DAISY AND BUTTERCUP.

By the Author of "I Promised Father."

CHAPTER I.

"WELL, good-bye, Katy. I've enjoyed having you here ever so much. Mind you come and see me again before we go abroad."

"Yes, if I can. Good-bye, Stella." And Katy descended the flight of low stone steps, and set off down the drive on her homeward walk. But the smile with which she had bidden good-bye faded from her face as she walked on, and a very grave expression took its place. She had not her usual bright smile for the lodgekeeper's two little children who came running out to meet her, but passed them by coldly and rather hurriedly. She was not in a humour just then for their shy, pleased greeting.

Outside the gates the road stretched long and straight, with the trees meeting overhead and the declining sun sending shafts of light through their stems. The rooks were cawing lazily on their homeward flight; a lark was singing his vesper song far away in the blue sky; the air seemed full of the fragrance of wild flowers.

But neither birds, sun, nor flowers had any attractions just then for Katy Marston as she trudged along the dusty road with her head bent and a very dissatisfied expression on her usually bright face.

Katy had been spending the afternoon with her friend Stella Branscombe, the only daughter of the squire, and a very important little personage, not only in her own eyes, but in those of the villagers and of the servants at the hall.

Katy, on the contrary, was only the daughter of the village doctor, and, instead of being an only child, had four brothers to share the doctor's rather small home and narrow income; consequently the two girls led very different lives, and it was this difference which Katy was reviewing at the present moment, and which was filling her mind with envy and discontent.

She and Stella had not met for two or three months until to-day, as the latter had been paying a prolonged visit to London with her parents, and had just returned very full of all the delights of the gay season: the sights she had seen, the parties she had attended, her new dresses, her birthday presents, and, in short, her own affairs generally. These were infinitely more interesting to her than her friend's concerns, about which she inquired scarcely anything; but poor Katy had found it rather an effort to keep up an appearance of interest all the afternoon, and had felt tired and vexed repeatedly.

"How selfish and egotistical Stella has grown!" she said to herself in some disgust, which, however, was not unmixed with envy.

Altogether, the long afternoon the two friends had spent together had not been quite so pleasant to Katy as she had anticipated. Stella had greeted her effusively, to be sure, and seemed heartily glad to see her; but then, as Katy said, rather bitterly, to herself, "it was only because she wanted to have some one to show off before."

So when Stella had displayed all her new dresses and Paris hats, and the birthday presents she had received a few days before, including a lovely necklace of pearls, with earrings to match—her father's gift—she must needs take Katy out to the stables to show her her new horse.

"We'd ride together, if only you knew how," she said, patronisingly; "for I shall never care to ride Dandy again," turning rather disdainfully to a loose-box where stood a pretty, cream-coloured pony, an old favourite, superseded now by the new horse. "I should not care to ride Dandy again," Stella repeated, "but he'd do for you very well; only, you see, you do not know how to ride."

"And I should not have time, either, thank you," Katy responded, coldly. She did not like to be patronised.

Then the girls adjourned to the garden, where tea was presently served under the shade of the large weeping ash. Such a dainty little tea-table, with its small silver gipsy kettle hissing and bubbling merrily, the silver teapot and cake-basket, the piled-up dish of strawberries, and the staid old butler to wait upon the two girls.

If Katy were inclined to be quiet Stella never noticed, only too well pleased to hear the sound of her own voice. She was busy now dilating upon the anticipated pleasure of a tour in Switzerland upon which she was to start in a few days' time with her parents. "Don't you wish you were going with us, Katy?" she demanded. "It will be awfully jolly; for, though I have been on the Continent three times already, I have never been the whole round of the Swiss lakes. I wish you had been going, too; we should have had such fun. But, oh! there's the carriage coming round! Have you finished tea? Then let us run back to the house. Papa and mamma are going out to dinner, and I want to see if mamma has finished dressing yet. She looks so lovely in full dress."

So the girls ran off to the drawing-room, where they found Mrs. Branscombe standing in front of the pier-glass giving a few finishing touches to the flowers she wore in her bosom, while her maid stood by holding a delicate white opera-cloak ready to throw round her shoulders.

Mrs. Branscombe was a tall, handsome woman, and Stella had not exaggerated when she said her mother looked lovely in full dress. She was wearing a creamy satin gown, which fell round her stately figure in lustrous folds, matching in shade the fragrant Gloire de Dijon roses with which it was lavishly adorned. Diamonds were twinkling and glittering on her neck and arms, and shining in the smooth bands of her black hair.

Katy felt slightly awed by the stately beauty of Mrs. Branscombe, but Stella sprang forward with a rapturous little cry of admiration as she seized her mother's hand. "Oh, mamma, how beautiful you look! I wish I was just two years older, and then I could be going with you!"

But Mrs. Branscombe pushed her away a trifle impatiently, and her voice sounded fretful and complaining as she answered, "There, there, child, that will do! You will only soil my glove with your hot hand."

The irritable repulse and the fretful tones struck Katy with a sort of little shock. Her own mother never spoke so to her children, and she looked anxiously at Stella to see how she took the words. Evidently they were nothing new to Stella, who continued to chat away in her usual tones, and Katy soon forgot the momentary impression.

It had faded almost entirely from her mind as she wended her way homewards through the fragrant country lane. She was thinking, instead, of how lovely Mrs. Branscombe had looked in her creamy satin robes, and wishing that her own mother could dress as grandly and richly. How proud she would feel of her if she could only see her so instead of in that never-ending brown merino, or the worn and turned black silk which Katy seemed to have known for many years. How poor and mean and shabby they were in comparison, while as for diamonds—why, Mrs. Marston did not possess one in the world, and her jewellery seemed to be confined to her wedding-ring and simple keeper, and the one gold brooch with Katy's grandmother's hair in it.

She caught herself up suddenly here. Was she going to feel ashamed—even in her innermost heart—of her own dear mother? Her mother, whom she loved more than anyone else in the world; the mother with her never-failing love and tenderness; her smiles, her kind words, her unceasing care for and devotion to her husband and children. A great rush of compunction and self-reproach filled Katy's heart as she asked herself the question: Was she going to be ashamed of that tender gentle mother? No; a thousand times no!

She had reached home by this time, and as she tripped up the little garden pathway she could see into the drawing-room, where, at the table in the window, dressed in the worn brown merino, with an overflowing work-basket by her side, Mrs. Marston was sitting. She looked up with her usual gentle smile of welcome as she caught sight of her little daughter. Katy was in the room in half a minute kissing the dear loving face.

"Back again, mother dear!" she said.

"Yes, little one, I am glad to have you back. Have you had a nice day?"

"Yes, thank you," Katy answered, rather shortly. "Mother, I'll help you with those socks. You know I can mend them nearly as neatly as you do now."

She was soon seated in a low chair by the window with a small heap of unmended socks on the floor by her side; but as she sat darning away industriously she unconsciously fell into silence, and her thoughts began to take the same line they had done as she walked home. Mrs. Marston, watching her from time to time, saw the shadow gathering over her face, and with fond motherly intuition guessed that something was wrong. But she was never in the habit of forcing the confidence of her children, and so waited for Katy to speak. The silence did not last very long; Katy soon began to speak of what was in her mind.

"Oh, mother dear," she began, "I saw Mrs. Branscombe this evening, dressed for a dinner party. She looked lovely; in such a rich satin dress, such a lovely creamy shade, and with such exquisite diamonds; they almost dazzled one, they sparkled so. Oh, mother, I should like to see you dressed so; you'd be every bit as beautiful as Mrs. Branscombe, and you're just as much a lady as she is. Don't you ever wish you could dress as she does? Why, you haven't got any silk dress but your old black one, and I don't think you have a diamond in the world."

