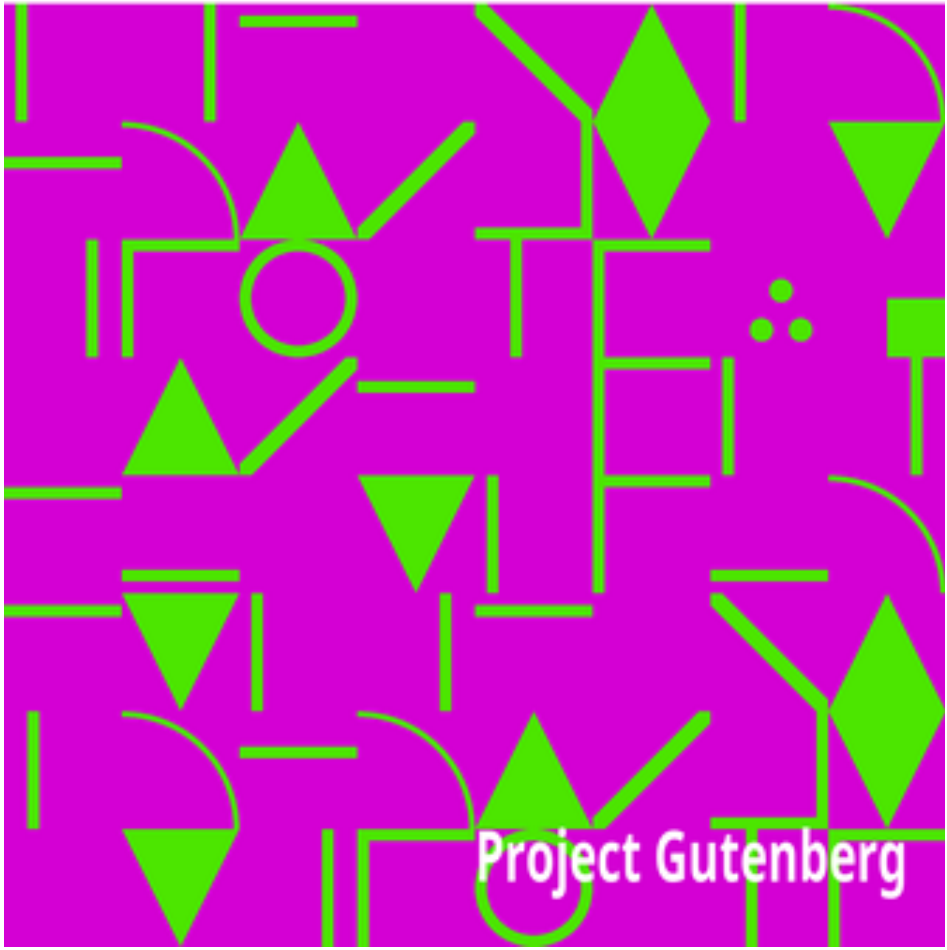
The Magician's Show Box, and Other Stories

Caroline Sturgis Tappan and Lydia Maria



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THE MAGICIAN'S SHOW BOX

AND

OTHER STORIES

By Lydia Maria Child

The Author of “Rainbows for Children.”

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THE MAGICIAN'S SHOW BOX.

There was once a boy, named Gaspar, whose uncle made voyages to China, and brought him home chessmen, queer toys, porcelain vases, embroidered skullcaps, and all kinds of fine things. He gave him such grand descriptions of foreign countries and costumes, that Gaspar was not at all satisfied to live in a small village, where the people dressed in the most commonplace way. At school he was always covering his slate with pictures of Turks wearing turbans as large as small mosques, or Chinese with queues several yards long, and shoes that turned up to their knees. Then he read every story he could find of all possible and impossible adventures, and longed for nothing so much as to go forth, like Napoleon or Alexander, and make mincemeat of the whole world.

One day he could bear it no longer; so, taking with him an oaken dagger which he had carved with great care, off he started on his conquering expedition. He walked along the sunny road, kicking up a great dust, and coming to a milestone, threw a stone at a huge bullfrog croaking at him from a spring, and made it dive under with a loud splash. Pleased with his prowess, he took a good drink at the spring, and filled his flask with the sparkling water. At the second milestone he threw a pebble at a bird, singing in a tree. Off flew the bird, and down fell a great red apple. “Ah, how fine!” he exclaimed, picking it up; “and how the bird flies! I wish I had such wings.” On the third milestone sat a quiet-looking little man, cracking nuts; so Gaspar stopped to crack nuts, and have a chat with him.

The man was very entertaining, and Gaspar listened and listened to his wonderful stories until he saw the milestone shadow stretching far along the bank. Then he jumped up and was going to walk on, but hop

went the little man quite across the road. Gaspar went the other side; hop came the little man back again; and so they dodged about, hither and thither, until Gaspar's patience was quite exhausted.

“He is only a small fellow, after all,” he thought; “I can take a good run and jump over him.” He took the run and gave the jump, but the little man shot up high into the air, and he might as well have tried to jump over the moon.

“It is a most singular thing!” said Gaspar to himself; “a little gray man, not much larger than I am, and yet he seems to be every where at once, like sheet lightning. There is no getting by him, and all the time he looks at me with those bright eyes and that quiet smile, as if he were really very much amused. Well, he must go to sleep by and by, and then I can step over him and walk off.”

So he lay down, pretending to sleep, and the little man lay down also, with his face turned to the sky. When Gaspar thought him fast asleep, he arose very softly, believing he could now surely escape; but at his very first step up came a sly hand, catching him by the foot, so that down he fell at the old man's side, and there saw the bright eyes gazing up at the stars, without a wink of sleep in them. But Gaspar soon forgot his travels, with all his bold intentions, and fell asleep himself, to dream of skewers and cimeters.

In the morning the little man said, “Come now, it is foolish for you to go trudging about over the world. You will never see any thing more than polywogs and sandflies, and those you can find in your native village. Give me a drink from your flask, and a bite of your apple, and I can show you more wonders in a day in my show box here, than you would find wandering about for a lifetime.”

Then he drew from the pocket of his gray coat a neat box, carved of ivory, and having taken a bit of the apple and a sip of the water, which Gaspar never thought of refusing, he touched a spring, up flew the lid, and Gaspar peeped in. Ah, but it was a wondrous sight; for on and on moved a procession of all imaginable things. Lions and elephants seemed mere puppies, for here were mastodons and ichthyosauri, and

animals that lived before the flood was ever dreamed of; and as for Turks and turbans, why, there were people with headdresses that towered up into the skies, and ladies who made rainbows pale. There were queens whose thrones were all one driven pearl, and warriors whose swords were a flash of sunbeams.

"Ah, yes!" exclaimed Gaspar; "this is better than travelling. But how shall I remember all these enchanting sights? I must make a note of them." And seizing his wooden sword, he began to draw in the sandy road each figure as it appeared.

Hour after hour the procession passed on in the little ivory box. Hour after hour he drew it in the sand, and that little man stood by, with his quiet smile and great politeness. At length a loud hallooing was heard, and they saw all the boys from the village running towards them.

"What is going on here?" they called out. "Never were such clouds seen as have been sailing over the village to-day. Whales and astronomers, kings and crocodiles, and nobody knows what. They all sail from this direction, and we have come to see what is going off here. Can it be you, Gaspar, who are raising such a wind? Did you draw all these lively things in the sand, and blow them up into clouds?"

Gaspar said he knew nothing about the clouds, but he thought it was getting rather dark, and was as much surprised as any of the boys, to see what grand figures he had thrown up into the sky. He begged his new friend to show the boys his box; but he said, "No, it was not for them," and put it into his pocket.

They all laughed at it, and said such great creatures never came out of that little paint box.

Gaspar went back to the village with the boys, and for a while was quite contented with the remembrance of what he had seen; but at last his old love of travelling awoke in him. He did not feel satisfied to have seen wonderful nations and animals merely passing through a show box, but wanted to see them in living reality; but how was he to get by the little magician? On foot he knew it was impossible, but thought he might succeed on a fleet horse. So he went to his friend Conrad, and offered

him the apple which could never be eaten, for his good cantering horse. Most boys are fond of red apples, but Conrad cared for nothing else but apples and apple dumplings, not even for his cantering horse, and readily exchanged him for Gaspar's apple, which he could be constantly eating. Off rode Gaspar with whip and spur, sure now that the little gray man could not stop him.

As he cantered along the road very grandly, there were those bright eyes fixed upon him.

“Whither so fast to-day?” said the gray man, with his queer smile.

“That's nothing to you,” answered Gaspar; and on he tried to go; but hop went the little man, to and fro, just as he did before, and Gaspar did not like to run his horse directly over him; indeed he might as well have tried to ride over the winds of heaven; so he jumped off, exclaiming, “It's no use dodging about in this way; come, now, let's fight it out;” and he drew his oaken dagger with a great flourish.

“Ah, ha! that is it, is it?” said the magician; and out flashed a steel dagger. At it they went, striking their weapons against each other with might and main. At every stroke Gaspar's wooden dagger became sharper and sharper, and when he left off fighting he found it was changed into good steel; but it was useless to hope for victory from such a combatant, who might have pierced him through and through at any moment, as Gaspar very soon saw; so he put up his dagger, and they sat down on the stone, cracking their nuts and jokes together in the old way.

“Now,” said Gaspar, “if I had a few bags of nuts like these, I could make my fortune. They do not grow in our village, and I have told the boys about them until they are all wild to have some. But I suppose you cannot give me any, for although you never get out of them, you seem only to have a handful at a time.”

“Gaspar,” answered the gray man, “there is no end to my nuts; we might crack here until doomsday, and I should still have thousands and thousands of uncracked ones left. I do not think much of them myself, but you are young and easily amused, and if you would like a bag or two, why, here they are;” and he held up his hands with a great sack full of

nuts in each. Gaspar jumped on his horse, dragged the bags up after him, while the little man looked smiling on, and rode home to the village.

What a shouting there was when the boys saw him riding through the streets with his great bags of nuts! They offered him bat and ball, hoop and kite; but Gaspar said he did not care for such childish things; he wanted something to be of use on his travels round the world. “You had better go to Lawyer Clang's,” called out a newsboy; “he has a horse such as never was seen afore.”

Gaspar rode straight to Lawyer Clang's office, and walked in, horse, sacks, and all.

“Sir,” said he, “what will you give me for this cantering horse and these very hard nuts?”

“My horse Wayfare; and a more serviceable animal was never known. I am getting a little tired of him myself, but he is just the thing for you, if you wish to see the world.”

The horse was brought round, a great gaunt creature, but handsomely bridled and saddled, and Gaspar thought he looked tough and sound, and would be far more useful than his cantering horse, which was only suitable for pleasure riding, so he changed horses, threw in the nuts, and rode off, bidding the boys good by, for many long years, he told them.

When he came to the first milestone he found the mossy spring was frozen over. At the second he saw the leafless apple tree, with a deserted bird's nest upon it; and at the third he discerned something that looked like the little magician; but he believed it was only a snow wreath: at any rate, it did not stop the way, and on he rode, exulting, though a little cold.

It was all very pleasant until night came; and then he was glad to see an inn, with a bright fire shining through the windows. He pulled in the reins, but the horse would not stop. He pulled harder and harder, and called “Whoa!” until he was breathless. It was all of no use. On went the horse, and the inn, with its bright windows, was soon left far behind. And over the wide plain he rode all night, through the wind and the

snow, which was not at all agreeable. In the morning he was quite faint, and wanted to stop at a cottage for some breakfast, and a good warming for himself, and some oats for his horse. But no; Wayfare had nothing to do with such trifles. He went calmly on, always at the same jog-trot pace, and that not a very easy one. Gaspar had to catch at some berries as he rode through the woods, but found them poor fare, and was glad to find himself, the next day, getting into a warmer climate, where even oranges grew; but not many could he gather as he rode by the trees, and it was very provoking to see the horse, instead of stopping at a running brook, trot straight through it, and across a green pasture, as if it were all a parched desert.

“What an old fogy of a horse he is! I am sure he must be made of wood,” exclaimed Gaspar; and he gave a great pound on the horse's neck. “Hollow, I declare! Nothing but a wooden horse, after all, and goes by machinery. I wonder how long he is wound up to go, and whether I shall ever get off the dreadful nightmare's back. What a fool I was to change my good cantering horse for such a machine as this! But I must endure it now I am in for it.”

Day after day they trotted on, through strange countries, among unknown people and animals; but the horse never noticed them, nor they the horse. Gaspar wished to jump off and let the great creature go; but it was so high, and went on so steadily, that he could not get a chance. At last they passed through a gate in a high wall, which he thought must be the Chinese Wall, and a pagoda in the distance soon convinced him that he was right.

“I shall at least see peaked shoes and mandarins, and that is some satisfaction,” he thought, and rode on, looking about him with great curiosity, until he came to a palace all gilding and porcelain. Here the horse came to a stand, as if he had been wound up to go so far and no farther.

“This I know must be the emperor's palace, and that must be the very gentleman himself, looking out of the window,” said Gaspar. “How fortunate that uncle Gammon taught me Chinese!” He bowed and

addressed the emperor, who was quite surprised to see such a very small foreign boy on such a very large horse, speaking his language so correctly. He came down to examine the horse, and when he found it went by machinery instead of being alive, expressed the greatest delight, saying it was just the kind of horse he had always desired, and if Gaspar would give it to him, he should be made one of his chief mandarins. Gaspar replied that his greatest desire was to be a mandarin; so he alighted in the most dignified manner, and entering the palace, was presented with layers of richly embroidered robes, which reached to his feet, and just allowed the peaks of his shoes to peep out. Then he was introduced to a large circle of mandarins who stood round, incessantly bowing to one another. He began to bow too, as if he had done nothing else all his life, and when dinner was served, managed his chop-sticks most dexterously, and smoked as if smoking had been his only vocation. In short, he ate and bobbed, and slept and woke, in the most approved manner.

Now he had attained the summit of his wishes. Every thing was entirely Chinese,—jars, mats, sweetmeats, dresses, bobbing, and stupidity. Rank, luxury, grandeur he called it, and for a while flattered himself that he was immersed in perfect happiness; but, somehow,—he could not tell what it was; perhaps he was not quite old enough,—but somehow he did become a little weary of being a mandarin. The palace was deliciously perfumed, but he longed for a puff of fresh wind. Nothing could be richer than their dresses, but the embroidery was rather heavy. Nothing could be profounder than their politeness, but it would have been a relief to have given some boy a good snowballing. Nothing could be serener than their silence, but he would gladly have given any body three cheers for nothing.

He began to make plans for escape from this palace of his desires, when one morning, just as one venerable mandarin was saying to another, in their usual edifying style of conversation, “Pelican of the Morning, before the magic charm of thy lofty countenance I am spell-bound, like an albatross bewildered amid the flapping sails of a mighty

—” down burst the door with a crash, and a lion rushed roaring in among them. What a scrambling there was of the long-flowered dresses! What a tumbling, a flying, a groaning, a screaming! Never before were such confusion and fear in an assembly of bobbing mandarins. But Gaspar felt his breast swell with courage. Throwing off his long robes, he sprang upon the lion, and struggled fiercely with him; but the powerful creature would soon have laid him low if he had not suddenly remembered the dagger, sharpened in his conflict with the little gray man. Drawing it from the belt in which he always wore it, beneath his embroidered robe, he plunged it into the lion's throat, and victory was won. He did not wait for the dispersed mandarins to return; but throwing one of the richest dresses over his shoulder, as Hercules wore the lion's skin, he walked off, taking his way straight to the gate in the wall, for he had had quite enough of China and the Chinese empire.

Now began glad days for him—roaming, like a wild hunter, from land to land, coping single handed with crocodiles and cameleopards, riding upon elephants, mastering tigers and young hyenas, visiting mosques and mausoleums. In every land he made collections of its greatest curiosities in art, literature, science, natural history, and politics. A sphinx, an obelisk, a winged bull from Nineveh, stuffed porcupines, live monkeys, fossil remains, a pinchbeck president of the United States, and many rare specimens even more curious, did he collect, and after years of wandering, by land and by sea, carry with him to his native village. There he converted an old barn into a museum, and gave out to the villagers that he was prepared to instruct them in all that the world contains. They flocked to the museum, and he was occupied every hour of the day going from one object to another, making a little set speech about each to entertain his bewildered visitors. Great admiration was expressed, and perhaps great knowledge was acquired. Gaspar felt that he was the benefactor of his race, and bought a pair of very tight boots to walk around in, and a neat little silver-tipped stick with which to point out the curiosities.

