake. A boy rowed us out a little way, while Jimmy's Pa

went in to see a sick man. The Lake is most as nice as the sea, I guess.

"I don't cry now, but I want to see you.

LENNY."

Olive Waters, the little girl at the hotel, "did not live anywhere," she said. Her father and mother were dead. Olive did not remember them at all. She had been in the care of two uncles and an aunt, living now with one and now with another. She had come to Carfield with her aunt for the summer.

The children hardly knew whether they liked Olive or not. They liked to hear her talk, for she had seen so many different places and had so much to tell. She talked a good deal, too. She was quite good-natured; but sometimes she spoke and acted as if she knew a good deal more than the rest of them, and boys and girls don't like that.

"Which do you like best?" she said one day, when several of the children were sitting under the trees on the grass waiting for the bell to ring. "Which do you like best,—Boston, or New York, or Philadelphia?"

Olive looked at Phœbe, and Phœbe laughed and said, "I don't know, for I've never been to either place!"

"Nor I," said Annie and Rosa; and Sylvia said, "I went to New York a good while ago, but I don't remember much about it."

"Oh!" said Olive. Then she went on, "Do you always live in this one place? Don't you ever go away?"

Two or three of the children began to tell of places to which they had been; but most of them had always lived in Carfield, and had not travelled about very much.

Olive said "Oh!" again, and then began to tell about the places where she had lived, in a way that made the others feel uncomfortable.

"I don't see how you can bear to stay in one place all the time!" said she. "Would n't you like to go to New York, now, and go to Central Park and see the animals? I don't suppose you ever saw them, any of you!"

"Who wants to?" said Georgie, a little vexed; "there's animals enough about here, I'm sure!"

"Oh, but you don't know what I mean—does he, Donald? You've seen them, have n't you?"

Donald laughed. "Yes," said he, "lots of times; but I think it is better fun to see the cows milked, and help drive them to pasture."

"Oh, what a boy!" cried Olive. "Did n't you like to see the monkeys? and the parrots? and the lions and things?"

"Oh, did you see all those? Tell about 'em, please!" said Jimmy.

So Olive began to tell about the last time she went there

with her uncle and aunt and cousins. "We took baby, too, and his nurse, and he liked it so much!" said she.

As Olive told some of the monkeys' funny tricks, Donald joined in and told about them too; and then the children, boys and all, were so interested, listening and asking questions, that they did not notice the school-bell, and Miss Agatha had to ring again.

Where was Frisk? He was after them by that time. He had been with little Kate and Eva, and they had permission to walk down a little way to meet Roxie Barton; for they did not have a walk to school as the rest did.

"Bow wow!" barked Frisk, in the most excited way. "Bow wow! How these children do need looking after, to be sure! Be off, all of you; Bow wow!"

Did Frisk really say that? Oh no; he only *said* "Bow wow!" but he *looked* the rest!



CHAPTER XIII.

LITTLE FAN.



MUST tell you something more of little Fan Mott, of whom Annie spoke in her letter to Mattie Lawrence.

The children were all delighted to hear that she was coming to school, for those who knew her loved her dearly, and the others all wanted to see her.

Little Fanny had lost her hearing from the effects of scarlet fever, when she was about two years old. So now she was a deaf-mute. For although she had begun to talk before she was so dreadfully ill with the fever, yet when she became deaf she soon forgot all the words she had learned, and only made a few sounds which no one could understand.

But it was quite easy to understand what little Fan wanted, without any words, for she made motions with her hands, and had some sign for everything. It amused all the children very much to talk with her by signs.

Thus, when she wanted to tell anything about her father, she would stroke her face on each side, because he wore whiskers; for her mother, she would fold her arms across her breast, because her mother held her in that loving way. To describe

a horse, she would move her hands quickly one before the other like the motions of a horse's feet.

She very soon had some sign to distinguish several of the children whom she liked best. For Phil More, she would pull a lock of her hair, because Phil had one stubborn little lock which was generally standing up. For Olive, she would stroke the neck of her dress; this made the girls laugh a good deal when they understood it, because Olive always wore collars or ruffles to school, and the other little girls were generally content with a clean white apron. Olive laughed too, for she was very good tempered.

For Miss Agatha, Fan would make a motion as if shaking a bell; and she had a motion of her little hand to represent Frisk as jumping from the ground.

Of course little Fan could not learn from books in the same way that other children do. Her father and mother meant to send her to an asylum for deaf-mutes, as soon as she was old enough; there she would be taught the sign language, and could learn to read and write.

They thought it would interest and amuse her to go to Miss Agatha's school, where she could watch the other children, and play with them at recess. They did not suppose she could learn anything.

But little Fan did learn a good deal. She learned some

things by watching the scholars, for she was very quick to observe and to understand.

Then Miss Agatha contrived some nice little lessons for her. She very soon learned to copy all the letters of the alphabet, printing them on her slate.

Little Fan had no idea of the sounds of the letters, but Miss Agatha used them in this way: she pointed to some object, and then printed the name of it upon the blackboard, and Fan copied it on her slate. The first word which she printed was Book. Miss Agatha made signs to her to show her slate to Sylvia, and Sylvia nodded, and took up a book; then she printed the same word on her own slate.

As soon as Fan understood that the word belonged to the object, she was perfectly delighted; then Miss Agatha showed her the same word, in two or three places, in a primer, and made signs that it always stood for the same thing.

Fan now covered her slate with Book, Book, Book; and took it home to show to her mother. You may think how surprised and pleased Mrs. Mott was when Fan showed her the word, and picked up a book at the same time.

The next word Miss Agatha taught her was Dog, making signs that it belonged to Frisk.

By this time little Fan understood that the names of all objects could be spelled with the letters she had learned to make,

and now she was very eager to learn more words. She would point to a thing, and make signs to Miss Agatha, or one of the scholars, to print the name of it.

The children were all very much interested in watching little Fan's progress; they thought it was wonderful; and indeed she did learn very fast.

Rather too fast, Miss Agatha thought; for little Fan was not five years old; it is not good for *little* children to study much.

So the kind teacher tried to think of other things to amuse Fan, and keep her from asking for so many words.

Fan always brought her doll to school; for she took it everywhere, and she could not be made to understand why dolly should not go as well as herself. So Miss Agatha gave her a little thimble, and cut out an apron for dolly, and showed Fan how to hem it.

But what amused her most was drawing on the slate, or with a pencil and paper. Miss Agatha always allowed the little ones, Gerty and Susy and Lenny, to make pictures when they had done their lessons. Sometimes they had simple copies to draw from, but they were rather young for these; they liked best to make wonderful pictures after their own fancy, and Fan liked to do this too.

Sometimes, when the little girl seemed tired of sitting in the



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school-room, Miss Agatha would let her take her dolly and her pencil and paper, and sit outside awhile. There was a low bench by the side of the barn, just under the school-room window, so that Miss Agatha could watch her. Fan would sit there, making a picture of something, and then they would hear her coming up the stairs one step at a time to show her picture, and explain what it was. Once she drew a portrait of Mr. Horace Deane, who was working about the yard. Sometimes she would draw Frisk, or some flower, or her dolly.

Do you wonder that the children all loved little Fan, and thought it was very nice to have her for their little schoolmate?

Little Fan enjoyed going to school very much until vacation, and then she was very anxious that it should commence again; she would ask her mother by signs, every day, how many days there would be before she could go to school.

But before the vacation was over the poor little one met with a sad accident.

She had some pennies given her to spend, one day, and her mother gave her leave to go to the store and buy some candy. She had often done this; she would lay her pennies on the counter, and point to the kind of candy she wanted.

Mrs. Mott did not feel afraid to trust her, for she had often watched her, and knew that she was very careful about crossing the street. The little thing seemed to know that she must be

more careful than others, and she would stand and look up and down the street before starting to cross.

Fan did so at this time; and there was no horse in sight but one which was standing in front of a gate. A man sat in the wagon, holding the reins and talking to another man; he was just about to start, but Fan did not know that.

Her head was turned the other way as she crossed the street so she did not see the horse coming, and of course she could not hear him.

"Hi there!" shouted the man; "take care, little girl!" and he tried to check his horse.

Poor little Fan did not hear his cry, and if she had it would have been too late. She was knocked down and the wagon wheel passed over her, breaking both the poor little legs.

Some men gathered quickly, and tenderly lifted the little sufferer upon a small mattress to carry her home. The man who ran over her was greatly distressed: "Why," said he, "when I saw the little thing she was coming right along almost in front of my horse; she did not seem to hear anything."

"Good reason!" said another. "The poor baby is deaf."

People blamed the man a good deal, and thought he must have been driving very carelessly; but perhaps it was not his fault.

Little Fan lay on her bed many weeks, with a sort of

frame placed over the poor little limbs to keep the bedclothes or anything from touching them.

The children used to go and see her as soon as she was a little better, so that it would do her no harm.

Fan was always delighted to see them, and she would describe the accident to each one, in her lively way, making motions to show the horse coming along, knocking her down, and breaking her legs. Then she would tell them by signs that her father would take the naughty man and lock him up in jail.

Mr. Mott did not think of doing this, although he was sadly grieved to see his darling little girl suffering so much.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOST.



NE day, as the children were gathering for afternoon school, Georgie Ray rushed in, exclaiming, "O Miss Agatha, little Elsie is lost, and they are just starting out to hunt after her! will you please excuse me and let me go too?"

"Which way are they going?" asked Miss Agatha.

"Towards the woods, ma'am, for they've sent to every house

they can think of. And I've been in those woods so much they say I can help."

"Oh, so can I, then!" cried Phil; "for I know those woods by heart. Please let me go too, Miss Agatha!"

Miss Agatha had no doubt that the parents of these boys would wish them to go, if they could really help in the search; and as there were only two or three men going, she thought very likely they might be of much use. So she gave them leave and away they went.

The boys did not come back, and after school was out, Rosa Clay walked down the road with Annie and Susy More, as far as Elsie's home, to ask if she had been found.

Elsie's grandpa was sitting in the door-way leaning on his stick, and gazing anxiously off on the road. He shook his head sorrowfully when the children asked him the question, and from within they heard the sobs of the poor mother, who was still sick and could not go out to search herself for the little runaway.

Rosa went back and told the news to Miss Agatha and the children, who were all waiting to hear. They all felt troubled and afraid that some real harm had come to the poor little one.

"What makes her run away so much, teacher?" asked Ruth.

“Such active little ones are very apt to be troublesome in that way,” Miss Agatha said, “and you know there is no one to take much care of little Elsie now. Her mother is sick a good deal of the time, and her father must work for their daily bread. The old grandfather is too feeble to watch and govern such a child.”

“Miss Agatha,” said Sylvia, timidly, “would you let Elsie come to school, if we would all promise not to laugh when she talks or plays?”

“Oh, if you will, teacher,” said Roxie, “Annie More or I might stop for her and bring her to school and take her home. I could come that way; it is only a little bit farther for me.”

“And we’d all help take care of her,” said Rosa, “just while her mother is sick, Miss Agatha!”

“My dear children, I am glad you all feel so kindly towards the little one. I shall be very willing to do my part and would like to have Elsie come, if I can be sure that you will not let her interrupt your lessons.

“If the child is brought back all safe, as we will pray she may be, we will decide about this to-morrow.

“Now my dear scholars had better run home, or their mothers will wonder why they are kept so long. We must not make any more mothers anxious to-day.”

The children dispersed and spread the tidings of the lost child.

Towards sunset George Ray came wearily home. Several of the school children and others hailed him eagerly, as he came up the street, to ask if Elsie were found.

"No," he said, "and that was not all. There was another child lost. Little Janey Connor, who lived near Elsie's home. Her mother had supposed she was at her older sister's house all the afternoon, and had just found out she had not been there at all. So they supposed the two had gone away together."

Three or four men from the village started at once, on hearing this, to aid in the search. Georgie said Elsie's father, and Pat Connor and his father, were just going off again; and Phil More had gone home to ask his father and the farm hands to help, because they were near the wood and could begin the search from that side.

"I did n't know," said Georgie, "that Pat Connor cared so much for anybody; but he was crying while they told how long Janey had been gone; and I heard him say to his mother, '*I'll* not come home till she's found, mother; be sure of that.'"

"The boy has some good in him then," said Dr. Brooks, who was listening.

The searchers were provided with lanterns, for it was growing dusk, and cloudy also. They divided into three parties besides that which they expected to start from the farm. It was quite an extensive piece of woods, and in some parts it was





very dense. All felt that if the little ones had really wandered far in the wood, there might be a good deal of trouble in finding them, on account of the thick underbrush.

It was after midnight when, at last, Elsie's father and the men with him discovered a little form lying on the ground a short distance from them. They sprang forward, throwing the light of their lanterns upon the child. It was Janey, and alone!

Poor little thing, it was hard work to arouse her, and when they succeeded, she looked around in a frightened way and began to cry.

One of the men took her in his arms and gave her a cake, and at last she answered their questions.

"Yes; Elsie had come to walk with her. She came to the woods to water the poor little flowers that did n't have anybody to care for them, and she asked Elsie if she wanted to help."

"But she was n't big enough to help carry the can," Janey continued, "and she got tired, and then she cried. And I found a nice soft place for her to sit down and rest, while I watered some more pretty flowers. Then I was *so* tired, and I went back to find Elsie, and she was n't *anywhere*."

"Did you find the 'nice soft place,' my dear?" asked Elsie's father.

Janey shook her head and began to sob again. The man

who held her, said he would carry her directly home. The others were to shout to the rest and give them the news, and then continue to search for Elsie.