"That does not trouble me, darling," Mrs. Marston answered, smiling back into her little daughter's face. "I have my jewels which are of much greater value—you and the boys—and so long as I have you all safe and well, and dear father too, I am more than content."

Katy carefully threaded her needle and began another large darn before she replied, and when she spoke she changed the subject.

"Oh, mother, do you know Stella is going to Switzerland with her parents in about a week's time? They are to stay for ever so many weeks. I wish, how I wish, I was going too! I do so long to go abroad, and I don't think I shall ever have the chance." Then, after a short pause, "Mother, I do think

Stella is the very luckiest girl there ever was. Here she is just home from London, where she has been seeing all there was to see; going to picture galleries and attending concerts—how I should love to go to a concert!—and dancing at parties. I don't mean real grown-up parties, for of course she hasn't come out yet; and then she has got such hosts of the loveliest dresses you ever saw—evening dresses and travelling dresses, and every other kind. Mrs. Branscombe seems to think nothing is too good for her; and the squire has just bought her a most lovely horse, and a set of pearls that I am sure have cost ever so much, besides a whole host of birthday presents. I think it would be so nice to be made as much of and to be as pretty as Stella is. She has such a quantity of golden hair, and such a fair complexion, and such blue eyes. It does feel hard that one girl should have so many advantages and another so few. It doesn't seem fair!"

"Discontented, Katy?" asked her mother, gently. "Have you been seeing all the nice things Stella has got, and been growing dissatisfied with your own lot? You must not say it is unfair, my love. It is right that some should be rich and some poorer, but I assure you that happiness does not consist in wealth. If Stella has some advantages you have not, perhaps she has many other things to grieve and trouble her that you know nothing of.'

"But she can't have," Katy replied, decidedly. "What more could any girl want than she has? Beautiful dresses, a fine house, plenty of servants to wait on her, a horse to ride, and, oh! mother, she is so pretty with it all."

Mrs. Marston looked down into the little flushed, eager face, but she did not give words to the thought which passed through her mind that the clear, sun-burnt complexion, the dark shining eyes, and the wealth of unruly brown curls were, in their way, quite as lovely as Stella Branscombe's blonde beauty. She only replied, as she gently stroked the flushed cheek—

"Do you remember that little poem I gave you to learn the other day about the daisy and the buttercup?"

"You mean the buttercup that wished she was a daisy, because she was tired of always dressing in 'the same old tiresome colour,' and had always wanted to wear a nice white frill. Oh, you naughty mother, you mean I am the discontented buttercup. I don't mean to be, but I afraid I am," she added ingenuously.

"And what did the robin say to the discontented buttercup?" questioned her mother, with a smile.

And Katy repeated—

"'The swallows leave *me* out of sight;
  We'd better keep our places;
Perhaps the world would all go wrong
  With one too many daisies.
Look bravely up into the skies,
  And be content with knowing
That God wished for a buttercup
  Exactly where you're growing.'"

Katy's voice took a lower and more reverent tone as she repeated the last two lines, and the cloud lifted a little from her face.

Mrs. Marston went on, "I always like that little parable; it teaches so much. And you may be very sure, little daughter, that if God wants to have a buttercup growing just where He places it, that He knew quite well all about it when He put Stella Branscombe in her place as the squire's only child and you as the doctor's daughter, your brothers' kind, helpful little friend and your mother's right hand. Won't you try to be content to be a buttercup, Katy, and leave the daisies to bloom where God has placed them?"

Katy made no reply. She bent her head over her work, but she could see neither needle nor thread for the tears which were filling her eyes. Of course, mother was right; she always was, and then Katy relieved herself by a burst of quiet crying on that loving mother's breast, while Mrs. Marston laid her work aside and talked to her little daughter wisely and tenderly as they sat alone in the gathering twilight, until Katy's eyes were once more quite dry and the little evil spirit of envy and discontent had been exorcised for the time being.

To be mother's great comfort; mother's right hand; yes, that was better even than Paris dresses and pearl necklaces; better even than a journey to Switzerland. Yes, she would be content to be a buttercup and bloom where God had placed her.

(*To be continued.*)

GIRLS' WORK AND WORKSHOPS.

By Ruth Lamb.

CHAPTER IV.

SILK CULTIVATION AND THE SILK MILL.

Since this series of papers was commenced, I have entered into conversation with numbers of persons who handle the fabrics from which our clothing is made, and have been surprised to find how little those who sell, sew, or wear them, know about their history or mode of production. This fact has induced me to step a little outside the lines I at first marked out, and, not merely to describe the girls' share in the different manufactures, but to teach the workers themselves something about the material before it reaches them and after it has passed through their hands. If I were a girl working amongst silk, cotton, or any other material, I should not be content to understand merely that stage of its development in which I was practically engaged. I should want to know how it came into the state in which I received it, and what would be done with it after it left my hands.

Almost every one who reads at all, knows that silk is produced by a species of caterpillar, and that to the labours of this insignificant little creature we owe all our richest, most costly, and beautiful articles of dress.

It is quite worth any girl's while to procure a few silkworms' eggs, hatch them, and watch the growth of the insect and its mode of producing the raw material, though the climate of this country is too cold and too variable for silk cultivation on a large scale to be remunerative.

The eggs are hatched at a temperature of about 82 deg., and the tiny worms, for the purpose of experiment, may be fed on young lettuce leaves—those of the mulberry not being easily procurable in this country. They are very small at first, like little dark moving threads; but they have fine appetites and grow rapidly, changing their skins four or five times before they reach maturity.

Each change of skin is a trying period for the worm, which ceases to eat before it takes place, and many die during the time of casting their covering.

A full-grown, well-nurtured worm in its native land is nearly three inches long and of a greenish-white colour. It is a stop-at-home creature; all it seems to care about is the having plenty of food to supply a voracious appetite.

Even when reared on mulberry trees in the open air, the little creatures do not wander, and a cardboard tray lined with clean paper, which should be changed from time to time as it becomes necessary, makes a suitable dwelling for a girl's stock of worms.

The creature has a large head, a sort of horn on the last joint of its body, and within it, and extending nearly the whole length, are two tubes containing and secreting a sticky substance from which the silk is spun. These tubes unite near the opening whence the thread issues in a single cord. Our little worker is, however, both a spinner and a doubler in its own person, for, on examining the thread through a microscope, we find it is composed of two distinct filaments; one produced by each tube, and joined together as they issue from the body.

When the worm is ready to spin, it ceases eating and commences its work by attaching coarse fibres to twigs placed for the purpose. In Italy, little trays divided into square cells are used for the worms to spin in, or they may be placed separately in paper cones, which they will speedily line with silk. At first you may see them working away as within a veil, but the screen thickens, the walls of the cocoon increase rapidly, and the worm is finally lost to sight to be seen no more in the same shape. The spinning occupies five days.

The work finished, the caterpillar becomes a chrysalis, and this in turn changes into a velvety white moth, which will eat its way out of the cocoon in from two to three weeks, if not destroyed. This is allowed to a certain extent, as sufficient moths must be preserved to lay eggs for the next season. The shape of the cocoon tells the sex of the moth enclosed within it, and an equal number of males and females are carefully selected.

The moths, like the worms, move but little from the spot in which they were perfected, taking almost no food and rarely using the wings as a means of locomotion. Their life in the last stage is short, and they seem to exist as moths only to continue the species and to leave eggs to be hatched when summer comes round again.