But, alas! even now, when the cup of happiness seemed full, was he not to be satisfied. Had he not attained all that the most eager hopes of his boyhood had promised? Had not the highest honors and the most yellow of garments been lavished upon him in that long-desired Chinese empire? Had he not conquered innumerable wild animals—African, Asiatic, and above all, American? Was he not the focus of life and intelligence in his native village? And yet, how weary had he become of describing to his gaping audience, for the three hundred and sixtieth time, the daily habits of the laughing hyena, and the exact manner in which kangaroos jump! What sad indifference to the nature of whigs and walruses, to the tendencies of sea otters and free institutions, was creeping over him!

"Ah, if a lion would but walk in again, and if I could but have another good fight!" he exclaimed one day. At that moment the door suddenly opened. Hope whispered, "The lion!" and a fair young girl entered. She glanced around the room, cast her eyes on the president, the bones of a mastodon, a parrot in the corner, and a mummy or two.

"Old bones and stuffed animals!" she whispered to her companions, and they all began to laugh.

"I suppose she will call me a stuffed animal too," thought Gaspar; "but I must show them the specimens." So he stepped forward, and began to point out the various objects, and go over his usual descriptions. He did it in his neatest manner; but the girl kept smiling, as if it were all a great joke, and yet she looked at him with some interest. Gaspar went into another room to put on his mandarin's dress and peaked shoes, which he thought would produce a great effect; but if she had only smiled before, now she fairly laughed. Then he caught down his dagger which hung on the wall as one of the curiosities, and felt for a moment as if she were the lion, and he would plunge it into her; but the next moment he saw her beautiful face bending over it. "Ah, this dagger I like! How sharp the point is! It looks as if you might have done something with it. Tell me all about it, will you not?" said the girl.

“If you will come here a week from to-day, I will tell you its history,” answered Gaspar; and she promised that she would surely come.

At the appointed time she appeared—alone, now, Gaspar was glad to see, for he did not like to have her whispering and laughing with the other girls. However, he hoped she would not laugh now. He led her through the museum into another room, where he had been painting a picture of his fight with the lion.

“That is excellent!” said the girl; “that is just the thing. There goes the dagger into the throat of the lion. How much better than a petrified peacock, or a labelled dromedary! And you killed the lion and painted the picture too?”

“Yes,” answered Gaspar, quite gently.

“And the dagger—where did you find that?”

Gaspar told her how he had carved it of heart of oak when he was a boy, and had changed it to steel in fighting with the magician.

“I must see that magician; let us go and find him,” said the girl. So away they went. As they walked along Gaspar told her about the ivory show box, and regretted that he had lost his flask of water, and exchanged his apple for the cantering horse, because they had now nothing to give the little gray man for a peep into it.

“Wait a moment,” said the girl; and running into her house, which they were passing, she brought out a golden cup full of red wine. “I think he will like this better than the water—do not you?”

When they came to the milestone, there sat the gray man, cracking away as inveterately as ever. “I should think he would be tired to death,” said Gaspar. “Think how much I have seen of the world while he has been cracking those old nuts.”

The little man overheard him, and smiled to himself, as much as to say, “I know;” but when he saw the young girl, he rose up and made quite a profound bow. “He never bowed to me,” thought Gaspar.

“Will you let me look into your ivory show box, and I will give you a drink of red wine,” said the girl.

“It is a poor thing,” answered the magician, “not worthy of your attention; but if you will vouchsafe me a sip of the wine, I have been cracking these dry nuts so long. Ah, I do begin to be weary!” The girl peeped into the show box. “All very pretty, but rather stiff and monotonous,” she said. “Not so good as you can paint, Gaspar. Come, let us go home.”

She made the gray man a pleasant little courtesy, took her vase of wine, and she and Gaspar went back to the village to paint their own pictures, leaving the little magician to crack his nuts and look into his show box as long as he pleased.

THE VIOLET FLAME

Rosamond was the child of a village blacksmith, and of a lady said by the villagers to be a princess from a far land. She herself claimed to be descended from an Ocean Queen; but no one believed that, except her little girl, who thought her mother must know best. Rosamond would sit by her for hours, gazing into the river that flowed through their garden, and listening to her mothers stories of golden palaces beneath the water. But she also liked to pry about her father's forge, and wonder at the quick sparks and great roaring fires. Her cousin Alfred would stay there with her, but while she was watching the red glow of the fire and the heavy fall of her father's hammer, he was gazing upon the violet flame that flickered above her forehead.

One day, when she was playing with him in the picture gallery of the old castle, in which his mother was housekeeper, she called him to look at the portrait of a child daintily holding a bird on the tip of her finger, and arrayed in the quaint richness of the old-fashioned costume. “She looks like you,” her cousin said, “only she has not a little trembling flame upon her forehead.”

“Have I a flame upon my forehead?” asked Rosamond, wondering.

“Come and look,” answered Alfred, and he led her to a great mirror, where she for the first time saw the violet flame. “How beautiful it is!” she exclaimed.

“O, but it is growing dim; you must not look at it,” said Alfred. “Come and let us run up and down the garden, between the great hedges.”

But Rosamond, having once seen the violet flame, could not be satisfied until she had been to the castle to take another look, and found so much pleasure in gazing at herself in the great mirror, that she went every day to pay herself a stolen visit, while Alfred was at school. But one

day he found her there, and said, “I see how it is that the pretty flame has gone; you have been admiring it too much by yourself. I shall not love you now.”

Then Rosamond felt very sorry, and wondered how she could win back Alfred's love. At length she took all her money, with which she had intended to buy her old nurse a warm cloak for the winter, and bought a golden *feronière* with a purple stone in it, to wear around her head in the place of the vanished flame. Then she walked into the picture gallery with a proud step. “O Rosamond!” exclaimed her cousin, “can you believe that bit of purple glass can replace the dancing flame that shone with, such a lovely violet light over your golden hair? Pray take it off, for it seems mere tinsel to me.”

But neither he nor Rosamond could unclasp the *feronère;* and she had to go back to the jeweller, of whom she bought it, to ask him to file it off, which he tried in vain to do; and at last he said, “The pedler who sold it to me must be right. He said that, once clasped, it could only be loosened by dipping it into a hidden fountain. What fountain it is I do not know; but some old priest, who lives in a town on the mouth of a river, knows.”

This was discouraging for Rosamond, there are so many towns and rivers, and so many old priests, in the world. She looked on the map, and thought it must be Paris, for that is not so very far from the sea, and there they know every thing. So, with her mother's leave, and some jewels she gave her, she went off to Paris, taking a bit of the mirror set in a gilt frame. When she arrived there, what was her surprise to find the city entirely inhabited by birds and animals! Parrots and peacocks prevailed, but ospreys and jackdaws, vultures and cormorants, crows and cockerels, and many, many other kinds of birds were also fluttering about, making a perpetual whizzing. Then there were hundreds of monkeys, all jauntily dressed, with little canes in their hands, and a great many camels and spaniels, and other animals, wild and tame, in neat linen blouses. What bewildered her still more, was to see that they were all skating about on the thinnest possible ice. Why it did not crack, to let them all through, she could not imagine. At first she was afraid even to

set her foot upon it, but soon found herself skating merrily about, enjoying it as much as any of them. Another queer thing was, that, reflected in the ice, all these birds and animals appeared to be men and women; and she saw that in her own reflection she was a nice little girl. She wondered how she looked in her mirror, and took it out to see. “What kind of an animal am I?” she exclaimed. “O, I see—an ibex. What neat little horns, and how bright my eyes are! What would Alfred say if he knew I was an ibex?”

She called out to the skaters to ask them if they would look into her glass. “Hand it here,” answered one, who in the ice appeared very pale, thin, and respectable. “I am a philosopher; I am not afraid of the truth.” He looked in, and lo, there was a stork, standing on one leg, with his eyes half closed, and his head neatly tucked under his wing. “What a caricature!” he exclaimed, giving the glass a toss. It fell upon the ermine muff of a furbelowed old dowager, who was skating bravely about, notwithstanding her seventy years. “I will see how I look,” she said, with a simpering smile; and behold, there was a puffy white owl in the mirror. Down fell the glass, but Rosamond caught and saved it.

“What a little unfledged thing you are, to be carrying that bit of broken glass about with you!” called out the philosopher.

“Better be unfledged than a one-eyed stork,” answered Rosamond, and skated swiftly out of sight.

Now, the grandest skater of all was a griffin, who led all the others, skating more skilfully than any of them, and flitting like mad across the very thinnest places. It made one's head giddy to see him. His swiftness and dexterity, and a knack he had of knocking the other skaters into great black holes under the ice, whenever they crossed his path, greatly imposed upon them, and they all took care to follow straight behind, or to keep well out of his way. Now and then a bear would growl as he glided by; but the next day, Rosamond would see that bear hard at work building ice palaces, too busy to growl. One day, skating off into a corner, she found the griffin sitting apart, behind a great block of ice

with his claws crossed, and looking very cold and dreary, like a snow image. “Would you not like to take a peep into my glass?” she said to him, quite amiably.

“No, child,” solemnly answered the griffin. “I know by your ironical smile that you have discovered the truth—that I am nothing but a griffin. But if the skaters believe in me, why undeceive them? Why should magpies and zebras have any thing better to reign over them?”

“But do you not see how thin the ice is? You will surely break through some day.”

“I know it,” he replied. “A good strong trampling, and we are all scattered far and wide. But I keep the tigers and hyenas at work, and the more sagacious elephants bear their burdens in quiet, and let me alone. If there be a lion among them, he roars so gently it does no harm. And you must be a good girl, and keep silence. I see that you also wear a crown, and you know how heavy it is.”

“Yes, and it is of brass too, like yours. I am trying to free myself from it,” answered Rosamond. “But I do not care for your peacocks and parrots, and will not tell them yours is not of gold; so do not be afraid;” and off she went, leaving his majesty in a very uneasy state of mind. But he had nothing to fear from her, for although she did not cry, “Vive l'Empereur!” when he skated gorgeously by, she never revealed the fact that he was only a long-clawed griffin.

Rosamond might have staid a long time in Paris, so amused was she by all the gay plumage and dazzling confusion around her; but she soon found that she was dying of starvation. She had always heard French dishes and bon-bons most highly extolled, and now she found they were nothing but dry leaves and husks, served up very prettily, to be sure, but with no nourishment in them. So she looked on the map again, and decided to go to the shore of the Baltic, and follow it along until she came to the town in which the priest lived; for it certainly was useless to look for one among the gayly-plumed skaters in Paris.

Hard walking she found it, among sands and stones, and poor living in the fishermen's huts scattered along the coast. She was quite glad, one day, to meet a little girl of her own age, picking berries. Rosamond helped Greta fill her basket, and then accepted her invitation to go home with her. After walking through a long green lane, among fields of waving grain, they entered a town built of white marble; and Rosamond knew this was the place she sought. They stopped at Greta's house; but when Rosamond saw how many children there were in it, she thought she should not be very comfortable there, and asked for a hotel. Greta told her there was none in the town, but that she would find herself welcome in any house.

So she walked about until she found a large one with handsome columns before it, and there she passed the night. In the morning the lady of the house said, “To-day I am bread maker, for you must know we all work in this town, and all share our food together. If you stay here, you must make bread with me.”

Rosamond did not like this proposition at all, for her mother had never taught her to work, and besides, she felt as if, with a crown upon her head, she were a kind of queen. It seemed to her as if the villagers also thought so when they looked at her as she walked through the streets, and she bore herself very proudly for a while, but at length became so tired and hungry, that she sank down on a doorstep, her head leaning on her hand; and as she watched the passers-by through her drooping lids, she noticed how very nice their shoes and stockings were. Then she saw that her own were much torn and soiled, and looking down the street, was mortified to trace her way along by the muddy footprints she had left on the fair white marble. She went to Greta's mother, and asked permission to wash her stockings and clean her shoes. But she did not know how to do it nicely, and they still looked very badly. “Clean bare feet would look better than such shoes and stockings,” said the mother.

“But I could not have bare feet and a crown,” answered Rosamond.

“O, is it a crown? Excuse me, I thought it was a snake skin.”

Rosamond half smiled, but said sadly, “It seems like a snake, it stings me so sharply.”

“You must go to Father Alter. A lady once came here with a jewelled girdle which was clasping her to death. He sent her to a fountain high among the mountains, and she returned in a white dress with a girdle of wild flowers. She lived with me, and kept a school for children. She was a lovely lady.”

This reminded Rosamond of the priest, and she asked Greta to show her where Father Alter lived.

She found him sitting in his garden of herbs among poor people who were waiting for comfort and advice, and Rosamond also had to wait. At length he turned to her, and laying his hand gently upon her golden head, said, “I see what you want, my child. You must bathe your forehead in the fountain, that the weight of this stone may be taken from it.”

“How shall I find the fountain, father?” she asked.

“Ah, my child,” he answered, looking tenderly upon her, “the way is long and difficult, and many who wish to seek it do not find it. Neither can I point out the path to you. Each must find it for himself. The fountain wells forth in a green valley high among the mountains, and this river on which our village is built flows from it. Yet you cannot follow the stream up to its source, for it is often lost under ground, or is hidden among dark caverns. Through these hidden caves I found my way; but your young feet may try the mountain summits. From these you will discern the valley, and can descend into it. Yet linger not too long among shining glaciers, for the cold may come upon you suddenly in that bright sunshine, and steal your life away. And tread lightly along the mountain paths, for often the slightest motion will bring down an avalanche. And, my child, take with you this osier basket, in which lies a little loaf of bread. Fear not to eat of it every day; but remember always to leave a crumb, lest you should meet a hungry bird, and have nothing to give it. And thus will the loaf be always renewed. Do not forget, and a blessing be upon you.”

Rosamond went gravely forth with the osier basket in her hand. As she passed through the village she could not but long to stay among those pleasant gardens, and water flowers with the children who were so busy there; but if she lingered to speak to them, she felt the tightened clasp of the fillet upon her head, and on she hastened. At first she thought the mountains quite near; but when she had walked until she was very tired, they seemed as far off as ever, and so on for several days. At many a weary milestone she stopped, wondering who had rested there before her, and whether they had ever found the hidden valley among those yet distant mountains. At night she staid in some little cottage by the wayside, always kindly welcomed, and carrying kind wishes with her when she went away. At noon she would break her little loaf, and dip it in the stream, remembering to leave a crumb in the basket; and when she opened the basket for her supper, there would still be the loaf, whole as ever; and many and many a bird did she feed on her way.

One day when she had been walking a long distance, and was very hungry, she had forgotten about keeping the crumb, and was just breaking the last crust, when she heard the quick, sharp cry of a bird in distress. Looking round she found a wounded sparrow lying on a rock. She washed the blood from his feathers, and gave him a crumb of the bread, very thankful that he had prevented her from eating it all, for then there would have been none left either for the bird or for herself. She wrapped the sparrow gently in her dress, and carried it with her, and wherever she went, along the edge of steep precipices, or over the rough glaciers, through deep snow or amid cold winds, still she warmed that bird in her bosom and kept it alive. At length she reached the summit of the mountain, and saw the red sunset slowly become gray, and the stars come out one by one in the wide, lonely sky. So far did it stretch around her, on every side, before it touched the horizon; so near did it seem, above her, that she felt as if she were high in the heavens, and turning her face towards her village, she thought Alfred might perhaps see her there, shining among the stars. Ah, foolish little girl! Her weary feet soon sank beneath her, and she fell asleep upon the snow. But the bird fluttered and chirped in her bosom, as if it knew danger were near, and

she suddenly awoke. “O, good little sparrow,” she cried, “if it had not been for you, I should have been frozen to death in my sleep; but now I will not stay here longer; we will go down into the valleys.”

She began to slide down the mountain, and when the sun rose, saw beneath her a green, hidden nook, in which stood a solitary tree. She thought she should reach it immediately; but sometimes her way was blocked up on all sides, and she had to creep over high rocks, or through dark chasms, often losing sight of the valley, and fearing she never should find it. At length, however, she stood safe beneath the blossoming tree, and there was the sparrow's nest with the young birds in it. Rosamond fed them with her crumbs, and looking about for water to give them, found a clear spring bubbling out from under the root of the tree. As she bent down to dip up some of the water in her hand, a few drops were sprinkled upon her brass fillet, and it fell from her head. “Why, this is the very fountain,” she exclaimed; “I did not know it.” When she raised her head, the free mountain wind blew through her hair, and she felt as light-hearted and happy as the bird which had found its nest.