They came upon Pat Connor in a few minutes after, and told him that Janey was safe.

"Then sure, I'll help ye till ye find the other little one!" said he.

And it was Pat who found her at last,—fast asleep in the nice soft place.

She shivered and clung to him as he raised her, but did not awake.

Pat raised a loud shout, and hastened to give the child into her father's arms, for he was not far away.

Happily it had been a very warm evening, and the little truants did not seem much the worse, the next day, for the exposure.

The children's plan was talked over in school, and at noon a committee of two girls went to ask Elsie's mother if she would like to have her go to school; and the poor woman was very thankful to say "yes."

Pat Connor always seemed a better boy after that night. Perhaps it was because people found out, as Dr. Brooks said, that there was some good in him, and so did not treat him so harshly: who knows?

CHAPTER XV.

EVA'S WISH.



E have had so many little ones to talk about, that I have not told you much about the little Maxwells.

As Annie said in her letter, Kate and Eva were rather grave and sad for a few days after their papa and mamma left them; for Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell came up with their little girls, and stayed over one day. In fact it seemed doubtful whether they would be able to go and leave them, after all; it was so hard for them to say good-by.

But the children soon learned to love "Aunt Agatha," as they called her, very dearly, and "Grandpa Deane," and "Grandma," and "Uncle Horace" too.

Then there were so many things to see and admire: the hens with their broods of dear little chicks; the good old cows, giving them such delicious warm milk; old Dobbin, who took them many a mile, in the farm wagon, with Uncle Horace; and, best of all the live creatures, dear little Frisk.

Frisk was at first very much astonished and puzzled to find children staying about all the time; he seemed quite disturbed by it for a little while, but he soon settled it in his mind that they were to belong there, and were to be very faithfully attended.

Was ever a little dog so busy as Frisk was, from that time? Besides all his care of the school children, to have those two restless little beings to follow up, at all hours!

But really, Miss Agatha felt much better satisfied to let the little girls run about in the farm-yard, and down in the meadows, when Frisk was with them. He would be quite sure to bark and drive them back if they were to go near the well; and he would drive off the cattle if they came near enough to alarm the children. They were not very brave children, it must be confessed! they were not used to meeting great horned creatures in their rambles.

One day—it was Saturday—Eva had been following Miss Agatha around, watching her, and chattering away all the time, so that almost anybody else would have been tired of answering questions.

Kate was with Grandma Deane in the kitchen, learning how to wipe dishes; but Eva did not care to stay there; she liked to be, as we say, “Here and there and everywhere.”

Presently Miss Agatha spread the ironing cloths on the table in the dining-room, and prepared to iron the little girls’ white dresses for Sunday.

Eva thought this was beautiful work; she begged her auntie to let her try. “Just let me iron my own frock, please!” said she. “I’m sure I can do it!”



"But I am not so sure, my dear; most likely before you had gone half over it, your own frock would not be worth owning."

"Why, auntie?"

"Because it would probably have a big print of the iron, done in brown or black; and that would not improve it at all."

"Well, I wish I knew how to do things!" sighed the little girl.

"Patience!" said Miss Agatha; "you must learn little by little; begin by doing little girls' work well."

Eva laid her doll on the table; "I am going to watch just how *you* do it, Aunt Agatha!"

As the pretty work came out nicely under the skilful ironing, Eva said, "My mamma made that dress, and Katie's, too. Oh, she used to make *such a many* things for us!"

"Little girls that have such a kind good mamma ought to be very thankful, should n't they?"

"Yes, Aunt Agatha; but I can't tell my mamma how I love her, now! If I could only reach her, just once a day, and give her one good kiss, I would n't mind so much!"

"Shall I tell you," said Aunt Agatha, "about a dear little girl who felt just as you do?"

"Oh yes, please!" cried Eva; and then she shouted through the open door, "Katie, Katie! Come; Aunt Agatha is going to tell a story!"

"Only a little story, dear, but it is true.

"A dear little girl whom I knew, lived in the city just as you did; but the first two summers of her life, her mamma had taken her into the country during the very warm weather.

"When little Caddy was nearly three years old, her mamma found, as the warm weather came on, that she could not go into the country that year; she was sorry, for she feared it might make her little girl sick to stay in the city where it is so very warm.

"But little Caddy had two kind aunties who loved her very much; they were going into the country, and they said to her mamma: 'Let us take the little girl with us; we will take good care of her; and it will be so much better for the child.'

"So at last it was decided that Caddy should go with her aunties.

"She was going to her grandpa's home, too,—just such a place as this, it was; with a garden and an orchard, and plenty of fun for little folks.

"Caddy was very happy and very busy all the time: chasing the chickens; helping to pick currants; watching the cows milked,"—

"Just as we do, Aunt Agatha!"

"Yes; just as you do. So I need not tell you any more of what Caddy found to do.

"But with all the happiness there very often came a thought of the dear mamma and papa so far away.

"Caddy was very fond of pictures. One day her auntie found her studying a little picture of a carrier dove. It had a letter tied under its wing. Caddy was very anxious to know what the birdie was doing with the letter."

"What is a carrier dove, Aunt Agatha?" asked Kate.

"In old times, dear, when there were no regular mails carried from place to place, as we have now, it used to be very difficult, sometimes, to send letters or messages to absent friends. They had to be sent by riders, or runners, at great trouble and cost.

"Many persons kept doves, or pigeons, of a kind which could be trained to carry letters to a distant place. If the carrier dove was taken from one place to another, though very far distant, it would find its way surely to its former home, when let loose, carrying with it the letter tied under its wing."

"What a pretty way to send a letter!" said Kate.

"Very pretty," said Miss Agatha; "but we may be glad we do not have to depend upon such messengers. They have been employed though, in late years, in time of war, by people shut up in a besieged city.

"Caddy's auntie tried to explain to her the use of the carrier pigeons. The little girl listened very gravely, but her auntie did not suppose she understood much about it.

"Not long after the little one asked for a paper and pencil,

and when they were given to her, she sat busily scribbling over the paper until she had covered it with marks.

"Then she trotted off into the orchard, and when her auntie looked out after her she saw her reaching the paper up, trying to put it in one of the trees, and as her little arms could not reach very high she called her uncle to help her.

"'Why, Caddie, what do you want to do with the paper?'" her auntie asked.

"'Oh, it is a letter for my mamma,' said the little one; 'and I want it put up in the tree—*high* up! And then perhaps some nice, kind birdie will fly off with it, and take it to my dear mamma!'"

"Oh, how funny!" cried Kate. "Did she really suppose a bird would carry it?"

"Yes; but you must remember that she was no older than little Elsie. It is no wonder she could not quite understand about the carrier doves."

"Well, I don't believe I'll try to send a letter to my mamma that way!" said Eva; "but I wish I could make my love reach her!"

"Aunt Agatha, the other day when I was riding with Uncle Horace, we passed some high poles, with wires running through something at the top. Uncle Horace said that those wires would carry a message as quick as I could *think* it; but I forget what he called them."

"They were telegraph wires, Katie," said Miss Agatha.

"I wish those wires reached to where mamma is!" said Eva.

"O Eva! they could n't stick up poles in the big ocean!"

"No, dear; but the telegraph wires are stretched under the ocean, all carefully covered; and they *do* reach to the country where your papa and mamma are."

"Oh, oh! Then can I send my love to them?" cried Eva.

"I am afraid it would cost too much for us to send it that way, darling. But I am going to write to them this very afternoon, and I will let each of you say a part of the letter, if you would like to."

This pleased the children very much, but still Eva wished the letter could go "very, very quickly."

"It will not take the good steamer many days to carry it over the ocean.

"But, my little Eva, you know there is a way in which you can reach your mamma with your love, very quickly indeed, do you not?"

Miss Agatha spoke seriously, and both little girls tried to think what she meant.

"O auntie," said Kate, "do you mean by praying for her?"

"Yes, my darling; you can both pray to the Lord to keep them safe from every danger, and in that way your love will surely reach them, for He will hear your prayer."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GRATEFUL BOY.



ATTIE LAWRENCE wrote every week, and took great pains with her letters as she had promised to do; and there was always a small epistle inclosed for Lenny, which brought a smile on his face that stayed there all day.

Lenny did not miss Sammy quite so much now. He had become used to going to school alone, and he liked school better than ever. Donald was very kind to the little fellow. He took so much pains to please him that his example moved the other boys to do the same.

They all went to Mrs. Dickson's one day, to persuade her to let Lenny go into the river with them.

"There's so many of us," said Georgie, "and we would all look after him. He could n't very well get under, and besides the river is low now."

So Mrs. Dickson said he might go whenever it would do for Jimmy to go; and she thanked the boys for offering to take care of him.

As for Lenny, he was so happy to hear he was going with the rest, and he enjoyed the bathing frolic so much, that the boys felt quite repaid and glad to have him with them.

We should not have room to copy all Mattie's letters and the answers which were sent; but one in particular interested all the children. It read thus:—

“DEAR TEACHER AND SCHOOLMATES,— We have been enjoying every single hour this week, it has been such lovely weather, and we have had such beautiful moonlight evenings. I wish you all could see the moonlight on the water!

“We have had a row out to the island twice, and one day we had a clam-bake. That was such fun!

“Sammy is very happy with a present he has had.

“I want to tell you how he got it.

“There is a man living here who owns a little cottage near the hotel. He had become very poor, I don't know how, and he supposed he must sell his cottage and go away to find work.

“He is a real good man, I think; and we all liked him very much.

“Well, Aunt Ella and some other ladies heard about it, and

they managed to get him some employment, and to loan him some money, so he need not break up his home.

"That evening, after it was all settled, we were out walking on the beach, and we saw a boy coming along over the rocks, with such a pretty ship in his arms. He was gazing up at the moon so that we expected to see him stumble; but he seemed to know every step.

"I said, 'O Aunt Ella! would n't Sammy like to see that ship!' Just then the boy came up; he looked at auntie and bowed, and asked if it was Mrs. Thorpe. When she said 'yes,' he went on; but his voice trembled as he spoke.

"He was the son of that poor gentleman; and he said Aunt Ella had been so very kind to his father, they never could thank her enough; but he thought perhaps her little boy would like that ship, and he wanted to give it to her for him.

"Aunt Ella wanted to refuse it, for she was sure he valued it himself; but the boy seemed hurt when she spoke of it, and begged her to accept it for Sammy. So Aunt Ella thanked him, and told him it would please Sammy more than anything else; and she asked him to come and teach him how to sail it.

"She talked longer with the boy, and liked him ever so much, he was so gentle and polite.

"When he was going away, auntie said: 'You have a bright evening for your walk. I think you were admiring the moon as you came along.'



FRANK AND HIS SHIP. — Page 98.

"The boy smiled, and said he was wondering if it would ever look so lovely, shining upon any other spot.

"Then you love your home?' said auntie.

"Oh yes, ma'am; it would have been so hard to give it up!' he said.

"But this long letter will tire you all, I'm afraid; so good-by

"MATTIE."

Sammy's letter of course must be given also:—

"DEAR LENNY,—O Lenny! I've got such a beauty ship! She sails like a real ship. Her name is 'The Ella;'—that's mamma's name, too.

"Frank gave her to me. He helps me sail her. I love him dearly.

"And O Lenny, I've got on jacket and pants, and mamma says I need n't ever wear frocks any more! That's all.

"SAMMY."

When this letter was read the children all laughed, and Phil said it was well that *was* all; he did not think Sammy could have borne any more happiness at once.

Rosa answered Mattie's letter this week,—it was just after Elsie was lost and found, so Rosa had something to write about.

Elsie was very well satisfied to come to school, and seemed very happy there. The children all remembered their promise.

and tried not to notice or laugh at her funny little ways. Sometimes, though, the little ones would be obliged to clap both hands to their mouths to keep from laughing aloud.

One day they all felt at liberty to laugh, for Miss Agatha laughed herself.

There was a class of girls seated on the recitation bench, which happened to be just in front of Elsie's little chair.

The class was longer than usual in reciting; for Miss Agatha was explaining something in their lesson, in a pleasant way, and they were all listening attentively.

When the girls rose to go to their places, they found themselves all in disorder; aprons, belts, collars,—everything that had been fastened with pins was unfastened.

"We might think there was a magnet about the bench, if they were needles," said Miss Agatha. But on looking farther, Elsie proved to be the magnet; her little hands were full of pins.

As I said, they all laughed then; I do not think the boys could have helped it.

"Elsie, dear, what made you take all the pins out? my little girl must not do so!"

"Elsie give 'em to mamma—mamma want 'e pins!" said the child, in her grave way.

Roxie told Elsie's mother about it, when she took her home, and she, too, laughed heartily.

She said she always praised her a good deal when she picked up pins from the floor, and brought them to her. So the little puss was disposed to secure all the pins she could lay her hands on, to win more praise.

CHAPTER XVII.

KATE'S TROUBLE.



MISS AGATHA had not long been in charge of the little Maxwell girls before she found that it was very much easier to manage little Eva than her sister.

Yet Kate was more than two years older than Eva, and children ought to be less trouble as they grow older, should they not?

Kate was, to be sure, better able to dress herself and take care of her things; but Miss Agatha, I think, would rather have taken more trouble for her in such matters, than to have had the care and anxiety which her temper caused her.

The little girl did not begin to show this naughty temper of hers at first. She was so pleased with everything about her new home, and she liked the school so much, that really there was nothing to sulk about, and Katie seemed, as indeed she could be, a very pleasant child.