When the cocoons have been selected as above, the others are placed in ovens sufficiently heated to kill the moths, for were these allowed to eat their way through the silken wall it would be greatly deteriorated and could not be wound. Should the worm die before its work is finished, a change is observable in the shape of the cocoon, and the silk will be of inferior quality.

The thread produced by a single worm is sometimes 1,100 feet in length, and it is usual to obtain 300 yards of good silk from a single cocoon. But you must not suppose that the fibre, as it comes from the worm, is thick enough to be wound singly, though it is already double.

The cocoons are placed in water heated by steam, and gently stirred with a twig, from time to time, until the gum with which the silk is impregnated dissolves sufficiently to set the ends at liberty. Four or five of these are taken together and gradually twisted into one as they run through a glass eye in passing from the cocoons to the reel. As they travel the moistened animal gum dries again, and the fibres adhere and form a single thread. The important part this gum performs in dyeing will be shown hereafter.

We are accustomed to regard silk as a very dainty material, and cotton as a comparatively coarse one, but it is astonishing to see what rough usage the former will bear in comparison with the latter. It is extremely tenacious and elastic, and will endure a strain to which a cotton thread of the same size would be quite unequal. The cause is self-evident. Cotton thread is made up of an immense number of short hairs, combed and twisted together. Silken thread is composed of several fibres, each one of which measures 300 yards or upwards.

The silk reeler should be very attentive to the work in hand to secure an even thread. If one of the number she is reeling should break or run out it should be joined imme-

DAISY AND BUTTERCUP.

By the Author of "I Promised Father."

CHAPTER II.

NEXT day was Saturday, always a busy day at the doctor's house, where there were seven in family, and only two young and not very competent handmaidens to assist. It was a holiday from lessons for Katy, who was accustomed to make herself useful in the house in a hundred ways. She helped to get her two older brothers off to school, finding their lesson books for them and wrapping up their luncheon to be eaten in recess; she helped to make the beds, dusted the drawing-room, nursed and amused baby Harold, and then, with apron and gloves on, she began to clean the silver. She had been too busy all morning to think much of Stella and her feelings of yesterday; but as she rubbed away at the spoons she found her thoughts flying once more to the hall, and as she began mentally to review all she had done the day before, all she had seen, and all she had listened to, the old discontented envious feelings began to reassert themselves.

"I won't!" she cried vigorously; "I won't give way to them. It's shameful and it's wicked! I will be content. I'll be a buttercup, and be glad to be one too!"

And to drive away unwelcome thoughts she began to sing a merry Scotch air, rubbing away vigorously meanwhile.

The silver cleaned and put away in its place, Katy's next duty was to take her mother's, market basket and set off to the village to make some purchases which were needed for the house. It was a glorious July afternoon, with the sun shining hot and bright, and Katy tripped lightly along, swinging her empty basket as she went.

She came back rather more soberly, for the basket was heavy; it was an up-hill walk from the village shop, and the sun beat rather too warmly upon her back.

Half way home she encountered Stella Branscombe mounted upon her new horse, a slim-legged, high-bred animal, with a black coat that shone like satin.

Stella drew rein when she met Katy, with a merry exclamation, "Is that you, Katy? Who would have thought of meeting you walking out on such a hot afternoon and carrying such a big basket!"

Katy flushed with annoyance at the rude little speech, and felt suddenly ashamed of her errand and the market basket. But Stella never noticed the effect of her careless words, and proceeded, "Look at Duke, Katy; you can see him to more advantage now than you could when he was in his stable. Is not he a beauty? I am so proud of him, and he has got to know me already. Simpson," motioning towards the groom, who was riding at a respectful distance behind his little mistress, "wants to keep by my side. As if I would allow such a thing. It would be a very poor compliment to my horsemanship. I'm not an atom nervous, and don't see why I should be. I've ridden ever since I could sit upright. But I won't keep you now; I see you are in a hurry to get home with your precious basket, and I'm going for a long ride round by Warne's Wood. It will be deliciously cool coming back in the evening." And, waving an adieu to Katy, Stella touched her horse lightly on the shoulder and trotted away—a slim, girlish figure in her perfectly fitting blue habit, "chimney-pot" hat, snowy gloves, and tight coil of yellow hair.

THE EMPRESS OF JAPAN.

Katy proceeded on her homeward way, but the basket seemed to have grown unaccountably heavier, the sun was unbearably hot, she was, oh! so tired, and it did feel so hard that she should have to go on errands like a servant and carry heavy baskets, while Stella had nothing in the world to do but amuse herself with riding a lovely horse in a beautiful riding-habit with a servant to attend her. It was all very well for mother to talk about daisies and buttercups, and each one filling its own place, but she had forgotten what it was like to be a girl and to want a hundred things she could not get.

It was a gloomy little face that Katy brought home with her that afternoon, but Mrs. Marston, who met her at the door, was too busy to take very particular notice. She relieved her of the heavy basket, saying as she did so, "You look tired, love; I am afraid you found it very hot walking up the hill. But run away and change your dress; the boys have come in and so has father, and tea will be ready in ten minutes. You will feel refreshed when you have had it, so don't be late."

So Katy had only time to run away to her little room and change her rather crushed and soiled cotton dress for a smooth clean muslin, and then trip downstairs again as the bell rang for tea, and found no further time for brooding over her troubles. Then they were such a merry party round the table that she could not have indulged her discontent if she had chosen; and, indeed, very soon Katy was the gayest of all.

Saturday evening was always made a sort of little family festival at Dr. Marston's. The boys were home from school with no lessons to do; the doctor always made a special effort to be at home in time for the social meal, while Mrs. Marston and Katy made a point of working particularly hard on Saturday that they might feel more at leisure for the evening.

But on this Saturday the boys hurried over their meal rather more than they were accustomed to, for Harry had had a present of a

fishing-rod made him, and he and Tom (Tom and Harry always went shares in what each had) must needs go to the pond on the common to try their fortune, and take little six-year-old Charley with them. Charley was only too glad and proud when invited to share his elder brothers' pursuits.

"See if we don't bring you home ever such a big dish of fish for breakfast, mother," they called out as they set forth upon their expedition, and the doctor bade them a merry "Good luck to you!"

Katy was disposed to feel a little aggrieved that neither Harry nor Tom had thought of asking her to join them, and watched them depart rather wistfully. The doctor had thrown himself on the couch with the day's paper in his hand to snatch a few moments of well-earned rest; Mrs. Marston had taken her place by his side, knitting busily with fingers which were never idle. Her eyes soon caught sight of the rather doleful little figure in the window.

"I am glad you did not go with the boys, dear," she said, kindly; "it would have been too far for you to walk without being tired after your busy day. Would you like to take Harold out into the garden for a little while instead, before he goes to bed?"

Katy's face brightened at the proposition, and when baby Harold crowed with delight and held out his little chubby arms to his sister, Katy felt consoled for the defection of the boys.

She took the little fellow in her arms and carried him out into the garden, where she began to walk slowly up and down, singing softly, while Harold over her shoulder kept up a low crooning as accompaniment.

Katy's evil thoughts had taken flight. It would have seemed wicked to have indulged them on such a calm peaceful evening.

"The earth might know Sunday is coming to-morrow, all feels so quiet and restful, as if all the week's work was done," said Katy, pausing in her song to listen to the chiming of the church bells, which sounded sweet and low on the evening air. The ringers were practising, as they usually did on Saturday evening, and the tune of the grand "Old Hundredth" was ringing out from the belfry tower. The young men and boys were playing on the village green, and the sounds of their shouts and laughter came faintly on the evening air. No other sound broke the stillness.