She slept that night beneath the sheltering tree; the new moon shone upon her, and the bubbling of the water lulled her into a sweeter sleep than she had known for many nights. In the morning she gave all her bread except one crumb to the birds, then descended the mountain, following the stream glancing over the rocks. But at last she lost sight of it, and instead of finding herself by the river on which the marble town was built, she came to the little old mill near her own home. There was Alfred hard at work, for he had hired himself out as a miller's boy. Her mother was weeping beneath the willow by the river, and her father was hammering at his anvil. How pleasant his great, glowing fire looked to Rosamond, after her wanderings among the icy mountains!

Alfred came to tea, and then she had to tell them while she had been. She described the beautiful white marble town, at the mouth of the river, and said she wished they could all go and live there. Her mother's face

lighted up as it did when the golden sunset shone upon it, and she said, “Ah, Rosamond, my home was once there, and there I long to be again.”

The father listened very thoughtfully. “Yes, it would be good to work there, where all work together; we will go,” he said at last. Alfred decided to leave the mill and go with them.

They were all ready before the new moon was full, and leaving the village, with its slow stream and low pastures behind, reached the clear river, after a few days' travel. They walked along its high banks, among stately groves, until they came to the marble town. The people were glad to receive them, and they at once felt that they were among friends.

Rosamond went down to the sea shore with her mother, to whom the ocean breeze gave a new life; but it was really the old life revived; for when she was a child, she had lived beside the sea, and in her inland home had pined for the sight of the great waves.

As they were returning to the town, they met the old priest, who said he had come to offer them part of his house to live in, but that they must not live idly there; they must look about them, and decide what they would like to do.

The next morning Rosamond asked her mother and Alfred to go near the shore with her. There she showed them a bed of fine clay, of which she proposed to make vases. She and her mother sat down on the grass together, and moulded them, just within sight of the waves gently breaking upon the beach. The vases were so beautiful it seemed as if they were modelled from the curves of the waves, and contained within them the rippling sound of the sea upon the shore.

Alfred built up an oven in the father's forge, and baked the vases. When all were finished, they presented them to their new friends, who were greatly delighted, saying they had never seen such beautiful ones.

Rosamond and her mother continued to mould, not only vases, but little images, which were very much sought after by all the villagers. Rosamond never knew that the violet flame once more burned upon her forehead; but she knew that Alfred loved her, and long and happy was their life, there, by the wide, sunny sea.

FLORIBEL.

One long, summer afternoon, old Zachary and his wife Betsy, having finished their tea at four o'clock, and having nothing very interesting to do, thought they would visit Hoppletyhop; the dwarf, who had promised to grant three wishes to any one who would bring him the three things he most desired in the world. Old Zachary took the president's message, a pair of spectacles, and a pipe full of tobacco, which he smoked by the way. The old woman carried a bowl of hot tea, a looking glass, and her very best plaited cap. As they went out of the door, they found their little grandchild, Floribel, reading on the step, and called to her to follow them. So she ran along with Jack the Giant-killer in one hand, and dragging with the other her tin wagon, in which sat her favorite doll, Rosa, drawn by four high-stepping tin horses.

As they passed through the village, their neighbors, who were sitting in their porches, enjoying the cool breeze, and feeling much too indolent to do any thing, called out to know whither they were going; and when told they were on their way to visit the dwarf Hoppletyhop, advised them to stay quietly at home, for he would be sure to do them some mischief. Zachary was a little inclined to turn back, when he heard this; but Betsy said, “Let us go on—I should like to see what mischief he will do;” and Floribel begged them to go, because she wished to see if a fairy dwarf was as large as her doll.

As they walked along, she asked them what they should wish. “I shall wish to be young, and deacon of the church,” said her grandfather. “And I, to have a whole chest of souchong tea, and to be young also,” said the grandmother. “But I shall wish for a castle as high as the sky, and a golden dress that will never wear out, and a stick of barley candy six thousand miles long,” said the little girl.

After a long walk they found Hoppletyhop playing jackstraws with a grasshopper, on a bank of violets. He received them very politely, and asked each of them to take a stone among the violets. The grandfather then offered his presents. The dwarf read two sentences in the president's message, and said he could not stand that; it was too stupid. He peeped through the spectacles, and said they gave every thing a twist; and as for tobacco, he could not endure it.

The grandmother set the bowl of tea before him; but it was so hot it burned his mouth, and he kicked it down hill, smashing the old lady's best china bowl into a hundred pieces. He was angry when she presented the looking glass, thinking she wished to make fun of him, because he was so small. The plaited cap, he said, was not made for a man like him to wear, and he tore it all to shreds.

Then, turning to Floribel, he said, “Well, my little girl, what pretty book is that you have in your hand? Ah, the History of Jack the Giant-killer. A splendid fellow was Jack! my great-grandfather. Just the book I have always wished to read. Family archives, you know. And what is this I behold? What, a splendid red chariot! and what a sweet little doll within! How dumb and amiable she appears! She shall certainly be my wife, and these four horses shall draw us all over the world.” He sprang into the wagon, seating himself beside the erect little doll, who immediately began to move her quiet eyes; the horses shook their manes, and pranced about; and away drove Hoppletyhop, calling out to Floribel as he disappeared, “Wish your three wishes, and they shall be granted, whatever they may be.”

Then her old grandmother and grandfather implored her, with tears in their eyes, to wish they might be young again. Floribel thought that would be delightful, for then they could all go blackberrying together; so she said in a commanding voice, “I wish my grandmother and grandfather to be young again;” but she did not think to say how young, and the next moment was surprised to see two little babies, lying among the violets, kicking and crying with all their might. “O, dear me!” she exclaimed. “The poor little things! How they do cry! What shall I do with

them? I do wish grandmother were here, to help me take care of them!" and one little baby was immediately changed back into her grandmother.

"How could you wish me to be old again, Floribel?" she exclaimed. "Pray wish me to be just seventeen." Then the grandfather began to cry most clamorously, and Floribel knew he also wished to be seventeen, instead of a little, helpless baby. She did not know what to do, for with only one wish left, she could not both wish her grandfather to be older, and her grandmother to be younger. While she was standing in this perplexity, half stunned by the cries of her grandfather, and the entreaties of her grandmother, she chanced to spy a little dog running along, wagging its tail, and without thinking, cried, "O dear, I wish I were a little dog, and then I should not have to choose!" and in the twinkling of an eye, to her great dismay, she became a little brown dog, jumping about.

You may imagine how the poor grandmother felt, when she returned home, carrying her old Zachary, a little baby, in her arms, with a brown dog running beside her, instead of her dear little grandchild, who had always been the best child in the world. The villagers ran out of their gates to meet her, and could not keep from laughing, to see their grave neighbor Zachary a little crying baby; but they felt very sorry about Floribel, for one and all loved the merry little girl. "O, we told you how it would be," they said. "We told you the dwarf would do you some mischief." But this did not comfort poor Betsy, who went sorrowfully into her house, shut the door, and would have had a good cry herself, if the baby had not been crying so hard that she had more than she could do to take care of him. "I never saw such a cross child," she exclaimed. "When he was my old Zachary, he was very good natured; but now he is little Zach, I can hardly stay in the house with him." She laid him on the bed, hoping he would fall asleep; but he screamed as if he had never dreamt of such a thing as sleeping. The little dog barked as if it fain would do something, and at last hopped on to the bed, and softly patted

the baby to sleep with one of its fore paws, and then, wearied with the adventures of the day, fell asleep itself, leaving the old lady to her lonely meditations.

The next morning the baby and dog awoke very early, as little dogs and babies always do; so that the poor grandmother had to rise, when she would gladly have slept four hours longer, to give them some breakfast. Then she looked about for something to dress the baby in. She opened the closet, and there hung old Zachary's best Sunday coat. Sad as she felt, she could not help smiling to think how funny he would look in it now. She took down a white dress of Floribel's, and began to cut the sleeves and waist smaller, that it might fit the baby. O, how troubled the little dog was, to see her cutting up the pretty new dress, which was to have been worn by Floribel, on her birthday, at a party her cousins were to give for her, at Elderbrook, their pleasant farm, two miles from the village! And when the little dog thought how, on the morrow, all the gay cousins would come for Floribel, and would find only a brown dog, it laid its head on the grandmother's feet, and whined so piteously that she began to weep, and said, “We are having hard times, Floribel! yes, very hard times!” and then the baby began to cry too, as if it understood all about it.

The dog wondered whether it would still be called Floribel; a pretty name for a little girl, it thought, but not at all the name for a dog. Then it remembered the time when it was Floribel, and had a little dog named Frolic, and wondered if any one would love it as much as Floribel did Frolic. Looking round the room it spied out the doll house, with the dolls and pretty furniture in it, and thought it could play with them just as before. But little paws are not so handy as little hands, and the dog broke off the arm of a chair, smashed in a doll's head, and made such a disturbance in the doll house, that the grandmother said, “Come away, puppy; let Floribel's things remain just as she left them.”

“Am I not Floribel?” thought the dog, and barked as much as to say so, and looked up so dolefully in the grandmother's face, that she said, “Poor little creature; you had better go out and have a run,” and opened

the door. The dog could not resist its active little legs, and off it sped, until it came to the school house. The children saw a little brown face with sparkling eyes peeping in, and one whispered to another, “How much that looks like Floribel's Frolic; do you think he has come back again?”

“Why, no,” said another; “do you not know it is Floribel herself, changed by the dwarf into a dog?”

“O, dear! what a pity!” exclaimed the children, and some of them began to cry; but others said it must be fine fun to be a little dog, and run about all day, with no lessons to learn.

When the teacher saw the children could think of nothing but the dog, she said it might come in a little while; so it jumped into the room, and ran all round, from one child to another, receiving many a gentle pat and kind word, and at length laid itself down under Floribel's empty seat, looking about with such mournful eyes, that the children said, “Poor fellow! I am sure it would rather be Floribel, and have the hardest arithmetic lesson to learn, than be only a little scampering dog. Would it not, doggy?” and the dog bobbed its head up and down, as much as to say, “Yes, I am sure I should.”

After school the dog and children ran races together; but no child could run so fast as the dog, with its four legs. It went frisking home, and the grandmother called out, “Why, Frolic!” thinking, for a moment, it was the dog they had before, and that Floribel would come bounding in after it. From that time she always called it Frolic.

The next day the cousins arrived in their wagon, and stopping at the gate, they saw a little dog in the yard, and called out, “There is Frolic, returned. I wonder why Floribel does not come out. Has she forgotten it is her birthday, and that we were to come and carry her home to the party? And where is grandfather? Why is he not sitting in his arm chair, in the doorway?”

Running up the path, they saw their grandmother at the window, dancing a baby up and down. “Where did grandmother pick up that baby?” they exclaimed, and rushed into the house. There they heard the

strange story, and truly astonished they were. “Can this be grandfather?” cried Sarah. “This little cooing baby, my own grandfather, who always said such wise things?”

“And can this little foolish dog be my cousin Floribel, who had such long curls, and such a sweet smile!” exclaimed Robert. “What will mother say?”

“Let us dress it up in Floribel's clothes, and mother will think it is she, when we drive up, in the wagon,” said Sarah.

So they put a pink dress and white sun bonnet on the dog; the grandmother tied a straw hat, that had belonged to the doll Rosa, on the baby, who gave rather a wistful glance at old Zachary's black beaver, on the nail, and away they drove.

The mother came to the door to welcome them, and thought she should see Floribel's smiling face under the white bonnet; but O, there was only a dog's sharp nose. “What prank are you playing, children?” she said. “Where have you hidden Floribel?”

“Allow me to introduce grandfather and Floribel,” said Sarah, as she and Robert took the baby and the dog from the wagon.

“What foolish children you are! Whose baby is this?”

The children assured their mother that the baby was their grandfather; but it was not until the old lady, with many sighs and tears, had told the tale, that she could believe it. The two women had rather a melancholy day together, although they did enjoy taking care of the baby, and were not quite sure that it was not as entertaining, with its sprightly little ways, as the old gentleman had been with his grand, moral remarks; and certainly its little shrill pipe was not half so bad as the old tobacco pipe. Sarah said that although she loved her grandfather, she could not help being pleased to have him a baby again; he was so cunning and droll, and she did so like to toss him about, and feed him, and make him laugh.

She carried him out in the hay, where the party of children were at play, and great fun they had burying him up in the haycocks, while Frolic frisked about as merry as any of them. At dinner time, when they went to the table, under a wide-spreading oak tree, they found two high chairs, one for Frolic and one for the baby; and there they both sat, with wreaths on their heads, and behaved with the utmost propriety, although Frolic was seen, after dinner, to slip down under the table, and gnaw a bone, as Floribel would not have done, and the baby cried for a cherry, as grandfathers never do.

Frolic had as pleasant a life as a dog could have. Every one in the village was kind to the playful creature, who had once been a favorite little girl, and the children always came flocking about the house, out of school hours, to play with the dog and the baby. Sometimes some curious child would ask them if they did not wish to be changed back again; but the baby would always shake his little bald head, as much as to say no; for he found himself growing larger and stronger, and thought it pleasanter to be a healthy baby than an old gentleman with the rheumatism. But Frolic's head would always bob up and down, as much as to say yes; for it is surely better to be a little girl than a dog. The children suggested various ways in which the change might be effected. “Why not go to the dwarf and ask him to change her back again?” said one. “Because the dwarf has gone to Chinese Tartary with Floribel's tin horses,” answered another.

“They might ask the fairies to change them with their wands,” said little Amy.

“Nonsense, with your fairies,” replied Tom, the blacksmith's son. “I should like to know where fairies are to be found nowadays!”

But Frolic thought a fairy might possibly be found, and got into wild habits of running about in the moonlight, and barking a great deal at bats and night moths, fancying they were fairies; so that all the neighborhood complained, and begged the grandmother to shut the dog up evenings in the wood house; for though a pleasant animal by day, it was altogether too noisy by night.

One day when Frolic was lying at the school house door, where it learned a great deal listening to the recitations, the teacher read aloud the story of Orpheus, who could tame wild animals with his lyre, and then went on to say that she had heard of music by which animals might be changed into persons. Frolic's white ears were pricked up, and every word was treasured, and thought over, day after day. The children wondered why the little dog did not play with them as usual; they did not know how eagerly it was wandering about, listening to every strain of music it could catch. The young ladies who played on the piano could not imagine why that little dog was always under the windows, and why it gave such a hopeful bark every time they began a new Polka or Sehnsucht, and why it whined so sadly every time it was over. When some soldiers marched through the village, they said the dog had better enlist, he seemed so fond of the trumpet and drum. When the hand organ players came and excruciated the villagers with a wiry “Last Rose of Summer,” they laughed to see the excited creature jumping about, and one of them would have carried it off for a dancing dog, if the grandmother had not run screaming after him. The old black man who played on the fiddle, for the villagers to dance in the town hall, said he could not guess why Frolic had taken such a fancy to Minerva's Quickstep. The congregation could scarcely refrain from laughing to hear the dismal howl the dog would set up in the church porch when the whole choir started off in “Old Hundred,” as if it were “Catch who can;” and young Edgar, who played on the flute in summer twilights, was quite gratified to find Frolic always lying at his feet, with wistful eyes, and imagined himself a second Orpheus.

But one day, when he had played a most unheard-of melody, Frolic thought that might possibly be the magical one, and annoyed the young man so much, by jumping upon him, that he gave the poor creature a kick, forgetting who it had formerly been. That was a cruel kick; for, though to appearance but a brown dog, Frolic had the tender feelings of a little girl, and, shrinking home, passed a most unhappy night in a dark corner of the garret, thinking every one might be unkind, now that its good friend, the flute player, had been so. And in the morning, when the

grandmother called, “Frolic, Frolic,” it came very slowly down stairs, and did not once go out all day, but lay on the rug, looking very much grieved.