Kate liked Roxie Barton better than any other of the scholars; she had the next seat to Roxie's in school, and the two little girls became very warm friends.

One morning Roxie did not come to school. Kate watched for her at the gate until after the bell rang, and Frisk came tearing down the path to make her go in.

"Be still, Frisk; let me alone!" said Kate, pushing him off in a vexed way.

"Why, why, my kitten! you should n't be angry with the monitor for reminding you that it is school-time!"

Grandpa Deane said this in a very pleasant way, but Kate did not smile. She was disappointed and cross because Roxie had not come, and she had something so particular to say to her, too.

"Come, Katie; we are waiting. Take your place at once, my dear."

Kate moved slowly to her seat; but Miss Agatha noticed that when the texts were said, Kate's lips did not move at all, although she certainly knew her verse.

As soon as prayers were over, Kate asked, "Aunt Agatha, may n't I walk down the road and see if Roxie is not coming?"

"No, my dear; it is time for lessons now. I do not think Roxie can be coming this morning, for she is always punctual. Perhaps she will be here this afternoon."

Kate pouted, and looked displeased. Presently she said: "I don't want to learn this geography lesson without Roxie, because we help each other find the places. Need I study it?"

"Yes, Katie; the class will recite as usual. If there is any question you cannot answer you may come to me with it."

At this, Kate slammed her book upon her desk in a naughty way, and leaned over it with her elbows on the desk, but she did not study.

Little Fan had been watching her, and now she gave one of the girls a meaning look, and made signs that Katie was naughty. The children could not help smiling at Fan's little pantomime; but Kate saw all this, and she was more vexed than ever.

When the class was called, of course Kate did not know the lesson. Miss Agatha looked very grave, and said she must learn it at recess.

So at recess Katie was obliged to stay in. It did not take her long to learn the lesson, and she was ready to recite it before the children were called up. But when Miss Agatha said, "That is very well; and now, I hope my little girl will put away this naughty temper," Kate did not look at her, but turned away.

Roxie did not come in the afternoon, and Kate was glad of it, in her heart, for she had not made up her mind to try

to overcome her sinful feelings, and she felt sure that Roxie would be sorry and grieved to see her in such a mood, and in disgrace too.

"She would look at me just like Aunt Agatha, said the child to herself, "and I *hate* that!"

O Katie! hate such a gentle look of reproof! She would not have said that if she had been in her right mind; but Katie had been yielding to wrong feelings all that day.

After school, as the children were going into the house, Mr. Horace called out to them:—

"See here, little folks; I have a message for you from old Dobbin: he is going to the mill, and perhaps some little girls would like to go along! Yes, Frisk; good fellow! you shall go too! It will take us all to see those bags home all right, won't it?"

"O Uncle Horace, you are so funny!" said Eva. "Old Dobbin could n't say a message; and Frisk can't help bring the bags home, I know!"

"Can he not? Well then, so much the more need of *your* help. Make haste and get ready, if Aunt Agatha says you may go."

"I am afraid," said Miss Agatha, "I cannot let my Kate go, unless I know that she is sorry for her behavior to-day."

Kate had brightened up a little, while Uncle Horace and Eva were talking, and looked as if she would like to go to the

mill; but when Miss Agatha said this, she turned away and walked to the window.

"O Kate, you *are* sorry, are n't you?" whispered little Eva, following her. "Don't you want to go with us, Katie?"

"Do let me alone, Eva; I don't care whether I go or not, I'm sure!"

So Eva went away with Uncle Horace in the wagon, but she was not half so merry as usual because Kate was not with them.

And Kate, what did she do?

Not liking to stay in the house with her kind friends, she took up one of her picture story-books and went out doors.

Down through the orchard, then through the meadows, and Kate found herself on the river-bank before she knew it, for her heart had been too full of proud, angry thoughts to care where she was going.

The sight of the river sobered her. She had not meant to come so far, and Miss Agatha did not let the little girls go alone to the river.

"Well, I'm sure I did n't think I was so near," said Kate to herself; "but I'm tired, and I mean to rest here now, anyway!"

The child threw herself down under a tree and opened her book, but not to read. She listened to the murmur of the river,

as it hurried along over the pebbles, and after a little while it seemed to take the sound of her mother's voice: —

"Kate, dear little Kate, try to be a good girl for mamma's sake!"

It was what her mamma had said, in a low voice, just before she kissed her good-by. She did not want to think of it now, but the river kept on in the same tone, "Kate, dear little Kate!" and she must listen, and think.

"Try to be a good girl;" she did mean to try; she *had* tried; but here she had been so dreadfully naughty, the whole day! And the boys and girls had looked at her so; and Aunt Agatha: she would never love her again! And Katie hid her face and sobbed and cried bitterly. She was sorry now.

A step near her made her spring up in alarm; she thought of some animal; but it was Aunt Agatha, come in search of her little girl.

Kate glanced up through her tears at the kind but sorrowful face; then she clung to Miss Agatha, and sobbed out: "I'm sorry, now; please do forgive me!"

A loving kiss told of full forgiveness, and then Miss Agatha sat down and drew the child close to her side.

"Tell me about it, Katie."

And Katie told her how angry she had been; and how she came to the river before she knew it; and what the river kept saying to her.



"And it made you sorry to think how you had forgotten your mamma's words?"

Katie nodded.

"Can you say your text *now*, Katie?"

The child wondered if her auntie knew she was too cross to say it in the morning; but she repeated it now:—

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

"My little girl is grieved to think that she has not showed her love to her mamma by remembering her words; should you not be more sorry, dear, that you forgot these words of our dear Saviour?"

"He bids us show our love to Him by keeping His commandments; but you did not try to keep them to-day, did you?"

Little Kate whispered "No," and she looked more sorry than before.

"I wish I could be good: I wish I did n't *get* so naughty, auntie!"

"Then *pray*, my child; ask the Lord to forgive you, and to help you to love Him, and keep His commandments.

"And watch, Katie; when the naughty feelings *begin* to come do not let them get stronger and stronger, but be ready to fight them and drive them away, by the help of the Lord."

Kate looked as if she understood this, and as if she meant to remember it.

"Now, dear, let us pick up our things and go home; I am very glad I have found my Kate again."

Aunt Agatha smiled, and Kate put her arms around her neck and kissed her two or three times.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER RAINY DAY.



NE morning the clouds threatened a rainy day, and Roxie hardly knew whether to stop for Elsie or not. She concluded to go in when she reached the house, and see what the little girl's mother thought about it.

Elsie had her bonnet on, and was unusually anxious to go.

"We might keep her and take care of her at noon, if it rains," said Roxie; "most of us stay rainy days."

"Thank you, my dear," said the mother; "if you are willing to look after her at noon, I'll be glad to let her go; for she does not know what to do with herself on rainy days."

So Elsie trotted along with her young guardian. The rain began to fall, in good earnest, before they reached Mr. Deane's; but Elsie thought it great fun to walk under an umbrella.

At noon Kate and Eva took Elsie into the house to dinner, as Miss Agatha told them to do. The little one did not seem very hungry,—in fact it was no wonder, for some of the children had given her cake from their lunch-baskets at recess. After a little while she slipped off from her chair, and began playing around the room.

Kate and Eva were talking very eagerly about a letter which had come that morning from their parents, and of all the news it contained; and no one noticed, for a few moments, what Elsie was doing. When Miss Agatha looked around for her she was nowhere to be seen.

"Why, where is that child!" she exclaimed, looking out into the kitchen.

No Elsie was there; Kate and Eva looked through all the rooms, and Miss Agatha went out to the school-room, but she was not to be seen.

"I'll go out and look up and down the street for her, Miss Agatha," said Phil.

"Wait a moment, Phil; I think she would hardly have gone out into the street in this rain; she *must* be about the house after all!"

Miss Agatha and Phil went to the house and searched again. At last Eva said, "Oh, maybe she's up in our play-room!"

"Have you ever taken her up there?" asked Mr. Horace.

Kate said they did once. Miss Agatha ran up to the garret, one corner of which the children had for a play-house.

There, sure enough, was the little truant. She stood with her arms full of dolls,—her little hands clasped tight, to hold them; and looked reproachfully at Kate and Eva, who followed their auntie.

“S’an’t hang *these* poor chillen up!” said she, hugging the dolls more closely.

How the children laughed! Eva had hung her old black doll, Dinah, against a beam, “for a *punish*,” as she said; because she had spoiled the dinner.

“Well, I think the little one is right,” said Aunt Agatha; “that was rather a harsh punishment for poor Dinah.”

“Well, please take her down now, auntie; and may we keep Elsie here until the bell rings? We shall hear it.”

“I’m afraid to trust her to come down those stairs; you had better come down now, and have a nice play with the other children, in the barn, before school begins.”

“Well, so we will,” said Eva.

Kate was very glad; she wanted to go out and play with Roxie; but she had been trying to make up her mind to stay up in the play-room, if Eva wanted to very much.

Elsie did not want to leave the dolls; so the children said they might come down,—black Dinah and all.



ELSIE IN THE PLAY-ROOM. — Page 110.

"Oh, here comes a crowd of new scholars!" shouted Georgie, as the armful of dolls was brought in.

Boys can play with dolls sometimes, on a dull, rainy day; and there was fun enough for the rest of the nooning, — with the dolls, and the "school-baby," as they all called Elsie.

When school was dismissed in the afternoon, it was raining very hard indeed. Mr. Horace came up to the school-room, when he heard the children moving about, and said: —

"I think, sister, you had better keep the children until this heavy shower is over; it will probably hold up soon; they could not go out now without being drenched."

"I think so too," said Miss Agatha. "The girls, at least, must wait awhile, and I think the boys had better do so too."

Little Elsie, as it happened, had set her heart upon going right home; it was unusual for her to be impatient to go, but to-day she had run for her things as soon as the children left their seats.

"We must wait a little while, Elsie," said the girls; "look out and see how it rains!"

"I wants to go home *now!*" said Elsie, beginning to cry.

"Come here, small woman!" said Mr. Horace, coming in, and taking her on his knee. "Don't you want me to sing to you about 'The Green Bay Tree?'"

"O Mr. Horace! I didn't know you could sing!" said Annie, roguishly.

"*Can* you, Uncle Horace?" said Eva, a little doubtfully; and the rest all laughed at her tone, and pressed around to hear the song.

"Now, this is not fair!" said Mr. Horace. "I only promised to sing for Elsie; if you all come to listen, I shall insist that you help me!"

"But we don't know it, sir; how can we?"

"Which of you can crow like a rooster?" asked Mr. Horace.

Every one of the boys, even Lenny, shouted "I!" "I can!"

"I believe you!" laughed Mr. Horace; "but we don't want you all to do it; I know Ralph can, for I've heard him; so he may be the rooster.

"And who can bark like a dog, and mew like a cat?"

These parts were quickly taken; so was the bleat of the lamb; the lowing of the cow; and the grunt of the pig.

"I'll take the horse!" said Phil, when it was named; "I brought father out into the barn the other evening, to see what was the matter with our horses; just whinnying!"

"Ah, you rogue; we'll hear you perform then! And now we must have a hen to cluck; a turkey to gobble; a duck to quack; and a goose to cackle."

When these were found, Mr. Horace told them how they were to join in, and then he began:—

“I had a little rooster, and my rooster pleased me,
I put my little rooster under Green Bay Tree :
My little rooster goes ” —

“Cock-a-doodle doo!” crowed Ralph, with all his might; and Elsie laughed merrily.

Mr. Horace then sang the same about the hen; and the hen clucked duly, and the rooster crowed again.

After each verse, all that had been named before performed again in turn; so that by the time the last animal was reached, you would have thought a whole farm-yard had adjourned to the school-room; and the children were laughing so they could hardly keep up their parts.

“More! sing some more!” said Elsie, when they stopped.

Mr. Horace laughed and said: “I think that is racket enough for once, my little lady; you can ask the young folks to perform again for you some other time.”

“So we will; it’s real fun!” said Donald.

“Yes, and any of us can sing the song!” added Sylvia.

“Yes, I really think you might, *perhaps!*” said Mr. Horace. “And now I see that the rain is holding up some, what do you think I mean to do?”

Some of the children guessed, and their eyes sparkled; but they did not like to guess aloud. The rest were very anxious to know.

"Well, I think it would be a pity to soak all these little shoes in the puddles which I see out on the street. I believe I'll haul out the old wagon, and Dobbin shall carry you all home. So get ready!"

The children did not need to be told twice, for this was great fun, they thought.

The up-street load were to be taken first, because they had the shortest distance to go. Mr. Horace had some clean straw in the bottom of the long wagon, and they all tumbled in: twelve as merry chicks as you ever saw, with umbrellas over them to keep off the rain, which had not quite ceased.

But, by the time the wagon was back again, for the down-street load, the sun was struggling through the clouds.

Kate and Eva stood under the porch, watching the fun of loading in, and Mr. Horace called to them to "put on their water-proof cloaks and come along;" which they did most joyfully.

Little Elsie was carried safely into the house without being wet in the least.

"Now," said Mr. Horace, "if Roxie is in a hurry to get home, we will land her next; if not, she may help us get these other youngsters safely to Mr. More's!"

"Oh, drive on, please!" cried Kate. "I know she will like to go; won't you, Roxie?"

Roxie did like it very much. In fact Mr. Horace's kindness made that rainy day a very pleasant one for all the children.

CHAPTER XIX.

VACATION.



T was the last week of school; there was to be a vacation of five weeks, to the second week in September.