The road that led past the doctor's house was quiet and little frequented. Not a single person came in sight during the half-hour when Katy was walking up and down and singing softly to herself, and the baby hanging sleepily over her shoulder; so that it came almost with a start when she heard the sound of a horse's feet galloping along the road. She watched in some curiosity to see who was coming. It was a man in livery riding full speed, and he drew up hastily at the garden-gate. Katy recognised the Branscombe livery, and her heart sank with a sudden fear of evil tidings even before the man could inquire, quickly and hurriedly, "Is the doctor at home, Miss Katy?"

"Yes, he is. What do you want him for? Is some one ill, Simpson?" for she knew the man as the groom who rode behind Stella.

"Miss Stella; she's been thrown, and hurt herself. But, for mercy's sake, tell the doctor to come at once, Miss Katy. Beg him not to lose a moment."

Katy did not need a second bidding, but ran breathlessly to the drawing-room with pale face and beating heart.

"Oh, father, Stella has been hurt, and you are to go at once to the hall, please. Simpson has come for you."

Dr. Marston started up from the comfortable sleep in which he had been indulging, tired out with a hard day's work, and was awake and ready in a moment. He went out instantly to speak to the messenger and hear a few particulars, collected some things he thought might be required, took his hat and coat from his wife's watchful hand, and was gone almost before she or Katy could ask him a single question.

"Mother, what does it mean?" Katy asked, when both the doctor and groom had departed. "Simpson only said she had been thrown, but he did not say anything more. Oh, I hope she is not much hurt. I told you I met her in the village this afternoon, riding her beautiful new horse, and she told me then that Simpson wanted to ride by her side, but she would not let him. She always was rather daring, but she was such a good rider that I should have thought no harm could possibly happen to her."

"Indeed, my love, I know no more than you do," Mrs. Marston answered; "we must wait until father returns to hear more. Indeed, I trust it is nothing serious. It will be a terrible anxiety to the squire and her mother; she is their only one, and they seem to set the whole of their minds upon her."

But Katy's anxiety remained unallayed, for hours passed and still the doctor did not return. The boys came home from their fishing expedition, hot, tired, hungry, and wet through, with not a single fish in their basket, but their hopes high with regard to better sport in the future.

They were glad to go to bed when supper was over, but Katy begged to be allowed to stay up later than usual; at least, until father came home. She could not sleep, she said, until she knew how poor Stella was.

But the hours crept on, and still the doctor did not return.

"It is half-past ten; you must really go to bed, darling," Mrs. Marston said, at last, "or you will be too tired to-morrow morning to do justice to your little scholars. You know I never like you to get overdone on Saturday evenings."

And so Katy slowly and reluctantly went to bed.

She slept, in spite of her anxiety; slept almost as soon as her head touched the pillow, and never woke until the morning sun was shining outside her window and the birds were singing their glad welcome to another day.

"How is Stella, mother? Is she better?" was her first eager inquiry, as soon as she could find Mrs. Marston.

"Hush, dear! not so loud," was the low reply. "Your father is asleep; he never came home until very late. Poor Stella is very ill indeed; they have had to send to London for two more doctors, and the squire and Mrs. Branscombe are almost frantic with trouble and anxiety. It is impossible to know for some time how much mischief is done."

"But how did it happen?" asked Katy, breathlessly, with white lips.

"It seems that the groom wished to ride close by her side until she had grown more accustomed to her new horse; but she would not allow him. Then something in the wood—Warne's Wood—frightened the animal and he ran away. All might, perhaps, have gone well, for you know she was a very good rider, but he took her under a tree, and one of the branches struck her on the forehead, and then she fell, and by some means or other the horse fell over her. The man thinks he caught his foot in the roots of the tree, but in the terror and anxiety of the moment he could not tell."

"But, oh! mother, she will not die?" Katy cried, her eyes beginning to overflow with pity and sorrow. "Tell me she will not die! for I do love her, mother, in spite of all I have said to you about her. Oh! it would break my heart if she were to die!"

"I cannot say, darling. God grant she may be spared, for her poor parents' sake as well as all of ours. You must not forget to pray for her, Katy, that she may live; poor, poor Stella!"

"And oh! mother, to think I grudged her all the things she has! To think I was sorry she was going to Switzerland! For I was sorry, and I was as envious and wicked as I could be; and if she dies I shall never forgive myself!" and Katy ended up with a piteous burst of tears.

(To be continued.)

"SHE MAKETH FINE LINEN."

By S. F. A. Caulfeild, Author of "The Dictionary of Needlework," etc.

As a rule of very general application, the pleasure and interest of life are made up of trifles. A word, a look, a touch of the hand, appealing through the senses, may have power to touch the heart. Thus, circumstances or things unimportant may lead to mighty results, just as it has been said the small cogs in some tiny wheel may so work on larger appliances as to set a piece of machinery in motion that many scores of hands could neither set at work nor at rest again.

Apart from the influence of human sympathy, apart from that of Nature—contributing so largely to the enjoyment of life—apart, also, from the recreation afforded by ancient and modern art, in their most beautiful and highest departments, I desire to point out to you that even the most common things, of the most unromantic character, have an unspoken word of wisdom for each and all who are ready to learn. Articles of use, both of food and clothing, may supply us with ample matter for thought, and lead on through pleasant by-ways to fields of wider scope and higher interest.

Enough, in explanation, to say that all things in Nature and art have a history, more or less ancient and instructive. Nature stands first, art follows. Nature, direct from the hand of God; art, His work second-hand, as it were, such intellect as He has vouchsafed to His creatures being employed to produce and bring art to more or less perfection.

We are told in Holy Writ that—"There are so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification." But all persons have not "the hearing ear" nor "the seeing eye," and many grope their way through life like very moles—all that would tell them a story of God's greatness and bounty, or of man's industry and success, passed by unheeded.

Take first, for example, the voices of Nature and of art in their highest developments. I will only direct your attention to one or two of the most unmistakable significance.

You have heard of "sermons in stones," and doubtless a study of the treasures (geological formations and external productions) of the earth we tread will read lessons to all who care to learn; Nature appealing to us in a voice which gives no "uncertain sound." So likewise in the comparatively recent discoveries made in the East, art has spoken too, and the "very stones" have "cried out" which she has sculptured, confirming the truth of remotest Biblical history, and confounding the pitiful cavilling of scoffers who have tried to throw discredit upon them.

We read in the beautiful and metaphorical language of inspiration that all the morning "stars sang together" in adoration of the Lord of the whole Creation; and truly, in the contemplation of the myriads and myriads of worlds spread out on all sides around this

DAISY AND BUTTERCUP.

By the Author of "I Promised Father."

CHAPTER III.

FOR weeks poor Stella's life hung upon a single thread. The best professional skill was summoned from London, and with tears in his eyes, and half desperate with grief, the squire besought the medical men to save his daughter, promising them all he had if only they would spare his darling's life. All that skill, love, and money could do was done, but for weeks the result remained doubtful.

"Life and death are not in our hands, Mr. Branscombe," gravely and reproachfully said the gray-haired surgeon, the last of those who had been summoned from London, a kind, tender-hearted man of widespread fame. This was in answer to the squire's passionate prayers to him to save her. "Rest assured that we are doing our very utmost. But the results we can only leave in higher hands."

But at last, after weary weeks of waiting and suspense, the verdict was given. Stella would not die. She would live, but how? She would be a helpless cripple all her life; would never again be able to walk, though in time she might grow comparatively strong and well. There was some mysterious injury to the spine which the best medical skill could not cure. No; poor Stella would never walk again.

Dr. Marston brought the news home one evening, and long and bitterly did Katy cry over it. It seemed so sad and so cruel to think of Stella, who had always been so full of life and spirits, so blithe and active, chained for life to an invalid's couch.