Frolic never quite forgot that kick, and sometimes was even afraid to go among the children, lest one of them might be angry, as the flute player had been, and felt sadder than ever about being a dog. The villagers said, “Why, what has come over our Frolic? It used to seem as merry as a dog could be, scratching at our doors, and stealing our bones; but now it goes moping about in solitary places, just like young Edgar, with his long hair. Poor thing! It is certainly a sad fate, for one who has once been a bright child, the best scholar in school, winning a medal every week, to be only a barking dog.”

A year passed on, and the little dog was still seen about the village; sometimes merry and frolicking with the children, but more often walking alone in the fields, or watching over little Zach, who was now old enough to play in the front yard; when one day, as it was taking a walk on the shore of the river, it saw a little girl who had paddled out in an old boat, which was fast filling with water. In her fright the girl had dropped her paddle overboard, and had no means of getting ashore. Frolic scampered off to a man who was walking at some distance, but seeing it was Edgar, who had given him that sad kick, for a moment scarcely ventured to approach him; then, thinking the little girl would be drowned if it did not make haste, it ran to Edgar, and jumped on him, pulling and barking. “Poor Frolic,” said Edgar, “I treated you unkindly once, and now you forgive me.” But Frolic pulled harder and harder, and ran towards the river, and then back again to Edgar, so that at last he thought something was the matter, and hastened to the shore. In a few minutes he had rowed out in another boat, and reached the sinking one just in time to save his own sister Lucy from drowning. O, how they both thanked Frolic when they reached the shore! and Edgar said he would never, in all his life, hurt a living thing again; it was bad enough to be a dog, without being kicked for it.

From that time Lucy and Frolic became the greatest friends. Wherever one was seen, the other was sure to be near. Those who passed her house would see Lucy singing at her work, under the great elm tree, and little Frolic lying close at her feet, looking up in her face. She always took the dog with her when she went with Edgar to a neighboring town, where he taught a singing school. One evening the scholars were to give a concert, and Edgar said they had better not take Frolic, lest he should bark; but Lucy answered, “O, let us take the poor little thing; it loves music better than any thing. I sometimes think it will sing itself, some day, instead of barking, and be one of your best scholars;” and the dog looked so entreatingly at Edgar, that he consented to take it.

As they drove along, Frolic peeped from the bottom of the chaise, where it was curled up at Lucy's feet, and saw the crimson sunset. A sudden thought came, that it would be the last sunset it would see with a dog's eyes. When it scrambled up the stairs to the concert room, it thought, “I shall never go pattering up stairs again on dog's paws;” and when it entered the room, and saw the hundred little girls in white dresses and blue sashes, it looked about very gravely, saying to itself, “Soon I shall be a little girl in a white dress and blue sash;” and yet it knew not how all this was to happen.

The concert began; chorus and solo, the sweet, clear strains arose in the air, and at every one the dog pricked up its ears; but every strain found and left it a little brown dog, lying on the step of the platform, and it began to think that a dog it should always remain. Just as it was in despair came a new piece, a solo, tender and entreating, as if a spirit were seeking its way through the lonely night air; and then a full chorus joined in, joyous and triumphant, with the tender tone running through it. Frolic lay with its head pressed close on its fore paws, thrilled through and through by the music. When it was over, Lucy turned to look for her dog, and saw a child, with rich brown curls, sitting on the step. “Have you any where seen a little brown dog, with a coral necklace on?” she asked.

“I am the little dog,” answered the child. “And here is the coral necklace you gave me, round my neck.”

“You look too good to steal my dog's necklace,” said Lucy.

“Do I look too good to be your little dog?”

“Nobody could be better than Frolic, who forgave my brother, and saved my life, and is so gentle to every one.”

“Have you forgotten me, Lucy, in the two years I have been Frolic? Do you not know your friend Floribel?”

Lucy threw her arms around her. “O Floribel, is it you? You have come back again! How glad I am! And yet I feel sorry to lose little Frolic, too. I wish you could be both Frolic and Floribel.”

Edgar was gladly surprised when a little girl came out with Lucy, to ride home with them, instead of Frolic. “I owe it all to you,” she said, “that I have become a little girl. It was your beautiful music.” They had a lovely drive home in the moonlight, and Floribel staid with Lucy all night. Her grandmother did not much mind whether a little dog was at home or not. In the morning, instead of an eager paw scratching at the door, she heard a little girl's happy morning voice, saying, “Let me in, grandmother, please.” When she opened it, in bounded Floribel, kissed her grandmother, and caught up little Zach, dancing all about the room, in great delight.

“Pray, be still,” cried her grandmother, “and let me see you. Are you really my own little Floribel, come back?”

“Yes, grandmother, yes, Zach. Frolic has gone, and Floribel has come.”

“'Ittle dog done, 'ittle dirl tome; me 'ove 'ittle dog, me 'ove 'ittle dirl,” was Zach's grave remark.

The old lady said, “Yes, my child, it is you; what would your grandfather say?”

Floribel laughed, and looked at Zach, but thought she would not remind her grandmother that he was her grandfather. In the two years the old lady had taken care of the baby and dog, she had almost

forgotten they were ever any thing else; and although she could never have her wish, to be young again herself, she almost seemed to become so, living with these two children, who were as happy as kittens together.

A grand festival was held in the village to welcome Floribel's return, and the neighbors said, “We shall all miss little Frolic, but we are right glad to have our happy, singing Floribel among us again; and we hope she will never have any more wishes granted.”

“O, dear,” exclaimed Floribel, “I do not know about that. But one thing I am sure of; I shall never wish to be a little brown dog again.”

THE LADY INTELLETTA.

Little children in the wide world, I have no one here to whom I can speak; so I must write to you, for it will be some consolation to think that you may read my letters, and feel sorry to think that a little child, like yourselves, can be living as I am.

I am writing with an opal pen, at a mother-of-pearl table; and you may see what pretty violet paper I have, with a silver edge. The room is of ivory, delicately carved, and chased with silver, and all around are arches, in which stand fair statues. But there is no window, except one in the ceiling, formed of a single pearl, through which the softened sunlight falls. This room opens, by a silver door, into another, in which sits a fair and stately lady, with hair like heavy folds of gold, and eyes like the blue sky. Her features are carved like those of a statue, and she is almost as pale and still. Her blue silken robe falls richly around her, and a white flower lies, like marble, upon her hair. She sits and gazes into the fire.

Now, this fire is one of the things I wish to tell you about. It is the very brightest fire I ever saw; but there is no motion in it—no flame, no smoke, no glowing coals, that take every moment new forms. It is always still, still, and seems to be made of shining metal. I wonder how the lady can sit and gaze into it as she does. And then there is no warmth in it. No, it is not in the least like our dear wood fire at home. O, how I long for that! For you must know this house is not my home, and that I am now a poor little prisoner here. And yet, how I once wished to come hither! I will tell you about it.

My own home is a brown cottage by the shore of a great lake, over which the sun brightly shines. Our garden stretches down to the very waves of the lake, so that my violets are often sprinkled by their light foam. In this garden I played and worked with my sister Mary. We planted our seeds in the spring, and in summer watered and weeded among the sunny flowers, while mother sat at the door and held the

baby, who laughed, and stretched out her little hands for the blossoms we threw her. How I wish I could see that darling baby rolling down the steps into the grass! But I am afraid she will be grown up before I shall see her again. Why could I not have been contented with all that happy life? But I had heard there was a great castle beyond the lake, in which dwelt a beautiful lady, and I dreamed of that lady day and night. When I went in the morning to bathe in the lake, and the waves, all golden in the sunrise, broke softly over my feet, I fancied they had brought me a message from her; and at evening I would lie down among the tall grasses, and gaze over the sunset waters, longing to follow the light to her castle door, whence I thought it shone.

The lake was so wide I could not see the other shore; but I knew that the road which passed our house ran all around it, and I often walked a long way upon it, hoping to reach the castle.

One day, when I had strayed far from home, a coach, all glittering in its swiftness, came sweeping by. “O, take me in, take me in!” I exclaimed; and in a moment I was sitting beside a lady richly arrayed, and we were speeding on. The lady did not speak to me, but gazed out of the window, so that I could only see the veil, that fell around her like shimmering mist. Thus we drove on and on, and every thing passed us so swiftly that I could see nothing distinctly. Indeed, I did not look out much, but turned towards the lady, hoping to catch a glimpse of her beautiful face.

At length we stopped before a strange, dark building, that seemed to rise up into the very sky. “Can this be the castle I have so longed for?” I thought in surprise. High steps led to the entrance, and on each side stood a lion with a woman's head, carved in stone. The door opened silently, and we entered into a marble hall, and went up broad marble stairs.

The lady guided me into a room lighted from the ceiling, where I found a small white bed and a marble bath. Nothing else. “Is this to be my room?” I wondered. “I should think there might at least be a looking glass: how shall I know whether my hair is smooth?” But I did not dare to say this to the still lady. She then walked before me into another

room, and we seated ourselves at a marble table. “Every thing is marble,” I said to myself, “even the lady.” Then an old man entered with a white beard, that looked like icicles frozen upon a rock. “Marble too,” I thought; but his eyes were very gentle. Not a word was spoken; but white porcelain dishes stood before us, filled with the most delicate food, and we ate in silence. Then the lady arose, and I followed her into a lofty room. She seated herself, and gazed into the fire, while I stood beside her, waiting for her to speak; but she did not notice me. At length I asked, “Shall I not go home now?” She did not glance at me, she did not speak. I looked around the room. Mirrors, mirrors, every where; and in every mirror I saw the lady, but started when I observed, that I nowhere saw myself beside her. I went nearer to them. There were the lady and the fire, reflected and re-reflected a thousand times; but poor little I was nowhere to be seen. “Am I not, then, any where?” I exclaimed. “The lady does not hear me! The mirrors do not hold me!” I clasped my hands together to feel if there was any real life in them, but almost thought there was not, they were so cold. I went into the marble hall. Silent all; ah, how silent! I opened door after door. Silver and blue were all the rooms; no crimson, no gold. Statues and columns were all around; no paintings, no flowers. Was I not in a great cave full of stalactites? Longing to tread once more the green earth, I ran down the broad flight of stairs; but the entrance door was closed, and I could not remember the word by which the lady had opened it. I went up the stairs and sought the old man, but every room was empty. At length I found a little wooden staircase, that led higher and higher, to a narrow door. I knocked; no answer. I lifted the wooden latch; it did not open. I sat on the threshold, for I liked that wooden staircase. It was like the one that leads to my own little chamber at home, where Mary and I slept so sweetly together. I fancied what Mary was doing at that moment. It must be night, and they must be wondering where I was. I would try to find a window, and perhaps I could climb out. I looked into every room. They were all lighted by windows, high, high in the ceiling, and I could not hope to reach them. I returned to the lady's mirrored room. There she

sat in her hundred mirrors, but she saw me not. I went into my little room, and weeping, fell asleep, to dream that my mother wept for me at home.

In the morning, on first awakening, I wondered where Mary was, for I forgot where I was myself; but the faint light, that fell like early dawn through the high window, brought all to my remembrance. A fresh, white dress lay upon my bed; I put it on, and glided down stairs. The lady still sat by the fire. “Had she not slept?” I wondered. “Had she not dreamed of flowers and falling dews, of rosy faces, and of mother's love, as I had?” She arose silently, and I followed her to the room where we had taken our supper the evening before. The old man entered. The lady bowed her head low. I bowed mine. The dishes appeared upon the table, I knew not from whence, and we again ate in silence. The fruits were fair to see, but seemed to have no flavor, no juice. The only drink was water, in crystal vases. How I did want a cup of good old Brindle's milk, foaming and warm, as we have it at home.

All that long day I wandered up and down. Once I saw the old man, at the end of a long corridor. I thought of his gentle eyes, and sprang towards him; but he vanished, I could not tell how. I began to think he was a phantom; that it was all a strange dream. If there had only been a bird to sing, or a frog to hop about, or any thing living! But the lady was so still she scarcely seemed to breathe, and the old man came and went like a shadow. There was not even a breath of wind. Finest lace curtains hung in the rooms, but they never stirred. How much pleasanter was my little muslin curtain at home, that fluttered so lightly in the summer breeze! And then my morning glories, that peeped into my window; they were all in full bloom, pink, purple, and white, and I was not there to see them.

At length I found my way into this ivory room. The statues here are not as stern as in the rest of the house. Some are very lovely, and there is even one of a mother holding a child, which makes me think of my mother and our little baby. O, how many hours I have passed at the feet of this statue, weeping as I never wept before!

I know not how many days I have been here, but it seems a very long while. Did you ever wake in the night, when it was all still, and you could see the faint starlight through the window? and did it not seem as if you were awake a very, very long time, and as if a great many thoughts came, which you never had before? and yet, perhaps, it is only a little while. So it is with me. It may be only a few days since I left home; but it seems to me as if the summer must have passed, as if all the flowers were faded, and the leaves fallen from the trees; and yet father may still be mowing his grass, and Mary playing in the hay. Happy, happy Mary!

I would write to her and my mother, and tell them where I am, and entreat them to come for me, but I know not how to send a letter. There is certainly no post office here. I have no way to send my letter to you; but I cannot speak to any one in this silent castle, and it is a pleasure to write. If I direct it to all the children in the world, perhaps one of them may some day come here and find it. I shall not seal my letter, because there is no sealing wax here, and no seal. I think the lady never writes letters to any one; but sometimes she writes and throws her paper into the fire. There it shrivels up in a moment, and the fire burns, or rather glitters, just as before. O, that fire! It seems more like a keen frost than a fire, and I never dare to approach it. I never look at it except in the mirrors.

In an old, dark cabinet, curiously carved, standing near the fire, are a few books, some large and some very small. They are bound in black leather, and clasped with jewels. I take them down, but cannot unclasp them. Sometimes the old man comes in and reads aloud to the lady. Then she turns her face from the fire, a little towards him. Ah, that is pleasant. His voice is like the summer wind, and I sit beside him to drink it in, but cannot understand his words. Yet they have a strange power over me, and I often weep as I do by the mother's statue. He sometimes looks mildly down upon me, and has even spoken to me; but I did not understand what he wished to say.

One day, when he left the room, I followed him, very timidly, with softest steps. He passed slowly through the great halls, and down a dark staircase, which I had never before seen. Yet it was not altogether dark; but the light was different from the clear, silvery light that shines through the upper halls. I heard a heavy door open and close, and all was hushed. I could not find the door, and after groping a long while for it, I went back to the ivory room, and cried myself to sleep, at the foot of my dear ivory statue.

But you must not think I am always unhappy here. How can I be, where every thing is so beautiful? And another wondrous thing is, that the rooms are always changing; not much, but a little, from day to day. I have never seen any thing move except the silken lady and the silver-haired old man; and these, with a motion that is not like life; yet I can perceive that there is a change—just as, while you are looking at the clouds, you can see that they have taken new forms and tints, and yet cannot tell how it is. I sometimes think there must be invisible spirits in the castle, there are such strange lights in the rooms. Perhaps the statues are enchanted queens and princes, for there seems to be a presence in each one. I wander from one to another, and gaze, and gaze. O, how lovely they are! If they were only alive, it would be almost too great a pleasure to live with such beautiful people. I sometimes lay my hand upon them, to see if they are not warm, but quickly draw it back again, they are so very cold. No lips smile for me, no eye looks into mine, no hand is stretched out towards me.

How I wish some of you, little children, were here! Any child! The poorest beggar, in her rags, if she could but speak and move. If the color would come into her cheeks, and the tears into her eyes, I would throw my arms around her, and kiss her a hundred times. O, she would not be made of marble. But good night now. It is very late, and only a little light comes in through the pearl window. I have written a very long letter for to-day. To-morrow I will write again, only I shall have nothing to tell, for the days are all alike here. Good night.