"I'm real sorry!" said Donald, as the children were talking together, before school, Monday morning. "I wish you would not have any vacation; at least while I am here!"

"Much obliged to you!" said Georgie. "That will do for you to say, when you've had vacation since the first of July, or before!"

"Yes," said Ralph, "I like school well enough, but a fellow *is* glad of a vacation sometimes!"

"What are you fellows going to do? Won't you come and see me? every day, if you can?"

"Yes; but you get leave to come and see us. There's no fun at a hotel."

"I'll tell you one thing to do!" said Norman. "Let's build a dam across the river, where we go in bathing, to make a

better place. Mr. Deane will let us go through his lot to bathe when we want to, and I don't believe he'll mind our building the dam."

"Hurrah for Norman! I vote for Norman, as chief engineer!" cried Phil, and he added, aside to some of the others, "What has waked him up, I wonder?"

"Now, you needn't laugh, Phil More. You always must tease! When I was over at Glynn I saw a dam the fellows had been making there, and it made the place real deep and nice: deep enough for us."

"I think it's a first-rate plan, Norman," said Georgie. "We'll ask Mr. Horace if we may, and as like as not he will tell us how to go to work. There he comes!" and the boys rushed off and surrounded him, all talking at once.

Mr. Horace said they might go through the meadow as much as they pleased in vacation, if they would only put up the bars after them; and they were welcome to try to build a dam if they had leave from their parents.

"The first day you want to go to work," said he, "if I'm not too lame to get down there, I'll show you how I should manage. If I can't go, I'll tell you about it. I helped my brothers build one in that very place, when I was a boy."

"Has the river been there all that time?" asked Lenny.

The children shouted, and Mr. Horace asked, "Do I look so very old, Lenny? The river was there long before I saw it."

Here the bell rang, and Frisk bounded right into the midst of the group, as the easiest way of scattering the boys. Then he began to chase them towards the school-room.

At three o'clock that afternoon, Miss Agatha said: "Children, I have a plan to propose. Our school closes on Wednesday, as you know; how would you like a picnic on Thursday, if it is a pleasant day?"

"Oh, splendid!" "That will be grand!" "The best way to celebrate the close of school!" said Rosa, who was apt to use larger words than the rest.

"Shall we go to that grove where we went once before, two years ago?"

"Near the Lake? yes. I think that is as pleasant a spot as we could find. Now you will all consult your parents about it, and see if they are willing to let you go."

"I know! I know now what Grandma Deane is baking for!" said Kate. "I asked her what made her bake to-day, and she laughed and said she should want a great deal of *provision* this week."

"But we shall each bring a basket of things for the dinner, sha'n't we, Miss Agatha?"

"Those may who can as well as not; but as Katie guesses, 'Grandma Deane' means we shall be sure to have enough."

You may be sure every one of the children had leave to

go to the picnic, even little Fan and Elsie; for the children all promised to help take care of them, and, as Phœbe said, "they *must* have the school baby along to be complete, and little Fan would be sure to make half the fun!"

Thursday proved a beautiful day, and by eight o'clock the children were all gathered in the school-yard, with bright, happy, eager faces, and baskets in their hands.

Little Fan did not quite know what to make of it; but she was evidently all ready for a frolic of some sort.

Mr. Horace had rigged up a wide hay-cart for the festive car. It had seats fixed on the sides, with room enough for the baskets between; and over the top he had contrived to form an arch, with some boughs, with flowers tied on, here and there. Georgie Ray brought a flag "to stick up in front," as he said; so that the car, or cart, was very gay indeed.

All the boys would have liked to sit on the driver's seat with Mr. Horace; but they of course could not, as there were seven boys.

"I think Georgie ought to sit there," said Ralph; "because the flag 's his."

"And I think Donald ought to sit there," replied Georgie, "because he is a stranger, and he wants the best place to see the country."

"Well, then, I think you must both sit there; there's room



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enough ; and we shall need you to do justice to the wonders of the land, for Donald's benefit," said Mr. Horace, laughing.

So Donald and Georgie mounted up in front ; the big covered basket which Grandma Deane had packed, was bestowed in the middle ; Miss Agatha and the children all climbed in, and when Frisk had jumped aboard, the load was complete. As the horses started, the girls waved their handkerchiefs, and the boys gave three cheers, which awaked the echoes, away down by the river.

Did they have a pleasant time ? Indeed they did. Mr. Horace was, as the children declared, "just as funny as he could be, all day long !" That is to say, he devoted himself to their amusement, and he was a capital hand to amuse young folks.

They had Miss Agatha to themselves too, for a whole day, without any lessons ; except such merry pleasant lessons as she could teach them by the way.

Little Fan was highly delighted with the whole plan, especially the feast upon the grass. They found a nice shaded place to spread their table-cloth ; and *such* a nice dinner as was produced from the various baskets ! Fanny skipped around, making funny signs, where this or that ought to go, and when all was ready, she made the motion of ringing a bell ; and then seized upon Frisk, and sat him up by the table, or table-cloth, as the first guest.

As to little Elsie, she seemed to enjoy every moment, and was more than ever the pet of the school.

Olive was so happy that she quite forgot to tell about any grander doings at some other place; for once she was as gay a country girl as any of the rest. In fact, Olive was not as apt to talk in that way as when she first came to Miss Agatha's school. She had found out that there were a good many pleasant, bright, well behaved children, who knew quite as much as she did without having travelled much, or having seen any large cities.

CHAPTER XX.

PHÆBE'S BOUQUET.



DONALD STERLING did not find the vacation very dull, for now that he was acquainted with so many of the boys and girls of the village, there were plans enough started among them to fill up all the idle hours.

The dam at the river was begun, and carried on with a great deal of energy. The spot where the boys generally went in to bathe was a little south of Mr. Deane's house, and quite sheltered by bushes; they thought, when they had finished their dam, so as to deepen the water there, it would be about the nicest bathing place to be found in river, lake, or sea.

I may as well say here that they did succeed in building

quite a dam; to be sure it did not stand the winter, or rather the spring freshets very well, but it was easily repaired for the next summer's sport.

Olive found it very pleasant to have so many young friends also. She liked Phœbe Barker best of all the girls. Phœbe was a year or two older than Olive, but they did not seem to feel the difference, as children generally do. Olive was so lively and talkative that she was quite a match for her quiet friend.

The girls spent a good deal of time together. One day when Olive went over to the Barkers', she found Phœbe very busy with a little dog.

"O Olive, I'm glad you've come; I want you to help me! See our Trip, isn't he a pretty little fellow?"

"Yes; a real pretty color; is he yours?"

"No, he was given to Ned; my brother you know; but Ned says he wants me to train him, and teach him tricks, because he has n't much time now."

"I wonder if he will get to be as knowing as Frisk; isn't *he* a funny little rogue?"

"Yes, but I mean to have Trip quite as smart as Frisk, or any other dog. He's young yet, you know; and I'm sure he can learn; I see it in his eyes!"

"Come, stand up now, old fellow, and beg!"

Trip went through his first lesson from his young teacher,

as well as could have been expected of a poor little dog, who had had no pains taken with his education before.

"There," said Olive; "I think he has had enough for once; don't tease the poor thing any longer; come and have a hoople race!"

Phœbe agreed; and quite to her surprise, Trip started after them in full chase.

"How soon he has found out that he belongs to us!" she cried. "Good fellow! Nice little dog! you learned that lesson all by yourself, did n't you?"

It was growing rather too warm for much of a race, and the girls soon returned to the pleasant nook under the window.

"I don't believe you want that cape now, Phœbe," said Olive, laughing.

"No, but it was cool when I came out here. As mamma says, the mornings and evenings begin to feel like autumn; but oh dear! I shall be sorry when the summer is gone!"

"So shall I; I most wish I could stay here all winter; but to be sure I do have good times at Uncle Harley's, and I suppose I'll be there next winter.

"Come, put on your hat and walk over to the hotel with me. We will have some fun in the parlor. What flowers are these?"

"Oh, I started to pick a bouquet for the vases, but there is scarcely anything pretty now in the garden."



"These morning-glories are pretty," said Olive, looking up, "if they would only last."

"I think," said a voice from the open window, "my little daughter might have found something to fill the vases prettily if she had taken a little more pains!"

Phœbe blushed, and answered, "I'll try again, mother."

"It's too bad of me," she confessed to Olive. "Mother asked me to dust the parlor, too; but I went to training Trip, and" —

"'Forgot to train yourself,' I suppose Miss Agatha would say!" said Olive.

"Yes; that's it. Will you come with me to the garden?"

"Yes; but I hope you won't go to dusting afterwards, for I want you to come over with me."

"But I must," said Phœbe. And she added, after a moment, "I ought to be ashamed to forget the little work I have to do at home. Just think of Sylvia. How much she helps her mother."

"Why! Here are verbenas, — plenty of them. What could you want nicer for your vases?" said Olive.

"I forgot them, or looked over them, I suppose, on that low bed."

"Somehow these verbenas make me think of Sylvia," continued Phœbe, as she picked them.

"Why? What a funny idea!"

"Oh, because they are always ready, we can depend upon them, and they are so *useful* in filling a place."

Olive opened her eyes as if she thought this a long speech for Phœbe.

With their hands full of flowers the girls returned to their shady nook to arrange them.

"Then I suppose I must be like those morning-glories," said Olive, at last, glancing again at the vines, "for they are of no sort of use—just curl right up if they are wanted for anything!"

"But they look bright and cheerful when other things are fading. Mother says that is why she always plants them."

"Mother" looked out at the window and smiled: "That is work we all might be glad to do,—don't you think so, Olive? To cheer and brighten the sad hours of those around us?"

Olive smiled too, and nodded, as she looked up at Mrs. Barker; but then she seemed rather thoughtful.

"What is the matter?" asked Phœbe.

"Nothing; only auntie had a bad headache, and I came away because she wanted the room dark. But I mean to go back now, and—and see if I *can* be a morning-glory!"

Olive was as good as her word. She hastened back, and surprised her aunt by coming quietly in with a glass of cool, fresh water.

"I thought you might want this, auntie; and shall I fan you a little while? Perhaps then you will fall asleep."

"Thank you, pet. I really believe I might. Why, what a good little nurse you are!"

Truly, the gay, careless child was learning to *think*.

CHAPTER XXI.

CLOUDS AND CLEARING.



HE pleasures of vacation were not wholly unclouded. The first thing that happened to make the children feel sorry was Norman's illness.

He was not a very strong child, and he took cold one day, working too long in the water at the new dam. Poor fellow, he was quite sick for two or three weeks.

Then came the sad news of poor little Fan's trouble, of which I told you in a former chapter. The children all heard of this very soon after it happened, and half a dozen or more little people were gathered at Dr. Brooks's gate, with Ruth and Jimmy, waiting to ask him about poor little Fan when he should come home."

"There he comes!" said Ralph, at last. He was up on the gate-post, watching, and saw the Doctor come out of Mr. Mott's house.

"I'm 'most afraid to ask him, aren't you?" said Phœbe. "Suppose she should die!"

The Doctor was walking very fast, and was soon in the midst of them.

"Ah, good-morning, little folks!" said he. "*These* young limbs are all sound, I hope!"

"Papa, they all want to know how little Fan is," said Ruth. "Please tell us about her."

"She is very badly hurt, poor little thing!" said the Doctor, "and it will be a long time before she can run about again; but, if it please God, she will be able to go to school again with you one of these days.

"Be sure, dear children, to thank the good Lord for giving you the use of all your senses, and of your limbs too, and health to enjoy them!"

The Doctor patted little Gerty's head, as she was looking earnestly at him, and went into the house.

"Poor little Fan!" said Jimmy. "She couldn't hear or talk before, and now she can't walk!"

"But your papa said, Jimmy Brooks, 'Please God she *will* walk again one of these days;' and I know it will please Him to make her well, because Jesus did make lame people walk when he was on the earth!"

"Yes, little Gerty, and we'll ask Him to make poor little Fan well, won't we?" said Phœbe, quietly.

"And Norman, too," added Gerty.

"Yes, and Norman, too. He is better to-day. His sister said so."

That was true; and not many days after this Sylvia saw him, as she passed the house, sitting propped up at one of the windows.

She stopped and called to him, "How do you do, Norman? I'm glad to see you up!"

"And I'm glad to be up; but I wish I could go out of doors!" replied Norman, looking pleased to see one of his schoolmates.

Sylvia hurried home with a kind thought in her busy mind. Ralph had been making a nice, strong cart, with a large box and some wheels which had been given him. He told Sylvia that morning that it was strong enough to carry her, and Gerty too, if they would crowd in.

Sylvia's plan was for Ralph to go with her, taking his cart, and offer to draw Norman out, down the road a little way.

Ralph blushed when his sister proposed this, and did not answer for a moment, pretending to be very busy with the handle of his cart.

Sylvia looked surprised. "Why, what's the matter, Ralph; don't you want to do it?"

"Yes; of course I'll go. Come on!"

"Wait until I see if mother can spare me a little longer," said Sylvia, running into the house and out again in a moment or two.

The reason why Ralph looked confused, when his sister spoke of Norman, was this: they had had quite a dispute the day before Norman was taken sick, while working at the dam. Norman was quite sure he knew more about the work than any one else, as indeed he did at first. Ralph wanted to work after his own fashion at the part he was doing. Norman tried to make him do as he said, and at last exclaimed, pettishly, "I'll just quit off and won't show you any more!"

"Well, do then!" Ralph had answered. "I wish you *would* stay away; we should get along better without you!" The two boys did not speak to each other again while they stayed at the river, which was not very much longer, for neither Georgie nor Phil were there that morning, and the work did not get on after the quarrel.