"Oh! mother," she cried, passionately; "I think I would rather have died outright than have to live as she will have to."

A few more weeks passed away, and then Dr. Marston brought a message from Stella one day. Would Katy come and see her that afternoon? But Katy shrank with a shy, nervous fear.

"Oh! father, I dare not see her! What shall I say to her? She must be in such a sad trouble."

"I think your own heart will teach you what to say, my dear," he replied, kindly. "Do not turn from your friends when they are in trouble; that is the time when we all need love and friendship most. It will do the poor child good to see you, and when she has asked for you, you must not refuse."

So very timidly and reluctantly Katy went up to the hall that afternoon. It was seven weeks since she had been there last. It was glorious July weather then; now the leaves were beginning to show the yellow tints of autumn, and the golden cornfields were beginning to fall beneath the reaper's hand.

Seven weeks since Stella had been in all the strength and brightness of her youth and health, full of happy anticipations and present joys. What a change had come! The tour to Switzerland had been given up. Perhaps such a pleasure was not in store in the future for poor Stella, and as for Paris dresses, pearl necklaces, and all the hundred and one things in which girls take pleasure, what were they to a helpless invalid, lying on her couch in pain and weariness all through the sunshine of the summer days and the golden glory of the autumn?

Stella's room looked bright and gay enough as Katy timidly entered. Flowers adorned it in every available place, and filled the air with their soft fragrance; there were pictures on the walls, good engravings and brightly tinted paintings; Stella's couch was drawn up in front of the open window, for the air was mild and balmy; by her side was a little table on which lay some hothouse fruit, some magazines newly cut, and some green-backed novels. Upon the rug which covered her lay a snow-white Persian cat stretched in luxurious repose.

Stella was looking listlessly out of the window when Katy entered, and playing absently with her cat's silky ears. She looked round slowly at her visitor's entrance, and in that first momentary glance Katy's heart swelled with a sudden wave of sorrow and pity; the poor little face was so sadly changed.

The golden locks and the blue eyes were unaltered; but under the hair, which was cut over the forehead and curled almost down to her eyebrows, was still to be plainly seen an ugly scar, marking ineffaceably the smooth white skin, while round the blue eyes were dark rings, and the face was pinched and worn and pale.

Poor Stella had hardly the ghost of a smile whereby to welcome Katy; she only held out one wasted hand and bade her sit down by her side in a voice faint and low from weakness. Katy obeyed, but so nervously and timidly that even Stella's dull eyes noticed, and she suddenly exclaimed with a hard unnatural laugh, more sad than tears would have been—

"What are you frightened of? Do you think I am going to hurt you? Why, I could not, even if I wished to!"

"I am not frightened," Katy faltered; "only—oh, Stella, I am so sorry!"

"I do not see why you should mind," Stella replied, in the same hard tone. "It does not affect you; you'll be just as well and happy as ever. I just have got to bear it all as well as I can. Only," with a sudden burst, "it's horrible; it's hateful, and I feel as if it were driving me mad! Oh, I wish I had died first!"

"Oh, hush, dear!" cried Katy, pained and shocked, but not knowing how to reply.

"It's true all the same," Stella went on recklessly; "it would have been far better to have been killed and get done with it at once than have to lie here like a log for years and years and years; who can tell how long? I am not sixteen yet, and I may live to be ninety. Oh, that wicked horse! I want papa to have him shot; I am sure he deserves it, for it was all through him it happened. Oh, it is horrible! How could God allow such a thing to be? it's so hard and cruel! and I was so happy and I meant always to have such a good time. Why don't you speak, Katy, and tell me how hateful you think it all is?"

But poor Katy knew not what answer to make to the wild reckless words. So she only put one arm round Stella's neck, laid her face down on the pillow, her brown hair mingling with the long golden locks, and began to sob and cry out of the fulness of the pity and sympathy which made her heart ache so keenly.

"Don't cry, you silly girl! Crying won't mend matters."

Stella's voice was as hard and cold as ever, but as Katy continued to weep and sob, gradually the blue eyes clouded over, her lip began to quiver piteously, and presently the assumed stoicism broke down, and Stella turned her head towards Katy's hidden face, and the two girls mingled their tears.

It was the first time Stella had been able to weep since she had heard the fatal news, and those tears, though they were passionate and almost hysterical at first, relieved wonderfully the throbbing of her brain and the burning pain at her heart.

Katy was the first to recover herself. She raised her head and wiped her eyes; then lifted Stella's face until it rested on her own breast, and began to smooth the golden hair, kiss the pale, sad, little face, and murmur tender endearing words in her ear. A great flood of love and tenderness seemed to have filled her heart; she had no idea until now that she loved Stella so much.

And Stella herself was soothed after a time, and permitted Katy to wipe her eyes and comfort her with tender words, and when she spoke again the hardness and recklessness seemed to have almost disappeared from her voice.

"It's a very poor sort of welcome to give you, Katy," she said, with a wan little smile; "I'm afraid you'll never come to see me again, only I have been so very, very miserable; it seems as if nobody ever had such a terrible trouble to bear. But I should not have thought you would have cared so much, Katy!"

"Oh, Stella, when I only wish I could help you to bear it!" cried poor Katy. "I have been so unhappy for you, dear; but perhaps the pain will not be quite so bad to bear soon. The doctors all say, father told me, that you would soon feel a great deal better."

"Pain!" echoed Stella, with a little return of the hard tone. "Do you think I'd mind about pain? I could bear that and be quite happy, looking forward to the time when I should be well again. It isn't that; it's knowing that I shall never walk again. Do you realise what that means? Think of my never being able to walk again as long as I live; never able to move myself from my couch. Think of that, and try to fancy how you'd feel if you knew it was always to be so with you. And, oh, Katy, I was so happy! I was looking forward so to going to Switzerland, and now I never shall go as long as I live. I cannot bear to see the pretty travelling dresses I had meant to wear there, and now never shall. And I shall never dance again, and I did *love* dancing. It's awfully hard."

And the poor, pale lip began to quiver again.

"My poor darling," Katy whispered fondly, smoothing the bright hair with a soft, tender touch, that said more than words.

Stella went on.

"Then I had looked forward so to coming out; in less than two years now. We should have gone up to London, and I should have been presented. And I'd fixed all about the dress I would wear, and had decided to choose nothing but the deadest white silk, because so few people can wear it; and I thought how proud I should feel to show everyone how I could stand the dead colour, which so few can wear, and are so glad to take advantage of ivory white and cream white on account of their poor complexions; while mine would look as beautiful as could be, because my cheeks were so pink, and my eyes so blue, and my hair so golden. And I was going to have the dress trimmed with nothing but white carnations, and a big bouquet of the same and maidenhair fern, and—but——"

She broke off suddenly.

"What nonsense I am talking! What's the use of saying anything about my complexion or my beauty? I've nothing left to be proud of now, and I shall never go into company now, much less to the Drawing-room."

She sighed heavily, and then went on after a moment's pause—

"But, Katy, that is not the worst. I'll tell you something I've never told to a soul, but which

has been the very hardest part of all. When I was lying so ill, and they thought I was unconscious, I once heard mamma and one of the doctors—not Dr. Marston—talking, and I heard him say how he feared I should never walk again; and then mamma said—oh, so bitterly! —'That if I was to be a helpless cripple all my life, I had far better have died at once.' Think of that, Katy. Think of one's own mother feeling one a burden and a weariness. And I know mamma feels me to be so."

"Oh, hush—hush, Stella! You must be mistaken!" cried Katy, in a shocked and pained voice. "I am sure it cannot be so—I am sure you are wrong. Why, a trouble like yours, you poor darling, is just the very thing to make a mother love and pity you more."