Dear Children: I have something new to tell you. One morning, when the lady arose from the breakfast table, she went down the broad staircase, and I joyfully followed her. She spoke the magic word at the door. It opened! We passed down the steps, between the two winged lions, and stepped into the glittering carriage. Away it sped. I could not see the driver, but only that there were four white horses. On we flew, faster and faster. I gazed out of the window at the green meadows, the woods, the streams; but we passed them so rapidly that they were all mingled. I could just see that there was something moving about near the houses, and at work in the fields—men and women, I suppose; but they were as transparent as air, and I could see every thing through them. Mere ghosts they seemed to be. Now I could understand why the lady took so little notice of me. I, and all these people, were like wreaths of mist to her. I turned towards her. She was looking out with the same calm eyes. It was all unreal to her, but she was very real to me, very beautiful. I wished she were not. I wished she were not in the carriage; that it would stop; that I could get out, and run, dancing and shouting, through the fields. I broke the silence. I implored the lady to stop the carriage; to let me go and find my home; to let me gather one buttercup, one blade of grass. She drew her glimmering veil more closely around her; I believe she thought the wind blew a little. On, on, we went! At length we stopped, and I thought it was my mother's house. I looked out for the little brown walls, the grass plot, the baby. I saw only the great castle, frowning down upon me, and the lions with women's faces looking at me with large, tranquil eyes. When we alighted from the carriage I tried to escape, but the lady's power was upon me, and I had to follow her up those stone steps. The door opened and closed. I threw myself down by it; I pressed myself against it. I wept as if my heart would break. I know not how long I lay there. All night, perhaps. It may

have been yesterday when I flew so fast through the green fields. I know nothing about time here. I have come to write to you again. It is night again. My paper is all wet with my tears. O, if my mother were only here to kiss me to sleep!

Dear Children: To-day something pleasant has happened. I have found a little room I never saw before, away off in the corner of a long entry; and will you believe it? there are the remains of a wood fire in it—real ashes, which I could blow about with my breath, only I do not like to disturb them, and a piece of burnt brand. Some one must have lived in this room, and perhaps not so very long ago. It is hung with flowered chintz curtains, like those around my bed at home. It made me so happy to see them, I kissed the flowers and the buds on them; and yet it made me sad, too, I longed so for my own little room. I lifted the curtains all around the walls, hoping to find a window, and found a little one in a corner, but the shutters were closed. I thought that it might overlook the lake and the hills, and that perhaps some little girl had once sat there with the soft breeze blowing upon her, and she had seen the dancing waves of the lake, and far across it our little brown house, which I would rather see now than the glancing waters I once loved so well. I pushed and pulled; I looked for a spring, and ran over all kinds of strange words in hopes to find one that would open it; but all in vain. There was no bar across the shutter, and yet it was firmly closed. Then I looked around the room. There was a small statue carved in wood of a boy, with an extinguished torch in one hand, stretching out the other as if he were groping in the darkness. There was another carving in wood of a child lying asleep, and an angel bending over it binding a wreath of roses on its head. I looked at this angel, with her softly-folded wings and loving

face, for a long while, and at the little sleeping child, and thought, perhaps an angel is binding my head with roses while I sleep in this marble house, for my life here all seems like a sleep and a dream.

There was nothing else in the room except a wooden footstool and a spinning wheel, the broken thread hanging upon it. On the walls was a picture of a child with a halo around its head. It might not be a very good painting, but the face was lovely, and seemed to say, “Come with me.” There was a little straw mat beneath this picture, as if some one had knelt before it; at least I did. Then I drew the footstool up, and sat near the ashes, on the hearth. I tried to imagine I was sitting by the fire at home, close to my mother's side, on my little footstool, while Mary, and the baby, and father were frolicking together, as they always do at night; but O, there was only the dead brand. And yet I would rather sit and look into those ashes, and think what a pleasant fire was once there, or might be, if rekindled, than gaze, as the lady does, into that hard, glittering fire, which is always the same.

While I sat there, feeling very homesick and sad, I spied a little cupboard by the side of the fireplace. I opened it rather hesitatingly, for I did not know what might be there, and found—what do you think?—a book! You cannot tell what a joy that was to me, you who have whole shelves of books. But if you had been shut up for a long while in a great castle where there was no person who would speak to you, no book which you could read, not so much as a kitten or a fly to play with, and nothing to do, day after day, but wander about and admire curtains and statues, and a lady like a statue,—would you not be glad to find a book you could read, even Mother Goose? At first I hardly dared to open it, for I was afraid it might be in some unknown language, and that would have been too great a disappointment; but at length I peeped in, and there was a little hymn I used to sing with my mother, and another and another. It was the very same hymn book I had at home—one just like it I mean, only very worn and old, as if it had been read a great many times. And I shall read it many, many times; for although I once knew all the hymns in it by heart, I have forgotten them now. But they will soon

return to my memory. I sat on the little stool singing them over to myself in a low voice, until it seemed as if my mother were really singing them with me; and now I shall go to bed and sing myself to sleep with one of them.

Dear Children: I have not written to you for several days, because I have not needed to write, I have been so happy with my hymn book. And besides, I have found in the cupboard some small, sharp tools, with which the images in the little room must have been carved, and I am carving a figure on the wooden stool. It is very pretty, I think. It is our little baby feeding a robin. Perhaps you would not think it a good likeness of baby, but I do, it is such a chubby little thing. Only I cannot carve very well, I have had so little practice. But I draw a great deal from the statues in the ivory room, and am learning very fast. I sing to myself while I am at work; and when I wander, singing, in the great halls, to rest myself, there comes a strange echo through the lofty rooms. One day, when I was dancing along, humming a little song I used to sing with Mary, I met the old man, and he laid his hand upon my head. It seemed for a moment as if it must be my own father, and I almost threw my arms around him, but was afraid of the long, silvery beard; and yet it does not look like icicles now, but is soft and flowing. It made me think of a picture father has of a wise old man named Eli, and I shall always call him Eli now, for I like that people should have names. I think the lady's name must be Intelletta, because I saw it written in a book that was unclasped, one day. It is a pretty name—do you not think so? But I do not like it half so well as Mary.

One day I saw a strange sight. I was sitting on the lower step of the wooden staircase that leads to the narrow turret door, when the lady passed me by, without noticing me, however. She carried a dazzling

sword erect in her hand, so that the point gleamed above her head. It was very splendid, to see her thus mounting the stairs. She stood before the door, but it would not open, although the sword flashed as if it would flash its way through. She waited very long, and then came slowly down, with her lips pressed together. I thought she gave one little glance at me. I arose and followed her, for whenever I see her move I always follow her. She seated herself by the fire, but did not look into it. The sword fell from her hand, and she leaned her head against one of the jewel-clasped books. The old man soon entered, unclasped the book, and read to her. She rose from her chair, and sat on a cushion at his feet—a little cushion near mine; and yet she did not see me.

I will draw you a picture of the lady ascending the stairs with the shining sword, and yet I can hardly venture to do so. It will not look like her, for I cannot draw the glittering light in her face, and that marble flower in her hair; that is too handsome for me to draw. But there is no fragrance in it, and I would rather have the smallest violet that blooms in my own dear garden. Good night.

Dear Children: I have not written to you for a long time, and you will be glad to know the reason why I have not. I was drawing one day with my pretty opal pen, when I heard a fluttering sound above my head, and there was a rosy bird flying about and singing. O, I knew that song so well! I often heard it at home when I was lying half asleep and half awake in the morning, and when I was quite awake I had often looked through all the garden, in every vine and tree, but had never found the bird; and now it had come to sing to me again. It alighted on the table. I did not touch it, but sat with my hands folded, looking and listening; and I listened even after it had flown away, and all was silent again. It flew away through the pearl window in the ceiling, which was open, and has

remained so ever since; and now I can look up into the blue sky and see clouds drifting by, and the sun shining in. It shines directly upon me and makes me so happy.

After the rosy bird had gone, I missed my drawing of the lady with the sword, and I think he must have carried it away. Perhaps he will fly with it to mother, and she will wonder what it is. She will not know that I drew it, for I never drew before. If she should know it was my drawing, she would send me a little note by the rosy bird.

Evening. Yes, the bird came again to-day, and brought me a blue forget-me-not. I know it very well; it came from Mary's garden. You would have thought some great misfortune had befallen me, if you had seen how I wept over that little flower; but it was only because it made me too happy. I did so long to fly away with the bird. All I could do was to write a little note, and tie it under his wing, hoping mother would find it. So I wrote,—

"Dearest Mother: I am your own little Anna. I am in the castle of the Lady Intelletta. I wish you could see how beautiful it is here. I will come home as soon as I can possibly get out. Cannot you come for me, mother?"

Dear Children: The next day the bird brought me a note. It was written on a bit of paper torn out of a book; but I did not care for that. It said,—

“Anna dear: Why have you gone away from us? Mother is so ill weeping for you, that she cannot come for you. You must come to us. Your own sister, Mary.”

Then there was one word added, in a trembling hand—“Mother.” I knew who had written that.

I took the note and went to the lady. I threw myself sobbing at her feet. I entreated her, if she had any pity, to let me go home. I clasped my arms around her silken robe. She did not draw it away; she did not know I was there. The rosy bird flew into the room and sang. She heard him. She rose and followed him. He flew out of my open window. The lady gazed up as if she had never seen the drifting clouds before. I fell once more at her feet. She looked at me a moment, passed her hand over my forehead, as if striving to recollect something, but resumed her seat in silence. It was a long while before I could control myself; but at last I sat down and wrote a note to mother, begging her to be well, and to come for me, and promising never to leave her again. I sent it by the bird, and he brought me an answer, to tell me that mother was better, and they were all coming for me the next day.

I searched all over the castle for the gentle Eli, for I thought he would let me out. I went up the wooden stairs, and down the dark stairs, and through every corridor, but he was nowhere to be found. I thought they were all standing outside the great door, but tried in vain to open it. O, how wearied and bruised I was, with throwing myself against it! At night the bird came with a note which told me they had all come for me, and had gone away; that they could not believe I was in the dark castle, for I had said I was in a beautiful place, and they should wait now until I came for them. And I also must wait, and be as patient as I can. I am happier than I was before, because the rosy bird comes every day, and brings me either a note from home, or a flower, or a leaf. The soft air comes in through my window, and the sunshine, and I know they all love me at home, and have not forgotten me. So I go on drawing, that I may

have copies of all these statues to hang on our walls, and I have almost finished carving the footstool. How pleased baby will be when she sees it! Ah, when will that be! darling little baby!

Dear Children: Happiest of the happy am I! Now let me tell you. I was just finishing off my footstool, and thinking whether the baby's hair was quite curly enough, when the door gently opened and the old man entered. How he had found my little room I could not imagine. He looked at the footstool, then taking it in one hand and leading me by the other, went through the long corridors to the lady's room. He opened one of the great books, and there was a picture of a baby playing with a robin-red-breast, just like my carving. The lady looked from the carving to the picture, from the picture to the carving, and at last seated herself upon my little wooden footstool, with her rich dress sweeping the floor on either side, and held out her hand to me. I put mine into it,—it was not so very cold,—and she sat looking into my face for some long minutes. I looked into her eyes, and they made me think of the evenings when I used to lie on the frozen snow, and gaze up at the bright winter stars, shining through the bare branches of the elm tree. At length she said to me, “How did you come to this castle?” I could not but smile at the question, and answered, “I came in a carriage with you, but you did not see me, perhaps; I was hidden by your glimmering veil.”

“Ah, that veil! I will never wear it again,” she said; and then I had to tell her about my mother and the baby, the flowers and the bees, and all we did at home. And now that she would hear me, I told her how I longed to be there once again, and entreated her to let me go. “Yes, we will go,” she said, and led me to the door, which flew open.

For a moment I so feared to see that splendid, never-stopping carriage, ready to receive us, that I did not venture to look out; but when I took a peep, and saw it was not there, I sprang upon the sphinx, ran along its back, and gave a great jump from its head, quite across the gravel walk, into the grass beyond, and rolled down to the bottom of the bank. I scrambled up again, my white dress stained with the grass, and saw the stately lady smiling at me. I ran off to gather handfuls of dandelions and buttercups, and then away I went to the lake, to let the little waves break over my feet. O, how delightful that was! I heard the lady singing a low cadence like that of the waves, and saw how beautiful she was in the sunlight, so much more lovely than when she sat by that spell-bound fire. How glad mother will be to have me bring this queenly lady home! I thought, and walked along with my hand in hers. But when we came to our garden wall, over I sprang, and fell down into my violet bed. O, how sweet my violets were! I felt as if I could lie there forever among them, but remembered the lady, and gathering two violets, gave her one, and put the other into my bosom. “But you will crush it, child,” she said.

“O, yes, I love it so!” I answered, and was bounding through the garden, when I suddenly thought it would not be very polite to let the lady find her way alone; so I gave her my hand, and led her to the house. There sat my mother, with the baby asleep in the cradle beside her. What happened then I do not know; but I found myself sitting in my mother's lap, with my head on her shoulder, and could hear, as if in a dream, a murmuring sound of the wind in the locust tree, the bees, the brook, the lady's clear tones, and sweetest of all, my mother's low voice answering her. Father and Mary also were sitting on the step, and baby lay sleeping in the cradle, with her dear little face looking just as it did when I went away. Soon we all went in to tea. How the urn smoked, and how good the baked apples tasted! I could not help smiling to see the lady eat bunns, for I thought of her handsome frosted cakes that never had any raisins in them. After tea I undressed the baby; she really seemed to remember me, and we had a grand frolic together. Then I was so happy at night,

when Mary and I fell asleep with the moon shining in through the vine leaves twining around our little window! I believe the rosy bird sang in the jessamine all the night long; at least I dreamed that he did.

This morning I have been all over the farm, calling upon the cows, the sheep, and the chickens. Old Nabby, my brown hen, has ten little chickens, and I have come home just in time to take care of them. I left her sitting on her nest. Will you believe it? father has not quite got through his haying yet. They say I have not been gone such a very long time, but it seems a year and a day to me, and mother says it seems even longer to her; for until the bird brought the note, she did not know what had become of me, and was afraid I was drowned in the lake.

The lady has invited us all to go to the castle to-morrow, and father says he will row us across the lake. Will not that be delightful? I have always so longed to sail on the lake! I cannot say that I care much to see the castle again, but I shall like to show mother and Mary all the beautiful statues, and to bring home my drawings and baby's footstool. Good by now; there is mother calling me to dinner. While she went out to call father I just stole a little time to write to you, here in my room, at my little rosewood desk. It is not so pretty as the mother-of-pearl table, but I like it better. It was my last birthday present.

Dear Children: I believe there was never before such a sunny day as yesterday. Early in the morning we sailed off in the boat, with the water splashing and dancing around us, baby and all so happy. We were three hours sailing across the lake. I did not know that it was so wide. We landed on the slope before the castle; the great doors were thrown open, and in the dark archway stood the old man, looking like a picture, with his long, white beard, and flowing hair. He welcomed mother to the castle; then the lady bowed her stately head, and we all entered.

The old man took my mother by the hand, and led her down the mysterious stairs. I think they must have entered the heavily-closing door, which I could not find when I had once groped about there; for when she returned she wore upon her breast a jewel that glowed like living fire. Then he led her up the wooden stairs, bearing her baby in her

arms. She lifted the little latch, and entered the turret door, while the lady and I waited below. When she came out of the door it seemed as if the sun were descending upon us, such a radiant light was in her face. She gave her hand to the lady Intelletta, then stooped and kissed me upon the forehead with a kiss that was like a burning star.

As my mother and the lady left the stairs, a statue of a young girl started into life. Her marble flowers became fragrant and blooming, as she knelt to offer her upraised basket. My mother took a rose, and presented it to the lady, who placed a fair white lily in her hand. Then side by side they moved along. And now a lovely statue of a winged boy flew forth from its niche, and struck upon its lyre. The whole castle awoke into life. The statues of grave men, with a scroll in one hand and their heavy robes draped in the other, descended from their pedestals. Young princes clustered around us, with graceful garments and waving hair, their swords bound to their sides, and their eyes full of light. A golden-haired princess looked upon me with the loveliest smile, and told me I must always be her sister. In one room, a queen, who had long been pale marble, arose from her throne in gorgeous robes, and joined in our procession. A lady with a wide brow and jewelled hair, rode towards us in a car drawn by lions. I remembered what a funny picture I had one day made of those lions, when they had not the power of motion, and was almost afraid they would eat me up, by way of revenge. But they were very forgiving. A young warrior, whom I had always greatly admired, because he appeared to have so much life in him, even when he was but a statue, now rode gently towards us, bowing low before my mother. But I knew by the fire in his eyes, and the restrained prance of his spirited horse, that he would some time perform brave deeds. When we entered my silver room, the beautiful ivory mother bent and kissed her child, who leaped with joy into life. A little girl, on a gazelle, bounded from a corner. A boy, on an eagle, soared high into the sunshine through the open window, then came circling down, and led the eagle near us. Lovely girls scattered flowers, their light dresses fluttering around them as they tripped along. They smiled upon me as if they knew me; and well they might, for when they were nothing but carved ivory I had sat before

them day after day, with my opal pen and lilac paper, trying to draw them. Then, too, they had seen my tears when I so longed for home. How different it was from that silent time, to have my own dear mother beside me, and all the beautiful, cold statues awakened into life!