Ralph thought of his angry words when he heard the next day that Norman was ill. He thought of them many times before he heard that he was better, and now, when Sylvia spoke to him, he had thought of them again.

But in the little time while his sister waited and wondered, Ralph had made up his mind to go, and make friends with Norman at the same time.



The sick boy was still at the window when they reached the house. "Hallo, old fellow!" cried Ralph, cheerfully. "See, here's a team; will you take a drive?"

Norman was delighted at the idea, and his sister, who was taking care of him, thought it would not hurt him to go a little way. So she helped to settle him on a low stool for a seat, with a pillow at his back.

Ralph drew him very carefully down the path and out on the sidewalk, for he was not sure but his vehicle might jolt some. Sylvia went behind to see that the pillow kept its place, and Dash, Norman's little dog, nearly went head over heels down the path, in his joy at seeing his young master out again.

The cavalcade was met by Dr. Brooks. "Why, hallo!" said he, "you've got ahead of me with my patient! This is quite a turn-out. I was intending to come after this boy soon to take a little drive. I'll be along by to-morrow, Norman, and you will be the more ready to go with me for this little journey.

"Don't keep him out very long to-day, young folks. Sylvia can tell when he begins to look tired."

It was not long before Norman acknowledged that he felt a little tired, although he did not like to be taken into the house.

"Never mind; you'll have a good drive with the Doctor to-morrow: you'll like that!" said Ralph.

"Yes, and I like *this*; it was real kind of you," said Norman, gratefully.

This was a good deal for Norman to say, but he meant it, as he showed by his looks:

Ralph stayed a few minutes to tell him how well the dam had succeeded, saying, "You must make haste now and get well, and try a bath before it grows too cold; because you were the head workman, you know!"

Norman smiled again; and so the quarrel was forgotten.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PARTY.



ONE day Kate and Eva had a very pleasant errand up the street; yes, and down street also. Uncle Horace took them around in his wagon. He had some errands of his own at the store, but he was to stop with the children at the houses of all their schoolmates; for the next day was Eva's birthday, and Aunt Agatha had given the children leave to invite all their little friends to tea.

When they stopped at Mrs. Dickson's house, Lenny was

out by the door, and as soon as he saw them he began jumping up and down, crying, "O Kate! O Eva! Don't you think, Sammy's coming home to-day!"

"Is he really, Lenny? And Mattie, too?"

Kate and Eva had never seen Mattie or Sammy; but they knew all about them, and felt as glad as if they had been old friends.

"Ought n't we to ask *them* to our party, if they are coming to-day, Uncle Horace?" Kate whispered in his ear.

"Yes, by all means; but I think you had better run into the house and give your message to Mrs. Dickson. Lenny cannot keep still long enough to hear about a party: can you, Lenny?"

Lenny caught the word, and followed Kate in, eagerly listening to the invitation. He was perfectly satisfied when he heard Sammy's name mentioned.

It rained that afternoon, so that there was no out-doors play; but our little friends endured the rainy afternoon all the more patiently, for thinking and talking of the morrow.

Donald and Olive had some games of checkers together, up in the hall by their rooms. Then they did not know what to do next.

"Aunt Mary!" Olive called, through the open door, "what shall I wear to this party to-morrow?"

Miss Waters laughed and said she thought there would not be much trouble about the dress.

"I went to a party last winter," said Olive, "where there was fuss enough about it, I can tell you! Why, we had as much trouble about getting ready as grown-up people would — only we didn't have any hair-dresser come to us. And we didn't go until real late; oh, it was *ever* so late when we got home!"

"Well, I'm glad they don't have that sort of parties up here; my mother says she don't like them for children. Kate said we must come at three o'clock to-morrow; that's early enough!"

"You are a sensible boy, Donald," said Miss Waters. "I wish Olive had never been to any other sort of children's parties; these are much the best."

Olive looked as if she could not quite agree to this, but she did not say anything; she was beginning to like the "sensible" country ways pretty well.

"Come, Olive; let's play you were going to a grand city party, and I'll be a hair-dresser, and do up your hair in grand style; see if I don't! I've seen 'em do it!"

Olive laughed. "Well," said she, "but I suppose you'll pull like everything! Auntie, may we come to your dressing-table?"

Auntie agreed, and was quite amused watching the young barber and his flourishes.

He managed pretty well, as Olive only once in a while in-



dulged in a prolonged "Oh!" But just at one of these "ohs" Phœbe appeared at the door.

She looked amazed for a moment, and then how she did laugh!

"Donald, do the other boys know of your new trade?" she asked, when she could speak for laughing.

"Now, Phœbe, if you go and tell!"—and Donald chased her with a hair-brush to make her promise not to.

"She won't, Don; she is too good-natured. Come, we can get up some better play now Phœbe is here; we'll excuse Mr. Hair-dresser and he may call in Mr. Sterling!"

The weather cleared in the night, and little Eva's birthday was a lovely day.

Miss Agatha was very glad that Mattie and Sammy returned 'just in time;' and all the children welcomed them back joyfully.

Three o'clock was none too early, the children thought, to begin such a delightful visit; they had all sorts of merry games, in-doors and out, with Miss Agatha and Mr. Horace to help them play.

And Frisk: oh how pleased the little dog was to get his flock together again! He almost knocked Sammy over in his delight at seeing him once more; for Sammy had been one of his chief playmates.

When the children began to come, Frisk jumped up on one and another, to show how glad he was to see them; but then he ran a little way towards the school-room, and came back and looked at Miss Agatha, wagging his tail very earnestly.

"He thinks we have come to school!" said little Gerty.

"No Frisk! No school until next week, sir! It's play, Frisk! *Play*, old fellow!" said Georgie, calling him off for a run.


Eva made a dear little Queen of the day, with a pretty wreath of flowers twined about her head.

"If only little Fan could have come; and poor sick Norman," said she. "I don't like people to be sick on my birthday!"

"**But** Norman will soon be well now, and poor little Fan too, I hope," said Miss Agatha; "and we will send them each a paper of 'goodies,' so that they can help to keep the birthday, too."

CHAPTER XXIII.

PLAYING A TRICK.

“ SAY, fellows!” exclaimed Georgie, “let’s invite the girls to walk down to the river, and see our new dam!”

“That’s a good idea; will you go, girls?”

The girls were all pleased with the plan. “But wait until we have had our tableaux,” said Annie; “because they are getting ready now.”

The tableaux were of a very simple sort, but they amused all the children very much.

They had one called “The Flower Girl,” in which Eva was standing, with some little bouquets in a basket, and one held out in her hand; but Eva smiled; she was quite too happy that day to keep a sober face.

Another was called “The Bargain;” Ralph and Georgie did that: they had long coats and large straw hats on; and Georgie was leaning against the wall, whittling, while Ralph had a carpet-bag open, and seemed to be trying to sell him some article, like a pedler.

But the prettiest one was called “The Little Errand Girl.” Mattie and Susy More acted that. Susy had a basket in her

hand, and Mattie was tying her hat, and seemed to be telling her what to do. They copied this tableau from a picture which Miss Agatha found for them.

When all the tableaux had been admired, the boys and girls started for the river. They had just about time, Miss Agatha said, to go and see the dam, before their tea would be ready.

They ran a race through the first meadow; the whole troop trying to see which could reach the bars first, Frisk and all.

Then they were content to go more quietly.

"Are those turnips in that field, Phil?" Donald asked, looking over the fence: "I like a raw turnip sometimes, don't you?"

"Of course; we have eaten them lots of times!"

"Can we have one, do you suppose?"

"I guess you can have all the raw turnips you want to eat; but wait now till we come back; they are all ahead of us!"

The two ran on, but Phil suddenly stopped. His love of mischief prompted him to call out to Donald:—

"Say, Don! Here's a turnip, if you want one!"

"Growing out here? How odd!" said Donald; but he waited for the root which Phil was busily cleaning, with his face turned one side, to hide his smiles.

"What a queer shaped turnip; are you sure it is one?" asked poor Donald, putting it to his mouth.



"Don't you think I know a turnip when I see it?" retorted Phil.

Donald had taken a bite or two, but now he threw it down, saying: "It don't taste right, Phil; it makes my mouth feel queer."

"Spit it out then, and come on; but I thought you liked turnips."

Phil did not look at Donald, until, wondering at his silence, he turned to see what he was about.

Donald was walking slowly along with both hands on his mouth, and tears in his eyes.

"O Phil! my mouth hurts awfully!" he gasped; "what shall I do?"

Phil was startled as he looked at him, for his lips were swelling very much, and as he opened his mouth Phil saw that his tongue was swollen frightfully.

"Let us go up to the house, and see if Mrs. Deane can't give you something; O Don! I'm so sorry I gave you that." Please forgive me if you can!"

"What was it?" Donald tried to ask.

"It was an *Indian turnip*; they call it Jack in the Pulpit. I knew it would n't taste good, but I did n't suppose it would serve you so!"

Phil hurried Donald to the house, for he felt more frightened

each time he looked at him. He hastily told the whole story to Miss Agatha.

"O Phil, how could you?" she said; and then, as she looked at Donald, she whispered:—

"Run up and see if Dr. Brooks is at home!"

He had just driven up to the gate, and he came right down with Phil, hearing his story by the way.

By this time the party of children were returning from the river, all wondering what had become of Phil and Donald; and Phil was obliged to explain matters to them.

Poor fellow! he was pretty severely punished for his mischievous trick. The children, seeing that he was crying, only whispered among themselves about the affair, and Phil went back into the house, determined to know the worst about Donald.

The Doctor was applying some cooling stuff to the poor swollen mouth, and Mrs. Deane was waiting on him.

Miss Agatha came out to the children, and told them that Donald begged they would go on with their plays, and not worry about him.

Dr. Brooks offered to take Donald home and explain the trouble to his mother, so she need not be alarmed at seeing him in such a plight; and Donald was glad to go, for he did not feel much like play.

The children were just gathering around the tea-table as Don-

ald came through the room ; he smiled and pointed to his mouth ; then grasped Phil's hand, and mumbled out, "Don't fret, Phil ; you did n't mean to hurt me !"

Mrs. Deane put up a mug of cool, soft custard, for Donald to eat, as soon as his mouth felt a little better.

"He 'll be all right soon, I hope," said the Doctor ; "go on with your fun, little people, that is the best way to please this brave boy !"

So the boys and girls grew merry again, and Miss Agatha tried to have them enjoy their nice supper, and the play after it, as if nothing had happened.

They all spoke kindly to Phil ; but he could not enjoy the feast, or the plays ; he felt too sadly the mischief he had done.

As Phil told Donald, he had no idea that the root he gave him could do so much harm ; but he *did* mean to play him a trick. Phil was very fond of playing tricks upon others, as all the scholars knew.

After tea, Roxie took little Elsie home, because she had promised to bring her home early. The "school-baby" had enjoyed the party as much as any of the children, and she had a great deal to tell her mamma and grandpa.

Miss Agatha put up a nice paper of candies and cake for Norman, and one for little Fan, as she promised to do ; and the children who lived nearest to them carried the parcels, with Eva's love.

Mr. More drove in with his wagon, for his children, about dusk.

Phil told his father about Donald, and begged that he might go up to the hotel to see how he was. "I can walk home, father!" said he.

Mr. More looked very grave when he heard what had happened. "I will drive up with you," he said. "I must see the boy's mother myself."

They found Donald much more comfortable, and able to eat his custard. He assured Phil that he would be all right by morning, and Mrs. Sterling was very kind, and said she knew Phil had felt worse than Donald had about it; and I believe that was true.

"I hope, my son," said Mr. More, when they were in the wagon again, "I really hope this will be a lesson to you against playing tricks upon people, as you so often do."

And Phil was quite sure he should think of poor Donald's turnip, if he were ever tempted to do such a thing again.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LESSON OF LOVE.



S Georgie told Frisk, the school was to begin the next week, and so it did.

A good full school-room there was, too. Norman was so much better that he could come for half a day, and after the first two days he stayed all day. Olive and Donald were to go away very soon, but they begged to go to school as long as they remained in Carfield.

Mattie Lawrence was ready to begin again, and Sammy came, hand in hand with his little cousin, who seemed almost too happy to have him back again.

Elsie seemed to remember all the ways of the school, and behaved quite like a scholar. She began to learn her A B C, too, and had a large alphabet-card on purpose.

One morning Ralph and Georgie came into the school-yard laughing together, and before long a number of the children had found out what amused them so much, and were laughing too.

Presently Rosa Clay came along with Phoebe and Mattie. Miss Agatha was sitting by the window with a bit of mending, and watching her children as they gathered in the yard. She noticed that as soon as Rosa came the younger children called out, "Proudie, Proudie!"

Some of the older ones hushed them, but they laughed among themselves as they did it.

Rosa very soon perceived that they were talking and whispering about her. She looked vexed, and at last, hearing Gerty say again, "Proudie!" she turned to her quickly and asked, "What do you mean by that, Gerty Ellis?"

Gerty looked abashed, for Rosa spoke in a rather sharp tone. "*They* said so!" she muttered.

"Who said so? What do you all mean? I'll ask Miss Agatha if you are to call me names!" said Rosa.

"Never mind, Rosa," said Phœbe, coaxingly; "it's only some of the little children's nonsense. I'm sure none of *us* would call you proud!"

"I don't know!" began Rosa; but the children all hushed, and welcomed their teacher with smiles, as she came out among them.