Katy was thinking of her own mother, and judging Mrs. Branscombe's affection by that standard; but Stella feebly shook her head.

"You don't understand," she said. "My mamma was very fond of me when she could be proud of me. You know she has always been a great beauty, and been very much admired, and she has always looked forward to my being a belle too—and I meant to be, I meant to be the belle of the county. But now there is nothing left for her to be proud of; I never can be a credit to her, only an incumbrance and a nuisance, and she is growing tired of me. She *said* she would rather I had died," she went on, in a tone of conviction; "and if she wished it, can you wonder that I should? What do you think it feels like to have all the sunshine suddenly shut out of your life, and to know you can never take any more pleasure in things you used to like better than anything in the world? Used to like!" she repeated bitterly. "I *do* like them still; I *love* dancing, and travelling, and pretty dresses, and everything that I never can enjoy again. Oh, it is terribly hard! The vicar's wife called one day, and talked about dispensations of Providence and bowing beneath the rod, and all that sort of thing. It didn't do me a bit of good. It all sounded as if she had got it off by heart before she came, and she said it all as if she was repeating a lesson. It's easy enough for her to talk when she's well and strong, and has everything she wants, but if she felt as I did she wouldn't talk so glibly about bowing beneath the rod—and——"

"Oh, hush, dear, you mustn't talk so!" cried Katy, deeply shocked at Stella's tone.

"It's true, all the same," was the reply. "I'm not religious, Katy, and I don't think I ever cared a rap for good things, or perhaps I should feel grateful to Mrs. Lowe, as no doubt I ought to. But she didn't do me a bit of good, and I don't want to see her again. You've helped me far more, dear, than she did with all her set speeches and nice little phrases. Now we'll try to talk of something livelier. Won't you have a peach? And please ring the bell and we'll have tea, and you shall pour it out for me."

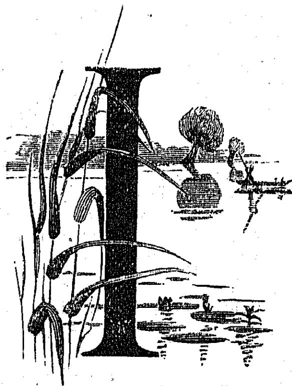
But though Katy did her best to entertain Stella with pleasant gossip and chit-chat, the attempt was a dismal failure. The careless words, "I am not religious," had grieved Katy's tender little heart, but she knew not how to answer them. It seemed to her that in Stella's position religion was the only comfort she could find. How she wished she knew what to say that would be fit and appropriate! She thought of her favourite little poem of the daisy and buttercup, but feared whether Stella would care for the application. Besides, the positions seemed to have changed altogether.

It was the daisy that might envy the buttercup now.

(*To be continued.*)

ON ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS.

A WORD OF WARNING.



IN the pressure of many subjects, we feel that we have not spoken with necessary emphasis on the danger of trusting to advertisements which offer a great return for very small investments. Among our readers there are many just entering on life as workers, who are anxious to be put in the way of earning money for their support, and many more who, inheriting a small patrimony insufficient to supply all their wants, are desirous to add to it with as little disturbance to their domestic comfort as possible. From these classes, as well as from elderly women whose means have been straitened by circumstances, many dishonest advertisers draw their victims, and although only a small outlay need be made, promise an immediate return, and that at the ratio of at least 100 per cent., and if art is to be the source of wealth, it is an art which can be learnt with little expense of time, and the work can be done *at home*. In one case, where the increase of income is to be obtained without study and without interference with ordinary pursuits, the respondent is informed that the desired accession is easily procurable from the percentage on the sale of cheap jewellery, to be supplied by the advertisers!

Among a host of other absurd and cruel advertisements, one which has lately come under our notice promises to teach china-painting to persons who have no previous knowledge of art in an incredibly short time; but we will quote the words of a letter sent to a lady who answered an advertisement. "By my system of teaching any person of ordinary capacity can learn the art in about a month or five weeks, and a thorough good income can always be made either by giving lessons or by working for some of the many firms who deal in artistic products." After much more to the same effect, he informs his client that if she follows the "clear, lucid instructions which he sends she can learn the art with facility at home."

The young lady, we need hardly say, having spent time and money on this *ignis fatuus*, is very far from being in the receipt of a "thorough good income"—in fact, she has nothing but a few spoilt tiles, though she is a person of at least "ordinary capacity," and most anxious to learn.

This is the third case of which we have become personally cognisant within the last six months, and in one instance a lady of more than middle life and very straitened means was mulcted of over £60.

Surely, then, it is high time that young mariners on the sea of life be warned off these dangerous quicksands, and exhorted to trust to nothing but the true mariner's compass of steady and persistent work, which alone will certainly guide them into good havens at last.

WHEN THE MISTS HAVE ROLLED AWAY.

WHEN the mists have rolled in splendour
  From the beauty of the hills,
And the sunshine, warm and tender,
  Falls in kisses on the rills,
We may read love's shining letter
  In the rainbow of the spray;
We shall know each other better
  When the mists have rolled away.

If we err, in human blindness,
  And forget that we are dust;
If we miss the law of kindness
  When we struggle to be just,
Snowy wings of peace shall cover
  All the anguish of to-day,
When the weary watch is over,
  And the mists have cleared away.

When the silver mist has veiled us
  From the faces of our own,
Oft we deem their love has failed us,
  And we tread our path alone.
We should see them near and truly,
  We should see them day by day;
Never love nor blame unduly
  If the mists have cleared away.

When the mists have ris'n above us,
  As our Father knows His own,
Face to face with those that love us,
  We shall know as we are known.
Lo, beyond the orient meadows
  Floats the golden fringe of day;
Heart to heart we'll bide the shadows
  Till the mists have cleared away.

Then, girls, put on your wings of imagination—few girls are so poor as to lack these—and let us away, away for millions of miles, not resting until we imagine ourselves in the centre of our planetary system.

After a short flight of probably about 100 miles through our atmosphere, we pass into the light, elastic, invisible æther which floats in space beyond. This æther keeps up a perpetual movement, rippling on in a constant succession of waves. Arrived at the end of our journey we ascertain the origin of this undulatory motion. All around the sun gases are incessantly whirling, and as their atoms strike against each other with some violence they produce both light and heat, shaking the æther around and sending off the sunrays—the tiny waves—on all sides. How inconceivably vast their work appears when we remember that it has been carried on for countless ages, and that the amount expended on our earth, great as we justly feel it to be, is, in reality, small compared with the whole!

I called them tiny waves, and such, indeed, they are, for 50,000 of them are contained in one inch of space, and so rapid are they in their progress that they travel the ninety-five—or, according to some later authorities, we believe, over ninety-one—millions of miles from the sun to our world in about $7\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.

Started on their way, the course of these busy rays is straightforward, but, as they journey on, various interruptions are met with, such as going from one medium into another of different density, or, meeting with a substance through which they cannot pass, or only in part, these interferences cause them to bend, to divide, to rebound, producing reflection. Thus are objects made visible to us by the rays of light being sent back from them to our eyes. Each substance has its own power of absorbing or scattering these rays, or of letting them through; for instance, a clear window-pane of glass allows them almost all to pass through it, but the wall opposite upon which they fall sends a greater or smaller number back through the glass again to us—supposing we are looking in from the outside—and the wall is reflected to our eye, or, as we say, we *see* it. Bright metal takes in scarcely any light-rays, hence glass covered on one side with quicksilver forms a powerful reflecting mirror—a looking-glass.