We all dined at the same marble table, served by the same invisible hands; but the fruits were juicy as well as fair to see, and the water had become fragrant wine, and there was no silence now, but conversation like the most enchanting fairy tales. After dinner we went to the lady's mirrored room. The fire was not still, and coldly brilliant, but burned with a motion like that of a fountain—self-contained. And yet I like better our wood fire at home. It is so pleasant to put on fresh sticks, and rake open the coals! But it was splendid to see it burning in a hundred mirrors, where all the gay and stately figures were reflected like sparkling light, as they danced around the room in swift circles. Yes, and the lady also danced. My rosy bird sat on the old cabinet and sang his sweetest song, and above all, in the height of the lofty room floated the angel who was crowning the child with roses, and by her side was the happy child.

It was early dawn when we sailed home across the lake. I lay in the bottom of the boat, with my head upon my mother's lap—not asleep, I believe—but listening to the water rippling against the boat, and faintly recalling the beautiful figures I had been seeing all day, I knew them all so well. But how different from the marble statues were the eyes beaming with life, the lips that spoke, and the glowing motions of living forms. O, yes, we shall often accept the lady Intelletta's invitation to visit her lordly castle.

I brought away my drawings, and have been pinning them on the walls this morning. Mother says they are very ornamental to the rooms, but I shall soon draw better ones. The baby creeps along the floor to her little footstool, and points to the robin-red-breast, then looks at me and laughs.

Mary and I are so tired to-night that we are going to have some bowls of bread and milk on the door step, and go to bed when baby does—at seven o'clock. Will not that be pleasant?

To-morrow I shall go to the village post office to put in this letter. I shall not write you any more now that I have mother and Mary to talk with; and I should not have written to you at all after I left the silent castle,—now no longer silent,—only I thought you might be interested to hear about my return home. I shall enclose all I have written in one large envelope, sealed with a winged head; and I think it will reach some of you, for I shall direct it “To all the Children in the wide World,”—care of the South Wind.

VENUS'S DOVE.

In old heathen times, on the shore of the Adriatic lived a little girl whose greatest pleasure was to wander by the side of the lonely sea. She liked better to sit on a high rock with the spray just tossing against her feet, than to play with her village companions, who laughed at her for her wild ways, and asked her if she were the child of Neptune, and if she dwelt in a shell palace under the water; although they knew very well that old Menos, the fisherman, was her father, and that she lived in a little hut, just above the line of seaweed which the highest tides leave upon the beach.

One day Ida roamed far along the beach, amusing herself making deep footprints in the sand, which the rising tide quickly filled, when at last she came upon a high wall of rock, too steep to climb, yet looking as if a pleasant bay might be beyond. She scrambled along the rock, slippery with seaweed, until she could peep round into a great cave, before which was a little beach of smooth, white sand, with dark, frowning rocks all around, except where the sea broke gently in upon it. In the darkness of the cave an old woman leaned over a book. Its brilliant cover attracted Ida, who, half in fear, stole nearer and nearer, treading so softly in the sand that her foot-steps could not be heard, and at last seated herself in the shadow by the old woman, and listened to the wonderful stories which she read, in a low, murmuring voice.

“High upon Olympus, on his golden throne, the blue sky shines above him, and around stand the immortals;” and then, mingled with the sound of the waves, came songs from Apollo's lyre, and descriptions of Bacchus, drawn by his soft-footed leopards, of Venus and her snowy doves, of fauns and nymphs, and wondrous people, of whom Ida had never before heard. She listened until the sun set and night darkened upon the waters, then slowly retraced her way home, thinking every

cloud that floated above her might be a messenger from Olympus, and that every fleck of foam was perhaps the little white hand of a nereid, sporting amid the waves.

In vain came her cousin Larra, the next morning, to ask her to go in quest of crabs and sea-urchins with the other children. Ida went off alone on another quest. The old woman sat in the cave with the morning sun glancing upon her silver hair, and upon a most beautiful picture, to which she had just turned. Now, Ida was an affectionate child. She loved her father, although she but seldom saw him, as he was out upon the sea for weeks at a time; and she loved her aunt Lydian, and her cousins, and all who were kind to her; yet she could not but see that Apollo, with his golden lyre and flashing eyes, had something more glorious in him than she had ever seen in her father, even on that day when he came smiling home, bringing the largest fish he had ever caught; and Minerva's helmet was certainly more splendid than the piece of cloth aunt Lydian wore on her head; and cupids, with fluttering wings, were much prettier than her little brown-armed cousins without any. So she forgot all her old friends, and day and night her dreams were full of lofty forms with golden hair and faces like the noonday sun.

And being an affectionate child, she liked to do something for those she loved; and she began to fancy what she could do for these unknown immortals of whom she dreamed. The old woman had retreated into the depth of the cave, whither Ida did not venture to follow her; and she would sit just within it, gazing through its dark arch upon the wide waters, and wondering if the bright sunbeams which pierced through the clouds, and slanted far down upon the distant sea, were not stairs by which she might ascend to Olympus. Then she would think of the boat her father made for her of the ivory tusks he once brought from a far-off land; of the pile of shells she had herself collected, all very valuable to her, but she doubted a little whether they would be much valued upon Olympus, and she could not go thither without some offering worthy of the immortals.

One day she found upon the shore a shell curved like a beautiful vase. “Ah, this is just the thing!” she exclaimed. “I will fill it with honey; there is nothing so delicious as honey; even the immortals must like that!” And away she went, deep into a wooded dell, where the stores of the wild bee were hidden.

How she found her way to Olympus is known only to herself. I believe she first climbed some rocks, then a cloud, then sprang over a rainbow bridge, and at last scaled a long sunbeam, which led her straight to the marble steps of Jupiter's high throne.

How joyfully she mounted! sometimes looking up to marvel at the height of the steps, which seemed to ascend into the very sky, sometimes looking down at her little shell of honey, thinking how brightly it shone, like pure gold, and how pleased Jupiter would be with it. At last she stood upon the summit of Olympus, and with timid step walked through the circle of gazing immortals, until she came before the throne of Jupiter. There she knelt to lift the shell vase and honey nectar to his sceptered hand, but trembled so much that she spilt the honey on his jewelled footstool. It seemed as if she beheld at once every face in that grand assembly. Jupiter apparently did not notice her; but Juno fixed her haughty gaze upon her, Apollo shot a glance of scorn, Minerva frowned, Venus turned away her head, Bacchus looked annoyed, Mercury smiled, and poor little Ida, covering her face with her apron, fled through the Golden Hall, and down the marble steps.

On the very lowest one she sat down with her feet in a cloud, and wept most bitterly. Soon she heard a fluttering in the air, and Iris glanced by and vanished in the cloud. Presently she returned, bringing with her a little girl whom Ida had often seen frolicking among the other children, a sunny-haired, rosy-cheeked child, named Hebe, the veriest romp in the village. Ida had always thought her a foolish little thing, because she was always playing about like a kitten, and never came to the sea shore to listen to the winds, and see the great waves roll in; and now here she was, ascending the marble stairs, with her white feet, and rosy smile, and rainbow colors, from the wings of Iris, glittering all around her. Ida

knew by the crystal vase she bore, that Hebe was to serve the immortals, and she longed to peep in and see how they would receive her; but she feared the haughty gaze of Juno, and the scornful glance of Apollo; so, burying her face in her hands, she remained weeping on the step. After a long while she heard a light motion beside her, and looking up, saw the beautiful eyes of Psyche, looking gently down upon her.

"Ah, little girl," she said, "you were sadly awkward. I pitied you very much, for I know what it is for a mortal to stand among the immortals; I never could have been here if I had not been brought by Love."

"But I also loved them," sobbed Ida. Psyche smiled a little. "Yes, my child, you were dazzled by their beauty, and thought you could fly up hither on the first morning breeze. But know—the gods are not easily approached; weary were the works I had to perform before I could be admitted, although led by Cupid. And know also, that all who enter must come with fair foreheads and serene eyes. You are a wee thing, with sad, shy eyes; and then those dusty feet of yours—Jupiter would never like to have those treading upon his golden floors. It is useless to sit weeping here. Minerva will order you off if she finds you. She has the care of the steps. You had better go back to your village and learn to spin with your mother."

"But I have no mother," cried Ida, "and my father is always out fishing. If I go among the children they will only laugh at me, because I told them such grand stories about the immortals, and left their plays to wander alone on the shore; and how can I go back to seaweed and rocks again, after having had a glimpse of this golden Olympus? O, I wish I were only a little brown leaf!" and she wept more and more, as if her very heart would break.

Psyche looked thoughtfully at her a while, and then said, "Would you like to be one of the Doves of Venus?"

"O, yes!" exclaimed Ida, her eyes brightening.

"But remember you will have to obey her every fancy, and fly far and wide; and her jewelled car is not light, nor does she drive with gentle rein."

But Ida, with clasped hands, entreated that she might become one of Venus's Doves; so Psyche kissed her tearful face, and she was changed into a dove with soft, bright eyes, dainty red feet, and a breast white as the sea foam. She flew into the circle of immortals, and none recognized in her the little stumbling girl, except Mercury, who merely smiled to himself, and was too good natured to reveal the secret.

Venus was much pleased to see a new, shining dove fluttering at her feet, and immediately harnessed it to her car, with delicate hands, and flew far over land and sea. Whether the little dove Ida found Venus and her winged car a weary burden to draw, I cannot tell you; but some time you may yourself become one of Venus's doves, and then you will know all about it.

THE GALA DAY.

PERSONS.

MRS. LANDOR.
EDITH, her daughter, }
FANNY, Edith's cousin. } Dressed as Fairies.
EDWARD, Mrs. Landor's son.
ELINOR, a gypsy woman.
JULIA. Fantastically dressed.
LISA. In an old brown dress.
CATHARINE HALL.
SARAH MUNN.
Constable and men.
Many children, dressed as fairies.

SCENE 1. *A Garden; Children dressed as Fairies, playing about. They join hands in a dance.*

SONG.

Sing the round;
Chide no bound;
Frisk it free with merry feet;
Harebells blue,
Violets true,
Lend your odors; breathe them sweet.

Bring the breeze,
Tallest trees;
Seize our songs and bear them round.
Circle on;
Anon, anon,
Dance we well on fairy ground.

Waters bright,
Gleaming light,
Where's the elf of Eldon Low?
Sit with me
Upon the tree;
Sing our songs on the topmost bough.

Wait a pace;
With a grace
Comes our queen—a gentle sprite;
Fireflies glow;
Whisper low;
She's the star that flits with night.

Enter EDITH as Queen, and other fairies; also JULIA.

EDITH.
Our wings are very weary. We've been flying
From tree to tree, with stillest motions spying
Into frail nests; and every dreaming bird
Popped up his head, when he our whispers heard.
They told us all their secrets—many a one
That is not warbled to the full-rayed sun.
But dance away; we will go rest a while,
While you with sports and songs the time beguile.

JULIA.
O, whip-poor-will, dost thou hear that tone?
Come, lightsome queen, thou'rt mine own, mine own.

EDITH.
Art thou the elf that in the hollow tree
Hoots with the owl, and mocks the night with glee?

JULIA.
In the halo of a star
Bathe thy brow, and gaze afar;
Stately walk, with dainty mien;
Fold thy robes, my fairy queen;

Thou art mine, and I am thine;
Ope thine eyes and bid them shine.

EDITH.
Go hence, dull raven; when I bid thee croak,
'Twill be when frogs sing ditties on an oak;
When hopping toads like winged skylarks fly;
When limping elves are lovely to mine eye.

JULIA.
'Twill be when the morning's freshness breathes,
And the clustering ivy thy hair inwreathes;
When thy voice shall be soft as the day's last sigh.
And hope like a shadow shall over thee lie;
Thou wilt call on my name; and from far o'er the sea,
Fierce thunders and lightnings shall mutter of me.

EDITH.
Thou art a gypsy girl—I know thee well;
Forget the queen, and Edith's fortunes tell.

JULIA.
Sorrow is o'er thee, though 'tis not thine own;
Lonely thou art, though never alone;
The sunshine is bright; but the sunshine is dark,
The sea shall betray thee; yet hide not thy bark.

EDITH.
Sorrow is o'er me! Not on these summer days,
When nature gives consent to all our plays.
The happy birds attune their songs to ours,
And rainbow hues encircle frolic showers;
Our saddest tears are wept without dismay;
Soft shining sunsets cheer the cloudiest day.

JULIA.
Hold thy joys lightly. Beware, O, beware!
Vapors rise from the earth, and mists darken the air.

EDITH.
Tell me thy name, and wherefore art thou here?

JULIA.
I am the Queen of Sorrow; to my court,
'Mid clouds and storms, both old and young resort.
The golden stream of life, on which you glide,
Through my grim caves must roll its head-long tide.

EDITH.
How wildly gleams the light within thine eye!
And thy dark hair hangs o'er thee mournfully.
O, come with me and join our gladsome dance!
If thou hast griefs, we'll lull them in a trance.
We weave our melodies from spring's soft air;
Sure such sweet sounds will banish all thy care.
Do not go forth to wander on the waste,
For there, they say, pale sorrows dimly haste.

JULIA *sings*.

Sweet grief, I have loved thee so long,
  I cannot leave thee now;
They woo me with music and song;
  Here at thy feet I bow.

They move in their festal robes,
  And thine are worn and gray;
Let me hide 'mid their heavy folds,
  Let me turn from their joy away.

Thine eyes threw their shadow o'er me;
  I caught their glance so wild;
I stood on thy earthen floor;
  Thou welcomed the young, timid child.

FIRST FAIRY.

See, pretty queen, I have brought thee a flower,
A little white snowdrop; 'twill droop in an hour:
I drove out the bee that hummed in its cell;
O, take it, for Caronec loveth thee well.

SECOND FAIRY.
Pray look at my marvels, wrought of pure gold;
Bright are the sunbeams they gayly enfold;
The elves call them king-cups, but, queen, they are thine;
I've filled them with dewdrops instead of red wine.

EDITH.
I thank you both, my merry little fays;
Now spread your wings, and speed along your ways;
And I will go where cooler shades press down,
For I am weary, though I wear a crown.

SCENE 2. *Outside the Garden Gate. LISA alone.*

LISA. I wish mother would come; I am so tired and hungry! She said Julia was in here, but I cannot see her. How many children are moving about—all in white dresses, and so pretty! They have wings too. I wonder if all ladies have wings. I wish I could go in; and perhaps they would give me a piece of bread; but I am afraid. For all they look so pleasant, they might drive me away. One is coming down the path; I am sure I might speak to her, she looks so kind.

Enter EDITH.

EDITH. It is pretty to play queen and be a fairy; but I know not how it is, I cannot dance and frolic as usual to-day. That gypsy girl looked so wildly upon me! She has been over sea and land, and knows many strange things, and I have seen nothing. How sorrowful she was! I wished to hold out my hand to her, but feared she would throw it aside; there was something so scornful about her. Dear little Amy! I will lie down and rest in your garden. Here are the lilies of the valley you planted; the moonlight shines down upon them as they lie folded in their green leaves, just as you lay in my arms when you were so ill; and they look out and smile as you smiled at me. Why did you go away from me?

Amy, Amy! Who is that sobbing? It sounded like Amy among her flowers; but O, it cannot be. No, it is outside the gate. I will go and see who is there. What is the matter, little girl? Why do you cry so?

LISA. I am so hungry, and so lonesome here. I wanted to speak to you, and was afraid.

EDITH. Poor child! come in. I will run and bring you something to eat. Sit down here by my little sister's garden until I come back. (*Goes.*)

LISA. How beautiful she is! I wonder if her little sister died. I would not if I had been her sister. I wish she would let me kiss her once.

EDITH, (*returning.*) Here is some cake for you. The children called out to me, but I snatched it from the table and flew off. Eat it all, and then you shall tell me who you are, and where you live.

LISA. I do not live any where; I go about all the time with mother and the gypsies.

EDITH. You are a little gypsy girl then. Was that your sister who came into the garden?

LISA. Was she there? She said she was going, but I peeped in and could not see her.

EDITH. And you wander about all over the world, seeing wonderful things?