Miss Agatha sat down on the bench under the trees, where most of the children were. She lifted Gerty upon her lap and put her arm around Rosa.

"What is the matter with our children, Frisk—do you know?"

Frisk whined, and wagged his tail, just as if he thought things ought to be attended to; and this and Miss Agatha's question made the girls and boys laugh; but some of them soon grew grave.



"What is the trouble, Rosa?"

"I don't know, Miss Agatha. They are laughing about me, and calling me 'Proudie,' or something like that; and I don't know what I have done!"

"What is it, Ralph? Will you tell me?"

Ralph blushed and fidgeted; but when Miss Agatha spoke in that quiet, pleasant way, and waited for an answer, she was pretty sure to get it.

"We didn't mean any harm," said he. "We were going past Rosa's house just now, George and I, and we saw her sitting with a looking-glass before her, just as if—as if she thought she looked *pretty*; that's all!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Phoebe, "is that all? I can tell you how it was, Miss Agatha, for I was in there.

"Mrs. Clay was asking Rosa which color she would like best for her dress this fall, blue or garnet, and Rosa caught up Lolly's blue cape and put it over her head, just to see how she liked the color. I don't think that was so very proud."

Miss Agatha smiled, and looked at Ralph, who blushed and fidgeted again.

"We had no business to be looking into windows, I suppose," said Georgie; "and I wish we had n't told of it, Rosa."

"But Rosa *is* pretty!" cried Jimmy, "and how can she help looking pretty in the glass?"

Such a merry shout as was raised at this! Then Miss Agatha said:—

“Now we are all good-natured again, I think; so let us go to the school-room. I hope you can all say your texts this morning.”

Miss Agatha led the way, the little ones skipping around her; the girls followed more slowly, talking about the looking-glass business.

“I don’t think it was such a dreadful thing to be looking in a glass, that the boys need have made such a fuss about it!” said Olive.

“No; we have seen people doing so before, have n’t we?” said Phœbe, roguishly.

“I wonder what Miss Agatha meant about knowing the texts; we knew them well enough yesterday, did n’t we?”

“We *said* them well,” said Sylvia, slowly; “but I suppose she meant about their *meaning*.”

The school-bell, and Frisk, put a stop to further talk; but some of the children repeated their texts more thoughtfully than usual.

These were their verses for the week: the girls said:—

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you; with all malice.”

The boys:—

“And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

And the little ones said this text:—

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.”

When three o’clock came that day, the children expected that Miss Agatha would say something about their verses; and they were not disappointed.

“I had some reasons for choosing these verses for you this week,” their teacher said, “and I have seen more reasons since.

“My boys and girls are generally very friendly and pleasant together, but it will be good for us all to study Love’s lessons, as we find them in the Bible: don’t you think so?”

Then Miss Agatha went on to ask the children what was meant by “evil-speaking,” in the text.

Ruth said she thought it was saying something bad about people.

“That is a very good answer, Ruthie.

“Now I hope my children would not say anything untrue about each other, from malice or bitterness. I do not think, either, that any of you would injure one of your schoolmates on purpose, — from anger or hatred.

“But I want to say a word to you all about this habit of teasing for fun, and playing tricks upon each other: is there anything in your text about it?”

The children looked as if they thought not.

"Think again, dear children; you say you don't mean any harm; but would there really be any fun in teasing unless some one were vexed, or made uncomfortable?"

"I suppose not, — not very *much*," said Phil.

Miss Agatha did not say anything especially about the turnip trick; or the "evil-speaking" about Rosa; nor did she mention two or three other little unkind things which she had noticed; for she thought the children would all understand what sort of actions she meant.

But she talked to them pleasantly about the "Love" which worketh no ill, or hurt, to his neighbor; and about being kind, and tender-hearted, and forgiving; and her little scholars listened earnestly.

There was no more teasing heard on the play-ground that week; and Rosa took pains to speak pleasantly to Ralph, about some book, as they went down-stairs, so that he might know she quite forgave him for calling her "Proudie."

CHAPTER XXV.

PARTINGS.



THE next week Donald and Olive both went away. Their schoolmates were very sorry to part with them. Donald had been a great favorite with the boys from the first, and the children all liked Olive too, now; although they used to feel vexed with her fine airs, as they called her ways, when she first came to school.

Donald was to go to a large boys' school in the city that winter.

"I suppose I shall like it, when I get to know some of the fellows," said he to Phil; "but I don't believe I shall like any teacher as much as I do Miss Agatha."

"Well, I wish you would write to me, Don, if you don't forget all about us, after you get home!"

"I shall not forget you, Phil; you know I won't; and I'll write to you if you will be sure to answer my letter."

Donald declared he meant to coax his mother to come to Carfield again, the next summer; "and I think she will," said he, "because she likes it too!"

Olive and Phœbe also agreed to write to each other very often.

So the summer visitors went away; and the children soon began to understand that Summer was quite gone, too; and that Winter would come before long.

But they were not sorry; all the children liked winter plays and pleasures; and besides, the beautiful autumn days gave them enough to do and to think of, without looking forward.

"I had such fun bringing Elsie to school to-day," said Roxie to the other girls. "She was so pleased with the leaves. You know the ground was covered with them after the wind last night. She shuffled her little feet along, and laughed as if she thought they were spread over the road on purpose for fun!"

"What a dear little thing she is!" said Annie. "Did you hear her sing with us this morning? She can sing that hymn better than any other:—

"'Saviour, like a Shepherd lead us.'"

"Yes, but she gets the tune of all our hymns and songs," said Georgie. "She'll be the smartest girl in school one of these days!"

"But not equal to the boys, I suppose!" said Annie, laughing.

The children were all very fond of little Elsie. She did not need to come to school now to be taken care of, for her mother



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was quite well. But Elsie loved to go, and Miss Agatha loved to have her in school, for, as I have said, she was quite an orderly little scholar, and gave no trouble at all.

You will know now how sorry all the children felt when they were told that their dear little pet was very ill.

It was on Sunday that she was taken sick. Monday morning Ruth called to Sylvia to wait for her, as she was starting for school, and then she told her the sad news which she had heard from her father.

Sylvia looked very much troubled, and asked over and over again if the Doctor thought Elsie was very sick.

Kate Maxwell was swinging on the large gate, watching for the scholars. When she saw Ruth and Sylvia talking so earnestly, she ran out to meet them, and then she flew back, with a very anxious face, to tell Miss Agatha about Elsie.

As soon as school was out that afternoon Miss Agatha went down to Mrs. Martin's to inquire after the little one.

She found her very ill, truly; and the parents and the old grandfather were watching anxiously over their darling.

Good Dr. Brooks did all he could to save the precious little life. But all his skill and the love and care of friends could not keep her. After three days of suffering, dear little Elsie died.

It was a sorrowful group of children that gathered in the school-room the morning after Elsie's death.

Roxie Barton came in and gave one glance at the little empty chair to which she had so often led her pet, then she burst into tears, and in a moment all the children in the room were crying.

When Miss Agatha came in, she could not keep back her own tears, but she spoke lovingly to the grieving children.

"We shall miss the wee lamb from our flock very much," she said; "but we must remember that it is the Good Shepherd who has called her, and we know that she is safe and happy in His care."

When all were quiet and had taken their seats, Ralph said, "Miss Agatha, may we have some new texts to-day?"

Miss Agatha knew what he meant. He wanted her to choose some verses for them that would have something to do with what they were all thinking about.

The others all wanted them too. So Miss Agatha thought a moment and then gave them these verses:—

"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom."

"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

"Jesus called a little child unto Him."

When the little ones repeated this verse, Sammy looked up at his teacher and asked, "Does that mean Elsie?"

"It is true of Elsie now, dear," she said. "Jesus called a little child to Him when He was on earth, and He blessed the little children who were brought to Him; and so we are sure that He cares for little children now, and will bless them in life and in death."

Miss Agatha, and all the children of her school, went to little Elsie's funeral on Saturday. The children walked, two and two, after the mourners and the little casket to the grave.

As they walked along the dead leaves rustled under their feet. The older ones all thought how merrily little Elsie had run through them, only a few days before, and some of them remembered this verse, "We all do fade as a leaf."

Each of the children had some flowers, and when the casket was lowered into the grave, they stepped forward and threw the flowers upon it. So they bade good-by to their dear little "school-baby."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MEMORIAL WORK.



HIL'S and Phœbe's first letters to Donald and Olive were filled with the account of little Elsie's death, and of the funeral, for they knew that they would be interested in knowing about it.

The children often spoke of Elsie at school, and seemed to miss her very much.

"I wish," said Phœbe, "that little Fan were well, and could come to school again; then the little ones' corner would not seem quite so lonely."

"Fan is getting on very nicely," said Miss Agatha. "I hope she will be here again before many weeks."

"But I have something to propose to you, as a memorial of little Elsie. We will talk about it this afternoon."

The children were all eager to know what this plan could be.

When their talking hour came, Miss Agatha told them of a friend of hers who was a teacher in an Indian Mission school.

She told how the wild little Indian boys and girls were brought into this school and taught the ways of Christian people, as well as to read and write and work. Above all, these poor little heathen were taught to know and love the true God, and Jesus Christ the Saviour.

"My friend wrote me, in her last letter," said Miss Agatha, "about two little orphan girls whom they were about to adopt at the Mission; and now my plan is that we take one of these Indian orphans as our 'school-baby,' in place of dear little Elsie.

"We can make clothes for her, and do all we can towards supporting her; and perhaps we shall be in time to ask that she may receive our pet's name, Elsie, as her Christian name.

"I have talked with Mr. Ellis about it, and he likes the plan very much; now, what do you think of it?"

The children had glanced at each other, and nodded and smiled, while their teacher explained her plan; and now they all spoke at once,—all the older ones at least, who could understand it.

"O Miss Agatha, that will be so nice,—just the very thing!"

"I do hope the little Indian girl can be named Elsie!"

"We will all work for her, won't we? If Miss Agatha will tell us what to do!"

"How can we get money to support the little girl, Miss Agatha?"

"I propose that on Wednesday afternoons, at three o'clock, if your parents like the plan, we all work for our little Indian child.

"The girls can sew, making her clothes; and perhaps we can

make some articles to sell. The boys may take turns in reading aloud to us, while we work; and perhaps those who are not reading can find some useful work for their hands, which will help our Mission fund."

Yes, the boys were sure they could help, in some way, and they were all pleased with the idea.

Miss Agatha told them they might ask their parents about it that evening.

"I'm sure my father will not object," said Ralph, "because you have asked him, Miss Agatha."

"And I am sure our fathers and mothers will like whatever Mr. Ellis likes," said Rosa.

Rosa was right. The children's parents were all pleased to have them take an interest in such a good work.

So Miss Agatha wrote to her friend at the Mission.

The children were very impatient for the answer; but in the mean time they made ready a "Memorial Mite Chest," and put it up in the school-room, to hold their earnings, and other offerings. Quite a number of coins rattled into the box, the very first day; to make a beginning, the children said.

At last the letter came from the far off Indian country.

Every child in the school handled the envelope, and all the older ones got out their maps to find the place where the letter was written.

It contained good news.

A little child had just been brought to the Mission to be adopted; and the Missionaries were all willing she should be named Elsie, and would like to have Miss Agatha's children "love her, and pray for her, and work for her;" so the lady wrote.

You cannot think how interested all the children were in this far-off school-baby. They could talk of nothing else, and were very anxious for Wednesday afternoon to come, so that they might have their first Missionary meeting, and work for their little girl.

The older children borrowed Missionary papers of Mr. Ellis, and of their teacher, to read about Indian Missions.

Phœbe Barker had secured one magazine which had a very interesting account of the mission-schools, one afternoon.

She hastily put away her things and was sitting down to read it, when her mother called her.

"You are very late this afternoon, dear; it is almost tea-time. I want you to take a slice of bread and toast it by the grate, for Grandma's tea; she is feeling very poorly to-night."

Phœbe tucked her magazine under her arm, and went after the bread and the toaster.

Puss seated herself also in front of the grate to watch the operation; but if Puss reasoned about it at all, she must have thought Grandma's toast was in a poor way.

Phœbe held up her toaster with one hand, and opened her book with the other. The first side scorched a little, and Phœbe turned it, but then, forgetting what she was about, rested her toaster upon the floor instead of holding it up.

Thus her mother found her when she hurried in to arrange the tray for her invalid.

"Why Phœbe dear! why did n't you tell me that this kettle had slipped back, and was boiling so hard? You and Puss might have been scalded. And the toast?"

Phœbe raised her toaster, looking very much ashamed

"I was so interested about the Indian school, mother, I forgot what I was doing."

"I am very glad to have you interested in Missions, my daughter, in a proper way," said Mrs. Barker. "But you must not neglect 'the duty that lies nearest to you,' for the far off work."

Phœbe blushed at these words, for that very afternoon in school, she and one or two other girls had missed their lesson, and been reprovèd by their teacher, because they were all busy trying a new pattern for some crocheted edging which they wanted to make for sale.

Phœbe remembered her mother's words, "Do the duty that lies nearest you;" and the next day, when Rosa held up two inches of the edging behind the desk, and made signs that she



could show her how to do it, Phœbe whispered, "Wait until recess!" and went on studying her lesson.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LETTER FROM ENGLAND.



MISS AGATHA'S children were all interested in the Post-office about these days, and there was seldom a week that one or two letters were not read aloud in the school after three o'clock.

There were the letters from Donald and Olive; for they did not forget their little country friends. They wrote quite regularly, and as all the children were pleased to hear from them, Phœbe and Phil always brought their letters to read aloud to the rest.