Now all of you are familiar with the fact that an oar dipped in the river appears to slant upwards. This is because the rays touching the oar, and rebounding, have passed from air into the water, which is a medium of greater density. It matters not whether the medium entered be denser or lighter than the one just left, the mere change of density occasions the appearance to differ from the reality. It is this power which causes the "mirage," with its magical effects, when fairy reflections of distant landscapes are seen in the air; when objects below the horizon, thus out of ordinary vision, appear represented in the "ocean overhead"; when weird-like shadows, that seem real, glide along the mountain; or, the similar phenomenon of vessels or icebergs hanging topsy-turvy in the sky. How many a thrilling ghost story may not these merry beams be innocently responsible for!

But now I must tell you that beautiful as an undivided sun-ray is, it shows fresh loveliness when divided. It sounds strange to talk of *splitting* a sunbeam, but you have often seen this wonderful operation performed. Whence come the hues of that glorious "arc of light"—the rainbow? What causes the band of soft yet brilliant colouring on the wall or ceiling, as the sunlight plays upon the glass pendants of the chandelier or lustres? What makes a fairy kaleidoscope even of a soap-bubble? Just an unravelled sunbeam! Each beam is made up of seven waves of different lengths and colours, the colour apparently depending upon the size. The longest wave, the red, is always seen on the lower, or left, side, on account of its being the one least liable to bend; the others range according to size—orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and lastly, violet—the smallest wave, being about half the length of the red, and the most bent, or, scientifically speaking, the most refrangible. For although I have not yet mentioned the word which seems to alarm some young folks, let me tell you, in talking of *bent* sunbeams, we are really entering, though in a very elementary manner, upon that difficult subject, refraction. You must understand that this power of refraction is not only influenced by the differing density of the medium, but by its nature, its shape, the form of its surface. The smooth, level surface of a plate of glass permits the rays to go through in a straight line; but in a three-sided prism of glass the surface is placed diagonally, in consequence of which the ray is divided into its several colours, these not being of equal refrangibility. If the surface is concave, the rays diverge like the sticks of a fan; whilst if convex, they converge and form a cone of light. So to paint the rainbow on the cloud, the rays that enter the upper part of the little globes of water, the raindrops, are refracted; other rays, within a certain angle, bringing the beautiful prismatic colours to our sight. To enter more fully into this subject would be out of place in such a paper as this, but there is one other marvel due to sunshine of which I must speak, one in which every girl takes an interest—colour. What a sombre place this earth would be without that beautifier! Yet were it not for the sun-rays we should miss its charm.

As we have already seen, substances retain fewer or more of the light waves. Some keep all but one—such as grass, which, keeping all but green, sends that back to us, and thus the grass looks green to our eyes; whilst your sheet of note-paper, sending *all* the seven colours back, is white. If any of you wish to prove that these seven colours form white, let her take a round piece of cardboard, and paint it in the *exact* shades, in their *right* order and *proportion*; then spin it very quickly, and she will see only white. Although we have but spoken of beams of light, there are others which help to compose a sunbeam, and which, though invisible, are of as much if not more importance than their companions. I refer to the rays or waves of heat.

Their waves are of greater length than those of light, therefore have their place by the side of the red wave.

I can only just remind you how, by their power, they warm the soil so that it is brought into activity, and vegetation develops and grows; how the very life of our bodies is greatly dependent upon them; how imprisoned for ages in the coal, they burst forth afresh, helping to produce such wonder-working agents as steam, &c.; how they send the water-vapour up to gather into clouds or heat, and render the air light, so that, rising, it forms winds and air currents. But you will readily see the greatness of the work given them to accomplish. Besides these, there is a set of waves of chemical power, which, being still smaller than those that form the violet tint, have their place by its side. Of this power I must, however, say no more than that we owe to it, amongst other things, photography.

What more fitting emblem of a warm-hearted, busy maiden than one of these bright servants of the "Father of lights!" What a picture of her joyous life, seeking to gladden and help all those whom she can influence, the very hindrances in the way only serving to develop fresh beauty of character. Does not each of our girls desire to be "a sunbeam in the home"?

ANNIE MINISTER.

DAISY AND BUTTERCUP.

By the Author of "I Promised Father"

CHAPTER IV.

KATY went home that afternoon sorely troubled in mind for her poor little friend.

According to her usual custom, her first care was to outpour all to her mother; telling her all the sad state Stella seemed to be in, the unsatisfactory nature of their interview, Mrs. Branscombe's coldness and apparent want of sympathy with her daughter, and ended up with the request, "Please, mother, won't you go to see her soon? I am sure you would do her good, and you always know exactly what to say."

"Do you think Stella would care to see me?" Mrs. Marston asked. "I should be sorry for her to think me intrusive."

"Oh, I am sure she would!" Katy cried, eagerly. "She was telling me only to-day how much she liked you, and how at home she always felt when she was with you. 'She is so motherly,' she said, and I know just what she means. Mrs. Lowe, I am sure, means to be very kind, but she has no children, and she somehow feels to chill you, while you—why, you're just *mother*, and that explains everything!"

Mrs. Marston kissed the flushed, eager little face and promised to do as Katy desired.

Accordingly, two days later she went to see Stella, carrying an offering from Katy of two newly laid eggs of her own special hen, over which she had placed the largest and darkest red rose she could find in the garden.

"I know she has everything she can possibly want," Katy said, "and far finer roses than any I could send her; but I want her to see I do not forget her."

Mrs. Marston was shown to the same room where Katy had last seen Stella; and, as before, the poor child was lying, listless and idle, looking out into the garden and absently caressing her favourite cat.

Mrs. Marston came forward with a bright, gentle greeting.

"I am so glad to find you are rather better to-day, my dear," she said, stooping down to bestow a warm, motherly kiss on the pale, wan little face.

Stella laughed in her old way—hard, cold, and joyless.

"I don't think that is much to be congratulated upon," she replied, ungraciously. "The very best news anyone could give me would be that I was growing worse every day, and could not possibly live long."

"Is not that rather a selfish wish, my dear?" Mrs. Marston asked, kindly, but without any of the horror and reproach in her tone which Stella half expected to hear. "If you do not want to live for yourself, think of all of us, and how ill we could spare you."

"Why, no one would care!" Stella cried, impetuously. "What earthly use can I ever be to anyone, unless," sneeringly, "it is to teach people to be patient? I am sure that mamma for one will need endless patience to bear having a daughter who is only a stupid, helpless cripple."

"Don't talk so, my child. Please God, there is plenty of happiness left for you yet, though it mayn't be of the kind you feel to want just now."

"Happiness!" echoed Stella; "I never can be happy again; never! never! That is all over and done with for me; but, oh! it

does seem so hard! And, think, I am not sixteen yet."

There was something in Mrs. Marston's look of tender pity and in her softly-murmured, "You poor darling," that won the girl's confidence, and led her to outpour all that was in her sad little heart—all the pent-up misery and rebellion and hopeless longings after the impossible, which her own mother would have had no patience to listen to nor power to sympathise with.

"I know I'm very wicked," the poor child finished up with. "I suppose, as Mrs. Lowe says, I ought never to think of repining, but be quite content as I am. But I don't think she would find it so easy to talk if she were in my place. I can't help it, Mrs. Marston, but I am quite desperate at times, and I feel as if I were going mad; and then I almost hate everybody else who is strong and well; and I hate the sun for shining, and I could kill the very birds for singing so happily when I am so utterly miserable. Oh! tell me how to bear it! Say something to comfort me!" she wailed.