LISA. O, yes, we walk about from one place to another, till I am so tired I can hardly stand. When I was small, mother used to carry me; but now I am too big. But at night she wraps her cloak round me, and holds me close in her arms, and sings me to sleep. I like the nights best. In the day she often goes off and leaves me waiting for her, somewhere, all alone.

EDITH. In the nights you sleep in your tents, and hear them flapping in the wind, and look out at the stars?

LISA. Most always we sleep in a barn. When we can't find one we sleep out doors, and have a fire when it is very cold. I am so sleepy I never look up at the stars, only sometimes. Last night we slept under a tree full of

blossoms, and when I woke up, they were blowing over us like a snow storm. I wanted mother to see how pretty they were, but I knew she was tired, so I kissed her softly, and went to sleep again.

EDITH. What does she sing to you?

LISA *sings*.

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We have wandered far through forest wild;
We have climbed where craggy rocks are piled;
Sleep in peace, my gypsy child;
      Mother watcheth o'er thee.

Night winds breathe a lulling sound;
Gentle moonlight streams around;
Shadows settle o'er the ground;
      Sweet visions fly before thee.

Sleep, my child; to-morrow, waking,
To thee shall come no sad heart-aching;
One is near—the ne'er-forsaking!
      Mother watcheth o'er thee.
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LISA. It makes the tears come into your eyes; does your mother sing it to you?

EDITH. O, no, my mother never sings to me. I sleep all alone, in a great, silent room, and they draw the heavy curtains all around, so that not even a star can peep in. I wish I could sleep under the sky as you do. Would it not be pleasant if we could change places a little while! I will be your mother's child, and you shall have all my fine things, and plenty to eat, and can play about all day.

LISA. O, yes, but I don't like to leave mother.

EDITH. It will be only for a day or two, and I know she will be willing. I will roam about with her, and see the world, and they will all be kind to you here; so let us change clothes. You shall have my fairy garments, and I will put on your brown dress.

LISA. And shall I wear these beautiful things all the time?

EDITH. To-morrow they will play fairy again; after that, my cousins will go away, and you will have to begin to study. Do you like to study?

LISA. What is study?

EDITH. Do you not even know your alphabet? How funny it will be to see Miss Magin sitting up like a forsaken owl, calling out A, and A you will softly say; then B, and C, and so on. If you had learned to read, you would have to pore over books all the time. Nothing but books! I could learn more, rambling about three days, than I could in books in half a century. When lessons are over, mother will come in and ask if you have been good, and as you will not have had any novels or poetry hidden away, Miss Magin will answer, "Yes, madam, she has been so." Then mother will give you a tart and an orange, and say you may walk in the garden and gather pinks. You can go round the garden and look at the fountains, or into the grove, but not outside the wall, or you will have Miss Magin tagging after you, to see that nothing happens to you. After dinner, you will have to practise and sew, and in the evening play backgammon with mother, or talk to the visitors who come in.

LISA. But I cannot do all these things; I don't know how.

EDITH. Well, you will not have to. They will soon find out you are a gypsy girl, and cannot be tamed down into a young lady. But you must not let them find it out to-night, or they will immediately send you after me. Your voice is so much like mine they will not notice that, and you must stay in the shadow of the evergreens, and not venture into the moonlight. When they talk to you, you must not say much, but sing gypsy songs, always changing the word gypsy for fairy; and in a little while you can steal quietly off to bed.

LISA. But how shall I know where to go?

EDITH. I sleep now with my cousin Fanny. She has a blue dress and silver wings; you must whisper to her and ask her to go with you; and then you can tell her the secret. She will not tell any one. Perhaps you had better leave the wreath here, and the wings, for many of the fairies have none, and they will not think it is I, without them. You cannot get on my shoes—can you?

LISA. I walk so much barefooted. What pretty gold shoes they are! I wish I could wear them.

EDITH. No, you will have to leave them here. Lay them on this flower bed with the wings. They look as if they might belong to little Amy—perhaps she will come for them to-night.

LISA. You seem so strange in my dress!

EDITH. I like to have it on. But it will hurt me to go barefooted. Never mind—I wish to try how you live, in every way. How pleasant it will be to sleep in the free air to-night! But you will like my bed with the flowered curtains, and the pictures, and all the things.

LISA. O, yes; but you will give my love to mother.

EDITH. Not to-night. I am going to be her little girl to-night. But to-morrow I will. I will come back in a few days and give you a great many pretty presents before you go away. Good by. I hope you will have a pleasant time.

LISA. May I kiss you once?

EDITH. Why, yes, indeed. You are a dear child; you look like a real fairy in your new dress. Good night.

LISA goes along the Garden Path. EDITH waits outside, and pulls her hat over her face as ELINOR approaches.

ELINOR. Come along. Lisa. Have you seen any thing of Julia? Here, take this bundle.

EDITH. How heavy it is!

ELINOR. Heavy, do you call it? It's I that have the burden to bear. I've had enough to do this day; we must be home pretty quick, I can tell you. But stop, child, you have had nothing to eat; here's some meat for you.

EDITH, I do not want it. A lady came and gave me some cake.

ELINOR. A lady! What kind of a lady, I wonder?

EDITH. She was all dressed in purple and gold, and we sat and ate it together. It was very nice cake.

ELINOR. A lady ate with a beggar! This is the first time I ever heard of such a thing. All in gold too.—(*Aside.*) I must teach her the business—what a chance she had.

EDITH, (*aside.*) What a frightful woman! Can it be Lisa's mother? I must ask some questions and find out. (*To Elinor.*) Where do you think Julia is?

ELINOR. I know not, and care not. She's a real vagrant, that girl is. No manner of use. She may go her own ways; I wash my hands of her.

EDITH. Will you sing me to sleep to-night? I am very tired.

ELINOR. Sing you to sleep? Yes, darling! What makes you lag behind so? Take hold of my hand; I'll help you along. How your hand trembles. Sing a song and cheer up. We must walk fast.

EDITH *sings the song LISA sang*.

We have wandered far through forests wild, &c.

ELINOR. She has a sweet voice; we might make something of that. But it's of no use—she can't be saved. I may as well begin now. Lisa, do you know what is in these bundles?

EDITH. Something that weighs a good deal.

ELINOR. It's silver, child; real silver.

EDITH. But where did you get it?

ELINOR. Where? where do you think? I took it out of a house.

EDITH. Took it! Do you mean that you stole it?

ELINOR. Stole it? Out with it! Yes, I stole it. How should you like to steal?

EDITH. But it is not right.

ELINOR. Who says it is not right?

EDITH. Why, every body says so.

ELINOR. The rich say so. They ride in their carriages, and live in their grand houses, and when we are starving, and freezing with cold, if we take a mouthful to eat, or a rag to put on, they call it stealing, and hunt us up to put us in jail, and treat us worse than brutes. I tell you I hate

them. I should like to see them homeless as we are, with the cold winds blowing through them. Then would I laugh at them, as they laugh at us. Then would they know what it is to suffer, with never a hand to help them.

EDITH. But some of them are kind.

ELINOR. Kind do you call if? If you beg and beg, and tell a piteous story, they will give you an old gown and a cold potato, just as they would throw a bone to a dog; and you must stand in their entries all the time. Your clothes are not good enough for their parlors, and they watch every motion, to see that you do not steal. But I can tell them I will steal. If I had not taken their clothes and their food, do you think you would be alive now? You would have been frozen in the winter snows, and not a hand to help you. I asked for work and work, and never a bit could I get; so I took what I wanted, and you must learn to do so too, for I may not always be here to take care of you.

EDITH. But cannot I learn to work?

ELINOR. You never can get any work to do, unless you can show a good character, as they call it. I wonder what kind of characters they would have if they were treated as we are. Run! Hide! Down in the ditch with you! They are after us!

Enter a CONSTABLE and Man.

CONSTABLE. Here they are! Hallo, there! Come out of that! You need not duck under like two great bull-frogs. Up with you—here's a hand. We're polite folks, marm. Fish out the bundles, Jim. Them's the articles —silver spoons and all. Off to jail with you. You'll have to trip it fast enough, I'll warrant you. Here, Jim, you take the old bird; I'll see to the young un.

ELINOR. O, my child; you shall not take her away!

CONSTABLE. Shall not, ma'am! If you valooed your child, you'd be right glad to have her go. She's got bad notions enough. We'll edicate her now.

ELINOR. Lisa! Lisa!

ELINOR is led off.

EDITH. Where are you going to take me?

CONSTABLE. To the House of Correction; you'll get a good lesson there.

EDITH. You shall not; I am Miss —— No, I will not tell him. I want to see what they would have done with Lisa. I can come away whenever I tell my name.

Exeunt CONSTABLE and EDITH.

SCENE 3. *Same as 1st Scene. Garden, and Children dancing and singing.*

FIRST FAIRY.
Where is our queen?
She has not been seen
For many an hour,
In acorn or flower.
Airy bluebell,
Pray can you tell?
Anemone fair,
Is she not there?
Upspringing grass,
Have you seen her pass?
Where shall I go?
Does nobody know?

SECOND FAIRY.
Look at that squirrel, lively and shy;
I know he can tell, by the fun in his eye.

THIRD FAIRY.
There is a swallow, skimming about,
Set him to seek her, and he'll find her out.

FOURTH FAIRY.
Over the moon sails a tiny white cloud;
And on it she sails far away from the crowd.

Enter LISA.
FAIRIES *sing*.

All hail to our queen! Now sing us a song,
While we rest in the shadows, all lying along.

LISA, *as queen*.

Fairies, fairies, ever go
Where the mountain torrents flow;
Foot it high, and foot it low,
  A wildly joyful band.

Fairies, fairies, loud our song;
No man hears us pass along;
Rugged cliffs and vales among—
  A wild and hidden land.

Fairies, fairies, night is nigh;
Light steals slowly from the sky.
Lay us down with lullaby,
  Sleeping hand in hand.

FIRST FAIRY.
Come, lovely queen, you must dance with me now;
For under the alder I vowed me a vow,
Beneath the clear moonlight to kiss you three times.
And whirl you about to my swift flowing rhymes.

LISA, *as queen*.

  Under the tree
  Is the home for me;
Here will I sleep,
 Through the lonely night,
While the cold dews weep,
  In the pale starlight.

FAIRY.

Jewels must shine
  In the glance of the day;
We shall mourn and repine,
  If thou hidest away.

Come, my fair lily, shine graciously out,
While we thy leal subjects will frisk all about.

They draw her out.

FIRST FAIRY. Why, it is not Edith; yet she has on her purple dress!

SECOND FAIRY.
An elf has crept into Fairyland;
Bid her bide, and make her stand;
Fairies, seize her by the hand;
    She shall not slip away.

THIRD FAIRY. How came you with the queen's dress?

LISA. She put it on me.

FANNY. Edith wishes to play us a trick; this is one of the farmer's daughters, perhaps.

Enter MRS. LANDOR.

MRS. L. Edith, it is time to break up your plays for to-night. To-morrow you shall dance again as much as you please.

FANNY. It is not Edith.

MRS. L. O, I thought it was; where is she? Some of you must go and look for her.

FANNY. This girl can tell you. She says Edith gave her the purple dress.

MRS. L. Where is Edith?

LISA. O, she has gone!

MRS. L. Gone! where?

LISA. She has gone with my mother.

MRS. L. With your mother, child? What do you mean?

LISA. Please don't frighten me so, and I will tell you. She said she wanted to be a gypsy; so she put on my dress, and waited at the gate for mother.

MRS. L. O, my child, my child! The gypsies have carried her off. What shall I do?

LISA. They did not carry her off; she said she wanted to go, and I should stay and sleep in her bed, and have plenty to eat, and be your child.

MRS. L. Be my child, you little impostor! Away with you, as fast as you can go.

FANNY. But she has Edith's fairy dress on.

MRS. L. Let her put on her own rags again.

FANNY. But Edith has her dress.

MRS. L. Then she must have one of Edith's old ones. Here, Nancy, see this child dressed in one of Miss Edith's frocks. Keep an eye upon her, and do not let her steal any thing.

FANNY. Mary, run and tell the men to go and look for Edith, and find Edward as soon as possible.

EDWARD, (*entering*.) Here I am, mother; what do you wish?

MRS. L. You must go in search of Edith; she has been carried off to the gypsies' camp.

EDWARD. The gypsies' camp! I will find her, mother; do not be troubled about her.

SCENE 4. *A Lonely Road; LISA crying. EDWARD enters.*

EDWARD. Edith, Edith, I have found you at last. (*Throws his arms round her.*)

LISA. It is not Edith; it is only me.

EDWARD. You, you little vagabond! What have you done with Edith? Where is your gypsy camp?

LISA. She is not there; I have been to the gypsies. They say mother is carried to jail, and Edith to the House of Correction.

EDWARD. Edith in the House of Correction! My sister! That shall never be.

Exit.

LISA. O, stop, stop! Pray show me the way to the jail; don't leave me alone here! There, he has gone. Edith would not have done so. What shall I do? I am so tired I cannot drag one foot after another. I must lie down and die here, all alone in the dark night. And mother is in the jail without me. How wretched she will be! O mother, mother!

SCENE 5. *House of Correction. EDITH, CATHARINE HALL, SARAH MUNN, and other Women.*

SARAH. What young thing is that they have just brought in? She looks as if she thought we were wild tigers from a caravan.

CATHARINE. She's a proud little minx; see how she holds up her head, and looks about, with her old brown rags on. For all she has such fine ways, I'll warrant you she is no better than the rest of us. I'll have a talk with her.

SARAH. Let her alone. Don't go; she's better than we, and shall be left so.

CATHARINE. Hands off. Do you think I'm going to be cheated of my sport? You had better turn minister. You look as grand as a judge. We'll teach her what kind of company she has fallen into. Come along; you haven't had any too much amusement to-day.

SARAH. Well.

CATHARINE. Come, child, tell us all about it; what are you in here for?

EDITH. I have done nothing.

CATHARINE. Arson, perhaps; that's my go.

EDITH. What is arson?

CATHARINE. What innocence! You never set a barn on fire, did you, my pretty one?

SARAH. Only a fence, Catharine, you know.

CATHARINE. You never stole a watch, or picked a pocket, or took a drink or two. O, no! How very young we are! Well, stay with us a while, and you'll soon be old. We can give you the best instructors.

EDWARD, (*entering*.) Where is she? Here, among these women! Edith, look up. I have come to take you home.

EDITH. Home! O Edward, I have heard such things!

EDWARD. Never mind the things; come quick as you can. Mother is in the greatest distress.

EDITH. Is Lisa there?

EDWARD. No, we sent her off, fast enough. I met her in the road looking for the jail and her mother.

EDITH. And you showed her the way?

EDWARD. No, I left her there; I was in haste to find you. I would not have any one know you are here for the world; the whole village would be talking about it to-morrow.

EDITH. Edward, I will not stir from this place until you bring Lisa here. If you knew to what dangers she is exposed, you would not have left her.

EDWARD. Are the bears coming to eat her? What dangers are you talking about?

EDITH. I cannot tell you now. Go—will you not? and bring her. She must not be left with these wretched people; she must not be taught to be wicked. She must go, with us, and be taken care of.

EDWARD. But let me carry you home first.

EDITH. No, Edward; I will not go until Lisa goes with me.

EDWARD. How obstinate you have become, all of a sudden! But I suppose I must go; I shall find her somewhere, crying, in the road. Hide yourself away; pray do not let any one see you. (*Goes out.*)

EDITH. Hide! I should like to hide a thousand miles under the ground. Is this the beautiful world I have dreamed so much about? It cannot be—such things cannot be true! Yes, I see them written on the faces of these women—how dreadful they are! O, what can we do?

SARAH. How could you talk to her so, Catharine? See how you have made her feel.

CATHARINE. She'll get used to it soon; that's the way with us all at first. She'll harden to it.

SARAH. It makes me almost cry to see her. Poor child! It was just so with me once; but that's all over now.

EDITH. You are not so bad as you seem. There is something good in you.

SARAH. Once there was.

EDITH. And is now. I am sure you would be good if you could come out, and live where people would love you, and be kind to you.

SARAH. That can never be.

EDITH. O, yes. You shall come and let me take care of you; I am not so poor as I seem. My mother is rich, and you shall come and live in one of her houses, and have books to read, and a little garden, and every thing pleasant.