Once a month they were to expect a letter from the lady at the Indian Mission. She had promised to write as often as that, to keep them informed about their little Indian Elsie.

Besides, there were the letters which Kate and Eva received from their papa and mamma. Very often there was something very interesting in these about the places which they visited, and the strange things they saw in the lands across the ocean.

Mrs. Maxwell was always thinking of her little daughters at home, so she was sure to notice things which would please and interest them; and then she would describe them in the letters. Kate and Eva, after they had enjoyed hearing these letters themselves, generally asked Miss Agatha to read them in school, so that the others could share their pleasure.

As the letters were read, Miss Agatha always told the children to take out their maps and find the places mentioned; and thus they learned a great deal about the cities of Europe, in a very pleasant way.

I would like very much to copy some of these letters, but they would take too much room, even if I could get them. They would have made quite a book by themselves if they had been printed.

One little story I must tell you, which came in a letter from England, and amused all the children very much.

It was not about the wonderful things to be seen in the great city of London. There was a good deal said about that city in one or two other letters. But this was about a simple cottage scene in the country.

Mrs. Maxwell said she saw two little children, a boy and a girl, talking very earnestly to a magpie, and she stopped to ask them what they were doing, and what was the matter.

The magpie, you must know, is an English bird, which

can talk nearly as well as a parrot, they say. It is a very amusing bird, when tamed; but it is a sad rogue, for it is always playing tricks.

Magpies are very fond of carrying off anything bright and shining, like a piece of money; and many a time has some lost treasure been found in their nest. Like all thieves, they take great pains to protect their hiding-place. They build their nests on some high tree, and defend the entrance with sharp thorns, leaving only a hole just large enough for the birds to go in and out. So you would be obliged to cut away the thorns with a jackknife, if you suspected them of stealing and hiding anything, or if you wanted to get at their eggs; but I hope you would not do that, for then *you* would be the thief.

As it proved, these thieving tricks of the magpie were the cause of the little cottage children's trouble.

The magpie which Mrs. Maxwell saw had been given to them, and was a great pet with them.

But it would steal and hide things, just for mischief; and this made so much trouble in the cottage, that the children's mother said that she could not have it around.

Just now she had missed her thimble. It was a silver one, and she thought a great deal of it.

"Mother says our Mag has hid it," said the boy, "and I'm afraid she has; for the other day she stole grandmam's scis-

sors, and we couldn't find 'em for three days. Then we found 'em under the door-step in a crack."

"And so," said the little girl, "we've brought her all the things she likes, and we are asking her *please* to find the thimble, for we would cry if mother sent away our Mag; wouldn't we, Tommy?"

Tommy did not like to own up before the lady that he would cry for anything, but he looked quite as anxious as his little sister to coax the bird.

Mag, all the while, stood perched on the outside of her wicker cage, looking saucily at the children and chattering away at them; but not one word would she tell about the thimble.

"Do you suppose your bird understands what you want, little ones?" said Mrs. Maxwell.

"It seems as if she might," said Tommy; "for she knows so *many* things. She knows when mother is angry, and just keeps out of the way."

"But our Mag isn't half so naughty as one the mistress had up at the school!" said the little girl. "Why, that one would tear up papers and letters all into little bits. *Our* Mag never tears up papers!"

"May be because we've no papers lying around; — not often," said Tommy.

Just then a younger child came toddling out of the cottage



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and announced that "Mammy had found her thimble in the sugar-bowl."

"Oh, then she will let Mag stay a little longer," cried the little girl, joyfully.

Mrs. Maxwell talked a little longer with the children, and pleased them very much by telling them that she should write to her little girls in America about their Magpie. Then she gave them each a sixpence, and told them to be sure not to let Mag steal the silver pieces and hide them.

Kate and Eva and the other children thought this was the funniest letter of all. Another, which they liked very much, described a Foundling Hospital in London, where some hundreds of little children were cared for and trained.

Another was written after a journey down the river Rhine, in the season of grape gathering; and it told how the villages seemed deserted, and all the men, women, and children were out in the vineyards.

Kate and Eva were very much interested in that account, for they had been enjoying the grapes which grew on the vine over the south door, and they thought they would like to be on those pleasant hills all covered with grape-vines.

Kate was learning to write very nice little letters to her mamma; and Eva, too, could print a few lines to send with Kate's. I am quite sure that these letters delighted their par-

ents, although they told of nothing strange or new; but only of the simple duties and pleasures of two little children.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FIRST SNOW-STORM.



INTER was now drawing near. Two or three times the boys were quite certain, as they scampered away from school, that there would be snow on the ground before another morning; and sleds were brought down, all in readiness to glide about, in case it should come.

It was quite late in the season when the first snow-storm came; but that was one worth waiting for, as Georgie said.

Sylvia knew all about it, and remembered it for a long time.

There was an old lady, living two miles or more north of the village, who was very fond of Sylvia, and enjoyed very much having her come up to spend a Saturday with her.

Sylvia always liked to go, although some of her young friends wondered that she did.

To be sure there was not much to amuse young folks at Mrs. White's, and the old lady herself was often almost helpless with rheumatism, and so the other children thought she must be very dull company.

But she loved to see a young face; and Sylvia loved to sit by her, and hear her tell about old times; she did not think her old friend dull, because she could not go about.

The snow-storm came on Saturday; and Friday, after school, Sylvia had gone to Mrs. White's, to stay over night.

When she found, in the morning, that it was snowing, she thought, and Mrs. White thought too, that it would not last long. But after dinner the snow was still falling, and Sylvia was sorry that she had not gone home before.

"You had better stay, my dear," said the old lady; "it is too much of a storm for you to walk home; stay with your old aunty!"

Sylvia kissed her, but she shook her head.

"Mother will want me, ma'am; there are so many things to do Saturday night. And besides, I could n't get back in time for church, if I stayed."

"Well, since you are such a useful little woman, I suppose I must not keep you; but I'm afraid you will spoil your pretty hat and coat. You must take my umbrella."

So Sylvia started; but she had no idea how deep the snow was on the road. The wind blew, too, so that it was very hard walking; and to make matters worse, she took the wrong turn, at a fork in the road, and went some distance out of her way before she found out the mistake.

Poor child, she felt quite discouraged, as she turned back again; and soon she felt so tired, that she was glad to sit down on a log, under an old shed, and rest a little before going on.

That was not a very safe thing to do, cold and weary as she was; but the little girl did not know this.

She did not sit there many minutes, however, before she was startled by a quick, familiar bark, which made her think of school time.

Sure enough, there was Frisk, barking, and jumping, and running around her, as if he were perfectly astonished at finding one of his flock out in that desolate place in a snow-storm.

"Why Frisk! You dear, good doggie! Who is with you? Oh, I hope it is Mr. Horace!"

It was Mr. Horace: he had stopped his horse out on the road, wondering what Frisk had found to bark at in that way.

When he saw Sylvia, he did not wonder any longer that Frisk was excited.

"Why, my dear child! How came you here? Come right up here, and I'll take you home!" and he made room for her on the seat, as he spoke.

Sylvia told him how she had taken the wrong road. "I think the snow must have blinded me, just then," said she, "for I thought I knew every step of the way from Aunt White's."

"Well, my dear, it was a good Providence that sent me off





on this lonely road on an errand to-day; I did not like to start very much, for it was neither wheeling nor sleighing. And it was well I took Frisk for company."

"Yes, sir," said Sylvia, gratefully. "I was *most* frightened; but I thought"—

"You thought our Heavenly Father was mindful of you? That is right, my little girl. We must trust in Him, and keep up a good heart, when we find ourselves in a hard place; for 'He knoweth the way that we take,' though we are blind and mistaken ourselves."

"Now you talk just like Miss Agatha!" said Sylvia, smiling up at him. "I like to hear you!"

"Well, little woman, that comes of having such a good sister. I hope you will grow up to be such a good friend to your brothers as she has been to me."

Altogether this talk with Mr. Horace was very pleasant, and gave Sylvia a good deal to think of.

Sylvia did try to be a good, kind, patient sister, and to help Ralph, and Gerty, and little Harry, and Will; and they all loved her dearly.

When Mr. Horace spoke so about his good sister, Sylvia determined in her heart, to try always to be a helper to the younger ones.

When they drove down the village street, the little boys were all out with their sleds, although it was still snowing hard.

"O Sylvia!" cried Ralph, seeing her. "Mother has been wondering how you would get home! And will you lend me your sled? It's ever so much better than mine!"

Now the little girls in Carfield were quite as fond of sledding as the boys, and several of them had very pretty sleds. Sylvia's had been her last Christmas present, and was very light and pretty.

"Where is *your* sled, Ralph?" said she. "I'm afraid you will break mine. Besides"— She was going to say, "I want it myself," but remembering that the little ones needed her, and that Ralph's sled was not nearly so nice as hers, she added instead,—

"You can take it, Ralph; only please be careful of it."

Ralph was surprised and pleased; for he knew Sylvia was very particular about her sled, and he hardly thought she would lend it so willingly.

His sister's pleasant tone so lingered on his ear, that when Gerty appeared at the door in her hood and cloak, and said, "Please give me *one* little ride, Ralphie!" he answered in the same pleasant way, "Yes, come along, sis! You shall have the first sleigh-ride of the season, if no one gets started before us!"

So true it is, that if one child of a family speaks lovingly and kindly, you will hear the pleasant sounds echoed from one to another, perhaps through all the day.

Harsh, cross, impatient tones will surely have their echoes, too. Which echoes would you like best to set in motion, dear young readers?

“Kind looks, kind words, and love sincere,
Make home to all a place most dear;
Oh let me ever try by these
To cheer and bless, to serve and please.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

OLIVE'S WORK.



PHOEBE brought a letter from Olive one day, which had quite a story in it, as she said. It really was a long letter for Olive to write, and it was well done, too; and showed, as Miss Agatha said, that she was taking pains to improve.

As all the children were interested in the letter, our readers must have it too:—

“DEAR PHOEBE,—I was glad to hear from you again. I think it must be first-rate fun to be in the country in winter. I never was on a sled in my life.

“What a nice place that hill must be to slide down, be-

hind Mr. Deane's! But it was nice in summer too, running down to the river. Oh, I hope we shall go to Carfield next summer again!

"We do not see much snow here in the city, for it is all trampled and soiled as soon as it falls, and then it turns into black mud. But it is cold here. People say it is going to be a hard winter for the poor.

"We know a poor girl who is an orphan, and she has a little sister. They live with some one who is not kind to them, and this girl—her name is Julie—is trying to earn money enough to take her little sister away and take care of her.

"The way we came to know about her was this: She came to our house to sell some toys. My little cousins, Myra and Harry, were standing at the window, and of course they liked the basket of toys. Julie had some of those pretty red balloons, and some dolls, and other things.

"I don't suppose they had money enough to buy any of them, but my Uncle Thayer was here then, and as he came up to the door he saw the girl, and the children looking as if they wanted to buy something, so he asked Julie to come in, and told them each to choose a toy.

"Of course Harry took a balloon, and Myra chose a doll. She picked out the prettiest one, but Julie said, 'That is broken, my dear.'



"She said it, as Myra said, just as if she was going to cry. And Harry said, 'Why, do you love the dolly? Are you sorry?'

"Julie smiled then, and told us she was sorry the doll was broken, because she would have been glad to sell it to get some money for her little sister.

"Myra stood looking at her a moment, and then she said, 'What made you tell that it was broken? It does not show.'

"'I could not cheat, for any money, my dear,' said Julie in a low voice.

"But I know Uncle Thayer heard her. He asked Myra if she did n't want to take that poor child with the broken arm and nurse her up, and Myra said yes; she thought it was the prettiest, if it *was* broken. And then Uncle Thayer paid for it, and for the balloon, and told Myra to pick out another dolly for Julie to give to her little sister. That made Julie look so happy!

"Since that, we have seen Julie two or three times. I think she is a real good girl, and I hope she will be able to take care of her little sister, as she wants to do.

"Oh, there are so many poor people here! Aunt Harley goes to see some of them every week, and yesterday she took me with her. We went to see a poor woman who is sick, and has four little children. One of them made me think of dear little Elsie, our school-baby, so much, that I asked Aunt Harley to let

me make something for her. She is going to cut out a warm frock and let me make it. So I shall have some work like yours.

"Please tell me more about your little Indian Elsie. I read your letter to my uncle and aunt, and they thought it was a very nice plan, — your Missionary work, I mean.

"I must stop, or I shall make mistakes, for I am tired. Is not this a long letter from
Your friend,

"OLIVE."

It proved to be a cold winter, as had been predicted, and very hard for the poor, as Olive said.

In fact people who were not very poor found it hard to keep warm, in some of the coldest days.

But Miss Agatha's boys and girls did not mind the cold weather. They grew more rosy and healthy by playing in the snow, and taking their merry walks to school.

One day Jimmy Brooks said, as he came in: "Oh boys, you don't know how splendid the Lake is! I was up past there with papa yesterday, and it's all frozen over tight!"

"Yes; I'm going up there, a fishing, some day with my brother Rob," said Georgie.

"How can you catch fish, when it's all frozen over?" asked Lenny.

"Oh, don't you know? They cut holes in the ice, of course!" said Jimmy. "Oh, I wish I lived by the Lake; I'd like to play

on the ice; it would be such fun to think I was running all over the Lake!"

The boys were not up in the school-room, but were talking at the foot of the stairs, in the barn.