Mrs. Marston made no reply for a moment beyond smoothing the bright hair and patting the thin white hand with a comforting little gesture. When she spoke her words sounded irrelevant to Stella. "Do you know my little baby Harold?" she asked. "He's hardly two years old yet, and, of course, being the youngest he is a great pet. Well, yesterday Katy brought him in from the garden crying a little, with a great thorn from the rose tree in his little finger. It was rather a bad wound for such a little fellow, and of course I had to take the thorn out for him, and of course that hurt him, and he cried and struggled hard to get away. I had to hold his little hand very tightly, for I knew that thorn must come out unless I wanted him to have a bad wound there. Do you suppose I gave up hurting him until I got the thorn out?"

"Why no, of course not," Stella answered, looking at her with wondering eyes.

"And you don't suppose I loved him any less because I hurt him? I should have been more likely to let him go and not take any trouble about his little finger if I had not cared for him at all; shouldn't I? And then when the thorn was out, and the little finger bound up, he was soon comforted, and went to sleep quite happily and free from pain on my knee."

"Yes," Stella answered, not seeing the drift of Mrs. Marston's words.

"He is a funny little fellow," her visitor went on; "when he was much smaller he used to cry for the fire, or the lamp, or candle: he wanted to play with them. Do you think I let him have them to play with, however sadly he cried?"

"No, of course not; he would only have burnt himself. But why do you tell me about him, Mrs. Marston?"

"Because, my dear child, I often think we are all like little ignorant children, never knowing what is best for us, or what will do us harm. And we seem as if we could not trust our Heavenly Father's love. We feel as if He must have made a mistake when He does not give us what we want, or we think He is cruel and unmindful when He sends us trouble, and will not realise that the very trouble is only a proof of His love and care for us."

Stella saw the application of the words now, and a sweeter, softer expression stole over her face. She pondered over them in silence. She had no reply to make.

Mrs. Marston, too, was silent for a few minutes, and when she spoke again she changed the subject. She was not given to "preaching," as Stella would have called it. She was content to have sown a good seed and to leave it undisturbed.

So she produced her basket with Katy's little present, and began to chat lightly and pleasantly upon all manner of topics which she thought likely to interest the sick girl, and when she rose to go she met with a very earnest request from Stella to come and see her again very soon.

"You have done me *such* good," said the girl, gratefully; and she lay silently for long after her visitor had left, thinking deeply with a vague feeling of calm and rest and possible happiness filling her heart.

Those few words spoken by Mrs. Marston were not lost. They were as the good seed which brought forth a hundredfold. Stella was changed from that day.

Not that the alteration was altogether perceptible at first; we cannot change our natures in a moment. She was rebellious, selfish, and irritable many a time again; and yet there was a difference. Her eyes were beginning to be opened. She began to see herself as she really was, and to struggle, feebly and intermittently, to be better. It was a hard fight, and many a time in bitter discouragement she was tempted to give up the struggle. But Mrs. Marston was her true friend, always ready to help her with kind counsel and loving words; and Stella clung to her from that day with an affection of which Mrs. Branscombe grew almost jealous. There was no one like Mrs. Marston in Stella's eyes, and the squire's lady learned to look upon the quiet wife of the village doctor with a sort of wistful wonder where the charm lay that had won her daughter's love and confidence as she had never been able to do.

Nor did Katy forsake her sick friend. She had always been fond of Stella, though perhaps hitherto the affection between the two girls had not been very deep; but Stella's affliction and Stella's helplessness were a new bond between them, and appealed to all Katy's love and tenderness.

The two grew to be almost inseparable, and all Katy's spare time was spent in the sick room. Had she a new book, she must take it for Stella to read, that they might discuss it together afterwards. Had she learned a new sort of fancy work, she must go and show it to Stella and see if she cared to try her hand at it. There was always some excuse for running to the hall, and the squire and his lady even grew to look for her coming, for no one—unless it were her mother—cheered and brightened their daughter as Katy Marston did.

Ten years have passed away since then, and looking in once more upon the two girls—girls no longer—how do we find them?

Katy is Katy Marston no longer. Four years ago she married the assistant whom with increasing practice Dr. Marston found it necessary to engage, and who has since taken the doctor's place almost entirely, a small fortune which had come to him rendering the older man independent of his profession.

So Katy is a village doctor's wife, as her mother was before her. It is not a very grand position; Katy is never likely to become the great lady she had once longed to be. Their home is small; her husband is a hard-working man; but Katy thinks he is the grandest and noblest man that ever lived, and is heart happy in her devotion to him and to the two little girls who call her mother and who keep her brain and hands busy from morning to night.

And Stella, what of her?

Stella and her father live alone at the hall now, for it is three years since Mrs. Branscombe died, a disappointed, worldly-minded woman to the last. Her daughter's misfortune had embittered her strangely, and even when Stella had lived down the trouble and grown to be far brighter, gayer, and sweeter than ever she had been before her affliction, her mother still mourned over it and refused to be comforted.

Not so the squire. When he saw his daughter happy once more he soon accommodated himself to circumstances.

"There is a bright side to everything, my dear," he would say when Stella alluded to her helplessness; "and it is a very great thing to me to know I shall always have you to stay with me. God knows I would have you well if I could, and yet——"

And Stella knew what the unuttered words meant, and kissed the hand which was touching her hair caressingly. The squire and his daughter were all in all to each other after poor Mrs. Branscombe's death. There was no more hunting for Stella, and the squire seemed to have lost his inclination to follow the hounds now that his daughter could no longer be at his side. So instead he would drive her out in her low easy carriage, with Dandy—grown an old horse now—between the shafts; and the villagers grew to know and to love the sight of the old man and their young lady, with her bright face and kindly interest in their concerns; her ready sympathy in their troubles and unfailing willingness to help.

"The sunshine of his life," her father would call her fondly; "the sunshine of the village," her poor neighbours would have echoed.

Could it be the same Stella? The gay, careless, self-centred girl of ten years ago? The same, and yet how different! She was happy and content in her apportioned lot, even when cut off from most of the pleasures in which youth delights; happier even than she had ever been in the heyday of her beauty and her girlhood. For she knew now what she had not known then, that purest and best of all pleasure—the giving of happiness to others.

But the present peace and sunshine had been purchased at the cost of many a hard struggle—many a dark day. Self is so hard to kill in the human heart, and many a time when we think it dead, we see it lifting its serpent head in places where it is least expected. But prayerful effort is sure in the end to be successful, and Stella gained the victory at last.

Her father's solace and joy; the lady bountiful of the village; the gentle, thoughtful mistress at home; Katy's bosom friend, and the fairy godmother to her two little ones. How could she help but be happy?

"It was just as you said, dear Mrs. Marston," she said one day to her faithful friend, "though I could not see it at the time; but I am sure my trouble was sent to me in love. Where should I have been if it had not been sent? Most likely a thoroughly worldly-minded woman, devoted to pleasure and fashion, for I know it was in me to be so. But I have been saved from that, and I see the love now. I don't mean I'm good"—with a soft little smile—"for I fear I never shall be that, but I'm always trying to be, and it is better to be always trying and always failing, than never trying at all. And I don't mean to say I don't sometimes wish I could be well and strong; but I am content to leave it all. I am sure my trouble has taught me to feel for others, and brought me out of myself; and I know—you have always told me so—that it will be made up to me some time. I fancy when I get to heaven"—and her tone was still more tender and reverent—"I shall be like the lame man who 'walked and leaped and praised God.' And what a thing that is to look forward to! Yes, I am more than content. There is Katy, a happy, busy little house-mother, and here am I, a poor helpless sort of creature; but we are both trying to fill the place given us, like the daisy and the buttercup in the poem we used to be so fond of when we were girls; and how can we help being happy?"