Mr. Horace was at his work bench, in the little room he called his "Tinker's shop," and the boys went in to see him.

"So you think you would like to play on the Lake just now, Jimmy?" said he.

"It must be grand skating," said Ralph, "if it only was n't quite so far away; did you ever skate, when you were a boy, Mr. Horace?"

"Oh yes; I was not lame then, you know, and I used to be very fond of skating.

"One winter when I was in N——, the harbor was frozen away out a long distance from the shore, so that we had a famous skating ground."

"Oh, tell us some of the fun you had then!" said Georgie.

"Shall I tell you about my voyage on a cake of ice?"

"Voyage! Oh yes, please, sir!"

"Well, one day when the ice was breaking up in the harbor, some of us boys got on the large cakes of ice, with long poles to steer ourselves with, and we went navigating around.

"I thought it great fun at first; but after a while I lost my pole; it floated off in one direction, and I on my ice raft drifted away in another."

"Oh dear, did you get drowned, sir?" asked Sammy.

The boys all shouted at this. "No, my boy, I am here to tell of it; but I did not feel very safe or comfortable, I must say.

"I had no way of steering my ice cake, and it drifted about as it might. At last I was relieved to see that I was floating towards the shore.

"My raft struck against a high wall, ten feet high, I should say. It was rather higher than I liked to climb, but anything was better than my ice-boat; so up I went.

"I reached the top of the wall safely; and when my head showed above it, a man below, in his grounds, looked up astonished.

"'Why, wherever did you come from?' said he: and I did not wonder that he asked."

The boys seemed to think this was a wonderful adventure. They were eager to ask more questions; but just then the school-bell rang, and Frisk came to look them up.

As it happened, the geography lesson for the first class was about the Arctic regions; so the children had more ice and snow to think about. They were so interested in their lesson that Miss Agatha promised, after three o'clock, to read to them from an account of an expedition to those cold northern regions.

As the marks were all good that day, there was nothing to prevent the reading. So the children heard about those daring


men who sailed up amongst the beautiful but dangerous icebergs and ice-fields; and how they suffered through the long, severe winter.

"Well," said Phil, "I like skating and sledding as well as any fellow; but I'm thankful I can go into the house and get warm when I've had enough of it!"

So thought all the children; and well they might be thankful for their comfortable homes.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE NEW SCHOLARS.

" THINK we shall have two new scholars next week," said Miss Agatha, one day.

All the children wanted to know who they could be. "Do you know the Widow Bunn's two little children? Their names are Ben and Maggie, I believe; they come to Sunday-school," said Miss Agatha.

"Oh!" said Ralph; most of the children were silent; but Gerty said: "I know Maggie Bunn; I see her every Sunday."

"I don't see what Miss Agatha wants to have them come here to school for!" whispered Rosa to Phœbe.

"I'm sure I don't see how they can afford to come!" said Annie More; "they're real poor."

“And they dress so queerly,” Rosa went on; “that little Maggie always has a funny little shawl tied round behind; and Ben,—well his clothes are clean enough, I suppose, but he looks like forty years ago, I should think!”

Of course Miss Agatha noticed the whispering, and she could easily guess what it was all about.

“I hope,” she said gently, “that these fatherless children will find friends among my scholars; I know them to be gentle, and well behaved; and it is no fault of theirs that their clothes are poor and old-fashioned.”

Poor little Maggie Bunn! it was indeed no fault of hers that they were so poor, yet she had suffered a good deal, already, from the thoughtless rudeness of more favored children.

Widow Bunn had nursed her husband through a long, painful illness; and after he died, she had been worn out, and sick herself; so that it was all she could do to find food for her children; and no wonder their clothes were shabby.

The first cold Sunday, she brought out the cloaks which she had made, two years before, for Ben and Maggie, out of an old one of their father's.

The children wore them to church and Sunday-school. Ben's did not look so much amiss, but Maggie's made her little figure look rather odd, and was quite a contrast to the warm pretty sacks which the other little girls in her class wore.

They talked about it, too; and Maggie saw them laughing. She was a little thing, but she felt very badly, and her face was quite red, as she heard them making fun of her cloak.

The next Sunday, Maggie stole out of the door quietly, and joined Ben, who was waiting for her in the street.

"Come sissy, we shall be late," said he. "Why, where is your cloak? Go back and get it, quick: it's cold!"

"No, it is n't," said Maggie; "see the sun! and I don't want to wear that old thing, Bennie; they laugh at me so!"

"Mother don't know you have n't got your cloak, does she?" asked Ben, doubtfully.

"She don't care, I guess; she's asleep, Ben; I don't want to wake up my sick mother, to ask her! Come, let's walk real fast!"

So Maggie went to church with her short-sleeved frock, and little shawl tied around. This made the other children stare more than before, for she looked so cold; but Maggie did not hear them laugh this time.

When the children started for home, poor Maggie wished for her cloak. It was cold, the wind blew, and the snow was falling. She shivered, and her teeth chattered, as she ran along, trying to cover her arms with her shawl.

"Stop, Maggie," said Ben. "I'll lend you my cloak. My tippet will keep me warm enough!"

The little girl was glad enough to be wrapped up in Ben's old cloak.

"But *you* 'll be cold, Bennie, for that's your summer sack you've got on."

"Never mind me; come on. But Maggie," said Ben, gently, "don't do so again, will you? Mother says we mustn't mind our poor clothes, because God knows what we need."

It was during that same week that Miss Agatha came to see Widow Bunn, and offered to take the children into her school.

Ben was delighted, and he thanked his kind friend with all his heart, for he was very anxious to get on with his lessons.

Maggie was very still, and let her mother thank Miss Agatha for her. She liked the kind young lady, and would have felt as glad as Ben did to go to her school; but some of the children went there, she knew, who laughed at her; and Maggie did not want to see them every day.

Did the children who laughed at little Maggie imagine how much pain they were giving? Some of them did not, I am sure; but that did not excuse their proud, unkind thoughts and words.

It was Wednesday; and in the afternoon the children were to have their Missionary meeting, as they called it, and work for their Indian child.

The boys as well as the girls had something to do. Phil



and Georgie were whittling out clothes-pins to sell to their mothers, — rather clumsy ones, perhaps, they were; but the mothers would buy them, as the money was to go into the Memorial Mite Chest. Ralph was making lamp-lighters out of paper, to sell by the dozen; and Norman and Jimmy were trying hard to learn the business, but theirs would not roll in the right way at the start.

They had had some reading, and now they might all talk.

“Only two weeks more to the Christmas holidays!” said Ruth. “Isn’t that all, Miss Agatha?”

“That is all, dear; are you very glad?”

“I wish we could get these things to our Elsie for Christmas!” said Rosa. “Wouldn’t that be nice?”

“Yes; but we shall not be ready in time with this box. Another year we will hope to send her a Christmas gift.

“But you can have Christmas good-will in your hearts, as you work for her; and there are others nearer home, dear Rosa, to whom we can show love and kindness at this season.”

The children seemed to guess what Miss Agatha meant, for, a moment after, Phœbe said: —

“They are going to make up a Christmas purse for Mrs. Bunn, Miss Agatha; don’t you think that is a good plan?”

“A very good plan, dear; but remember that the money will be worth much more to her and her children, if we give

love and sympathy with it. If we are really sorry for their troubles, we shall not treat them rudely or unkindly.

“And now, as the blessed Christmas time is coming on,—the time when the Lord of Heaven, for our sakes, ‘laid His glory by,’—surely little Christian children ought to be ready to show kindness to the lonely and poor, for *His* sake.”

Nothing more was said about the new scholars. But on Sunday, as Rosa and Phœbe passed little Maggie in the church porch, they stopped and spoke to her.

“You are coming to Miss Agatha’s school to-morrow, with your brother, are n’t you?” said Rosa. “I am sure you will like it!”

These few pleasant words, and the smile that accompanied them, did little Maggie a great deal of good. She did not feel afraid of going to the school any longer, but when Monday morning came, she was quite as ready as Ben was to take her place there.



CHAPTER XXXI.

CONCLUSION.



T snowed hard all Sunday night, and by Monday noon there was enough snow on the ground to satisfy any boys.

Miss Agatha's boys went to work at once with wheelbarrows and spades. They had not made a real good fort yet this winter, Ralph said; and there was to be one now, with a huge old snow image to defend the corner.

Ben and Maggie Bunn were a little shy at recess, but the boys soon seized upon Ben, and made him one of their working force; and a merry, active worker he proved.

As for Maggie, Ruth and Gerty took her under their care, and they were soon the best of friends.

"What shall *we* play?" said Ruth. "The boys are having good times; but we can't go out in the deep snow, at least *I* mustn't, for papa told me to stay in-doors at noon, because of my cold."

"Shall I tell you what my sisters and I used to like best for stormy days when we were children?"

"Oh yes, Miss Agatha, please!" cried Ruth.

"I know it will be something nice!" said Susy.

"Perhaps you will be disappointed if I say paper dolls," said Miss Agatha, smiling.

"Paper dolls? Oh, I've got two at home. One is 'Lady Alice,' and the other is 'Patty.' They have lots of dresses, but I don't like them *very* much," said Gerty.

"*We* did not like bought paper dolls; that was not the kind we had for our grand play.

"We used to cut out our dolls, and draw the faces, ourselves; then we saved up every scrap of colored paper to make the clothes. I remember how we used to watch when a package of saleratus came from the store, to secure the bright red paper, it made such lovely flannel sacks for our little ones."

The little girls laughed. "How many paper dolls did you have?" asked Ruth.

"We each had a whole family; the father, mother, and six or eight children, a servant or two, perhaps an aunt if we fancied one. We each had a large pasteboard box to keep our 'family' and furniture in; and we knew in a moment if any little paper child, or table, or chair, was missing."

"O Miss Agatha! Did you make the tables and chairs too?"

"Yes; and the bedsteads, cradles, stoves, cupboards, dishes, and other articles, all out of paper or pasteboard, with the help of some 'gum sticky,' as we called it.

"I never saw any children play with paper dolls as we did. We used to play a whole afternoon or evening, boys and all."

"Boys play paper dolls? Oh how funny!" said Susy.

"Yes, my brothers liked the fun as much as we did, sometimes. They would manage the out-door business, take care of the stable and farm-yard, bring up the horse and wagon when the family were ready for a drive, and so on."

"Did they have tin horses?"

"Oh no; horses and wagons were all made of paper, and they were very ingeniously made, too.

"Then sometimes one of our children would meet with a calamity, lose a head, perhaps, or be killed in some way, and there must be a funeral. Then the boys were needed. The paper family were all dressed in black, and attended in carriages.

"Each of the players did the talking for her family, speaking for each doll in a different tone. The neighbors were supposed not to hear; but if one house-mother said, 'I think we shall have callers this pleasant day,' the ladies at the other houses would be pretty sure to find themselves arrayed in their best, to go out and make calls."

"Oh, I wish we knew how to make the things, and play so!" said Kate. "Will you show us, Aunt Agatha?"

"I will, if I have not forgotten, dear. Run in and get my scissors, and we will see what we can do."

So Miss Agatha spent the rest of the noon hour in showing her little girls how to cut out paper dolls, chairs, tables, and so on.

Some of them very soon learned to cut out clothes and household furniture very nicely, and it became a favorite play with them.

Kate and Eva, especially, found it the nicest kind of play for the winter evenings, and they became quite ingenious in cutting and ornamenting. Some of Katie's dolls had very pretty faces indeed, and the daintiest little clothes.

One other little girl found the new play a great source of amusement that winter. Poor little Maggie Bunn only went to school two weeks after the Christmas holidays. She was sick all the rest of the winter, so that she could not go out at all.

Maggie had no playthings, for her mother had no money to spare for toys; but the paper doll play needed no money, only bits of paper and card-board, and a pair of scissors.

Ben used to look out for any stray bits of colored paper, or bright little feathers for dolls' hats, and save them for his sister; and the other children, when they had some pretty paper would send her a piece. So Maggie's family were well provided for.

Perhaps you have expected to hear something about the Christmas holidays at Carfield. But if I were to begin to tell

what good times the children had, I should need a good deal of room; for we should have to go into each house, — the children were not together in school at that time.

They *did* have a Happy Christmas; all the happier for the lessons of kindness and love they had been learning.

When school began again, little Fan was in her place once more, as bright and lively as ever.

I must tell you of one Christmas gift which gave a great deal of pleasure, and was a great comfort to one bereaved family.

It was Rosa's plan; but every one of Miss Agatha's scholars was eager to help.

Little Elsie's father and mother had no likeness of her, except a very small picture, poorly taken, by a travelling photographer.

Roxie borrowed this; Elsie's mother would not have trusted it in many hands; but she could not refuse Roxie, who had been so kind to her little girl.

Mrs. Thorpe was going to the city on some Christmas errands, and she took the little picture and had it copied, in large size, by a good artist.

The finished picture was an excellent likeness of little Elsie; and it was framed, and given to her mother, as the children's gift.

But Mrs. Thorpe privately ordered another picture, which

was given to Miss Agatha, to be placed in the school-room, over the Memorial Mite Chest. This was for the children. Mrs. Thorpe was much interested by their love for little Elsie, and in their memorial work.

A letter from the Mission teacher was received not long after Christmas, which said that the little Indian Elsie was improving very fast, and was a very good and promising child.

And now I must end my story of Miss Agatha's children, leaving them all busy and happy with their kind teacher.

As for Frisk, faithful little guardian, we leave him at his post; quite sure that as long as he has life enough left to jump and bark, he will not neglect his duty to his Flock.





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