SARAH. Your mother will never let me come. She will tell you, you must not speak to me, and send me away if I go near her.

EDITH. No, she will not. I will tell her the temptations you are led into; she knows nothing about it now. When she does, she will do all she can for you.

SARAH. O, if it might be so!

EDITH. And you too; I can forgive you, although you have made me so unhappy. I do not believe you are entirely wicked.

CATHARINE. I am wicked enough. Let me alone.

EDITH. But have you no one in the world who loves you—no mother, no sister, or brother?

CATHARINE. I have a child. I shall never see her again!

EDITH. Never see her again! Why not?

CATHARINE. I sent her away from me; I do not want her to lead the life I lead.

EDITH. But if you could lead a good life,—if she could be with you all day, and love you, and sleep all night with her little arms round you,—then should you not be happy?

CATHARINE. And scorn me, and jeer at me, as all the others do.

EDITH. But she will not; she will call you her own mother, and love you dearly. You will become good, and she will never know you have done wrong. Will you not come?

CATHARINE. O, yes, I will, I will!

Enter LISA and EDWARD.

EDITH. I am so glad you are found, Lisa; now you shall go home with me.

LISA. O, no; my mother is in prison; I must go to her—she'll want me so much. Do let me go.

EDITH. Edward, we must carry her there before we go home.

EDWARD. It will be useless; we cannot get into the jail at this hour of the evening.

EDITH. To-morrow, Lisa, early in the morning.

LISA. It is so long till then!

EDITH. Tell me your names before I go. “Catharine Hall.” “Sarah Munn.” “You will not forget.”

CATHARINE. And my child—you will not forget her.

EDITH. I will remember you all, and come to-morrow. Good night.

She holds out her hand; CATHARINE draws back, then takes it. SARAH kisses it.

SCENE 6. *Garden, as before. MRS. LANDOR, EDITH, FANNY, LISA, EDWARD, and Children.*

MRS. L. Edith, how much trouble you have given me! Where have you been? Why did you bring that girl back?

EDWARD. Where do you think I found her? In the House of Correction.

MRS. L. In the House of Correction! My daughter! Edith Landor!

EDITH. Mother, I have something to say to you; will you not walk down the path with me? I shall come back soon, Lisa. Be gentle, girls.

FIRST GIRL. So you are a gypsy. A pretty game you have been playing! What made you steal Edith's clothes?

LISA. I did not steal them; she changed with me.

GIRL. That's a likely story. Your mother beat her, and made her give them up.

LISA. My mother did not beat her; she never beats any one. O, yes, she punishes Julia sometimes.

GIRL. And you very often, I think.

FANNY. How can you speak so to her? See, you have made her cry. Never mind, little girl; we know you did not mean to do any harm. I believe what you say. Edith is always getting into mischief in some way.

LISA. You will be good to me; you will be like Edith, will you not?

EDITH, (*walking with her mother.*) You knew all this, and you sent the child away from your home, to wander houseless, and be led into all kinds of evil. You love me, and take care of me, your own child, and yet you let so many children suffer and do wrong, and do nothing to save or help them. O mother!

MRS. L. I have been very thoughtless. I have never realized these things until now.

EDITH. But, mother, now that you do, you will not send this poor child away. Let her live in Jane's cottage; you know there are spare rooms there; and I can teach her to read and sew, and she will be so

good! Will you not let her stay?

MRS. L. Yes, Edith, have it as you please.

EDITH. Lisa, you are going to live in a nice cottage of ours in the grove, and I shall teach you to read and write, and we will walk and play together, and be so happy.

LISA. And mother too?

MRS. L. No, I cannot have the gypsy woman about the place. What could she do here?

EDITH. But she will not be a gypsy woman if she lives here. She will become like one of us, and be very happy here with Lisa.

MRS. L. These gypsies never change; their vagabond ways are in the blood. You can do nothing with them. She will be for wandering off, east, west, and north, and be like a caged lioness when she is in the house.

EDWARD. They are not real gypsies, mother. I have heard the neighbors say they are poor people, who have assumed the gypsy mode of life to tell fortunes, and impose upon the country people.

EDITH. O, yes, mother, they do not seem like real gypsies. I know you can make of her what you will, if you will only let her come.

LISA. Do let her come—she is so good to me! I will not leave her. I will go wherever she goes.

MRS. L. Well, she may come too; we will try it, and see how it will answer.

EDITH. Dear mother, how can I thank you enough? She shall come this very night. Edward, cannot we get her out of jail?

EDWARD. It will be impossible, I think.

ELINOR. (*rushes in.*) Lisa! my child!

LISA. Mother, mother, have you come? (*Throws herself into Elinor's arms.*)

MRS. L. How did you come here, woman?

ELINOR. O, I ran away; they have not caught me this time. Come, Lisa, we must be off like lightning.

LISA. Mother, we are going to stay here, and live in a nice cottage, near Edith.

ELINOR. Who said so? They are laughing at you.

EDITH. Yes, it is true. Lisa is to be my little scholar.

EARNING ONE'S OWN LIVING.

“What a shame, girls!” exclaimed Anna; “Clara Morton's things have been sent for, and she is not coming to school any longer. Her father has failed, and they are to give up house and furniture, horses and carriage, and the girls are going out to earn their own living.”

“Not really?” said Fanny.

“Why, every one knows it.”

“You do not mean to say that Clara Morton is going to earn her own living,” said little Effie. “The last person in the world! Why, I do not believe she ever sewed a stitch in her life. She never even brought her own books to school, but had them carried for her by a boy.”

“But there are other ways of earning a living besides sewing. Clara plays beautifully, and could give music lessons as well as——; well—perhaps not as well as Mr. Cantari.”

“No, indeed! Can you not see one of his queer smiles at the idea of one of us girls giving lessons?”

“I know it. How flat one feels, after playing a piece so splendidly, to turn round and meet, for one's only applause, that incomprehensible smile! Poor Clara! I hope that smile will not meet her, wherever she goes in the world. I am sure it will haunt me, for I can never see it without a dim apprehension of the possible fate that awaits our lessons and accomplishments in that formidable ocean into which our school days are to empty.”

“Your geographical comparison is very natural for you; but as I do not pride myself upon my acquirements in that branch, I confess I do not see what it has to do with Mr. Cantari's smile.”

“You do not take music lessons, I believe, Miss Erudition; and perhaps the forebodings of examination day would be a comparison in which you would be more at home. I only hope poor Clara will not be reminded of it by the world into which she has fallen.”

“Now do tell us, Anna, what you mean by the world.”

“Why, the world is—the people that laugh at every thing we school girls do. Not exactly that, but the people who know how every thing should be done, and give one of Mr. Cantari's smiles at our way of doing it; they do not always know how, either. It is not that—it is—it is—you girls sitting there, calmly watching me extricating myself from my definition. Well now, into this world, whatever it is, Clara has dropped, just as if she had been riding in something, and the bottom had come out, leaving her standing on the actual ground; and the poor child must walk on her feet which any little barefooted beggar girl can do better than she.”

“That reminds me of a funny adventure which happened to me, when I was a little girl, in India,” said Effie.

“In India! O, do tell us about it.”

“You know I was born in India, where the people—that is, the people who are any body—never think of walking, but ride in palanquins carried on men's shoulders. These coolies, as they are called, are just like horses here, and one never thinks of their having any will of their own, or any thought, but of trotting patiently all day under the palanquin. As for me, I hardly knew there was such a thing as the ground, till one day the palanquin bearers, for some reason which I never understood,—a quarrel among themselves I believe,—suddenly set the palanquin down on the ground, and left me all alone in a strange part of the city, crying, and begging the passers by (who did not understand a word I said) to carry me home; but I never should have reached there if I had not been found by some one who knew our family.”

“What a wonderful adventure, to be sure!”

“Well, I thought I had something to tell when I began. I am sure I know now what you mean by Mr. Cantari's smile. But it was not so much my little adventure in itself, though that always seemed something till now; but after that I never could get the palanquin out of my head. It seemed to me that all the people in India lived in palanquins, except the poor people, and that they were nothing but bearers. No one did any work, not even the servants, for every servant seemed to have another under him, though, to be sure, there must have been some at last with their feet on the ground, trudging along to carry on the household. But this was always a puzzle to me, and I used to wonder if some time every thing would come down to the ground, like the palanquin; for the bearers were human beings after all, and I had found, for once, at least, that they had wills of their own. But this was, I suppose, something like the fear of the Indians, which some of you say you always had when little children. I do not think it could have troubled me much, however, for I remember I used to lie all day in a hammock, reading story books, with a half-waking and half-sleeping sense of the poor story writers being palanquin bearers, to carry us about so delightfully, without any thought or trouble on our part. But really, now, was it not natural to be reminded of all this by Clara's situation? Was it not, Miss Revere?”

“Yes, Effie,” answered Miss Revere. “And probably we could each of us remember a similar impression, if we would recall the circumstance in our lives which brought us into closest contact with the reality of life, which Clara is now finding, I fear, so different from her school-girl ideas of it For my own part, you have reminded me of my earliest years, when my palanquin, also, was set down with a shock I have never forgotten.”

“Why, were you ever in India, Miss Revere?” asked Fanny.

“No, dear, but Effie has already hinted that the country of palanquins is not so far from us as that.”

“Do tell us about it, Miss Revere. I have always longed to know your history, for I was sure you had one. You seem to be so apart from us girls, and to do every thing as if you had done it before, and as if you

stood so far back, that things which make us happy or unhappy are only things to be looked at by you, just like Leonora, who is always quietly sketching us, when the greatest excitement is going on."

"I will tell you, if you wish, all that is to be told of a life, which, with one exception, has been without events, that would appear such to any one but myself. It will only, therefore, be the result, and not the history of my life, which I can tell you, and that rather for the pleasure I shall have in exacting the same of you, than for any I shall take in recalling my own. I say there has been but one event in my life; it was that which left me an orphan. O girls, we speak of Clara's coming down to the ground; we speak of seeing our way clear, and treading on solid ground; these are expressions of those whose feet only would walk upon the ground, while their hearts and eyes are on a level with those about them, who have never known how hard to the forehead is the ground, when all we love lie beneath it; how one hides her face in terror from the vacant air, finding her only refuge in the earth, where lies all her grief. But I do not wish to bring my dark robe among your gay dresses."

"O Miss Revere!"

"Tell me if you think it possible for one who is absolutely alone in the world to be happy, after having once been so with others?"

"I cannot imagine being alone, any more than I can imagine a sound, without being there to hear it," answered Anna.

"Poor Mr. Polanco, in the Darien expedition! Was not that absolute solitude? After being left to die alone by his companions, who were forced by starvation to desert him, think of his bones being found long after, stretched on the grave of his friend, who had been buried a day's march behind!" said Miss Revere.

"I know. Was it not frightful?" said Anna. "Can you imagine a solitude so appalling, that a dying man would drag himself a whole day's march (poor men! it was but a few miles in their condition) to find in a grave some semblance of human society."

"As if a drowning sailor, in an Arctic sea, should swim to an island of ice," said Kate.

“Only think how many have gone down in the sea with nothing in sight but the waves; and people have fallen down precipices, and known they were going, and no one has ever known what they have felt. We only hear about those who are saved. I would give any thing to know the last thoughts of those who have never been heard of.”

“But, Anna, is it not the same to every one at the last moment?”

“Perhaps so; but it seems different.”

“Ah, Anna,” said Miss Revere, “that *seems* is the old story of the palanquin again. Just as we *seemed* safer the other night, when we all huddled together in one room, in the thunder storm.”

“What an awful night that was!”

“And yet here we all are, safe. I never could have believed, years ago, when I was lying alone in a heavier night than that, that I should ever be sitting here tranquilly telling of it.”

“O, yes, do tell us the rest.”

“If I should tell you all, it would only be answering my own question, 'whether one could be happy after being left alone in the world by all whom she loved.' Little thing as I was then, I learned that there is no comfort from others, no diversion from a great calamity. Every thing that one clings to for help is only the sailor's block of ice, which is itself water. May you never know how utterly alone one is in a great sorrow; but if you ever should, may you find yourselves, as I did at last, taking root in the very ground on which you fall, and drawing a new life from the reality of your desolation. Thus I had to earn my own living; and you can judge if Clara's lot can seem a hard one to me, who have known so well what poverty is.”

“Why, Miss Revere, how can you speak of poverty? I thought you had every thing you wished,” exclaimed Effie.

“Dear child, I believe it is only those who have been unhappy, or in some way thrown out of their natural life, who can understand comparisons. We must all earn our own living in some way, and always in the way in which our life is different from all others.”

“I wish, Anna, you had not told about the sailor swimming to that awful ice. I do not see the use of thinking of such things before they happen. I am sure I shall never dare to go to sea,” said Kate.

“How did you feel, Fanny, when you were out in the boat, in the middle of the ocean?” asked Linda.

“Why, was she ever at sea?”

“And in a real shipwreck, my dear.”

“What, Fanny here? Do, pray, tell us all about it.”

“I thought every one knew about it. And yet I remember when we landed,—for we were picked up by another ship,—and I thought every one in the city would be thinking of nothing else, how strange it seemed that no one thought much about it. We went up to a hotel, and every one was seeing to his own baggage, and every thing going on just as if nothing had happened. I suppose this is why I have never talked more about it.”

“But tell us; you know we shall be interested in it. I have always wanted to hear about a shipwreck from some one who had actually been in it.”

“And then it was not so much the actual wreck. I think I rather enjoyed it,—what I remember of it,—and I suppose I was too ill most of the time to take much notice. But the voyage I remember distinctly, or rather after a certain time, for I was so young that my first recollections were about that ship, so that it seems to me as if I had been born upon the ocean. I remember playing dolls in the cabin just as if I had been in a house; and although it rocked about terribly, the vessel was so large, with all kinds of other cabins and forecastles, and holds, which I heard them speak of, but had never seen, that I never thought of it as actually floating on a deep sea, and separate from every thing else; for we were really, you know, thousands of miles out on this immense ocean. But I always thought of it as something like the floating bridge at the salt water bath, fastened in some way, at one end, to the place we had left,—of which, however, I had no recollection,—and at the other end to the place to which we were going, about which I had almost as little idea.

“I must have been kept in the cabin, I think, by my nurse, for I remember so distinctly the first time I climbed up the steep stairs, and found myself alone by the side of the ship. Now I think of it, I must have been on deck before, for I have a confused sense of the glittering of the sun on the waves, which seemed very near, and the spray, and the wind in the ropes, and altogether like a city or a band of music; perhaps there was music on board, though I don't remember hearing it again. But now it was after sunset, and there were no little sparkling waves, but great, solemn swells rolling, as if their loneliness, out there in the middle of the ocean, was too awful to think of, out to the gray edge of the sky, so far and vast all around, with nothing to hold on to, and then swelling up so deep against the side of the ship, and lifting it up,—that great, heavy vessel,—as they passed under; and then I felt for the first time the motion of the whole ship, and the depth of the sea beneath it, and understood what some one meant who had said one day at table, that there 'was but a plank between us and eternity.' I had some sense of what he meant when he said it; but there were so many planks in the ship, so many decks, one below the other, that I never thought till now, that, last of all, there must be one plank along which the deep water was always washing, and if this should give way, we should go down 'with every soul on board!' These words I had heard said by a very solemn man, a passenger, who was also, I think, the one who spoke of the plank and eternity. After this they were always sounding in my ears, and at night, after lying awake, trying not to listen to the wash of the water against the side of the ship, and not to feel it heaving up on a great wave and then sinking down—down—till I felt certain something would give way, and we never should come up, I would fall asleep, and dream the ship had sunk, and 'every soul on board' was tossing alone on the waves, with 'only a plank between him and eternity.'

“I forgot to say that we had a captain whom I loved very much; he was so kind and polite to us all, and at the table particularly, was so attentive to me, that I thought the ship would be safe so long as he was in it. He was very young and handsome, and I thought he sat at the head of the dinner table like a real nobleman. And so I believe he was, as I heard one

of the sailors say one day,—a gruff old fellow he was,—that nobody but a lord's son would ever have given such an order as that, whatever it was. I heard him say, too, one day, to a passenger who looked as if he had something to do with vessels, that if the captain had earned his own living, as he had, at the ropes, he would have known something or other from a marline-spike. He said, too, that ships never would be safe so long as captains who had never 'served up' were appointed over the heads of old salts, like himself.

"I felt dreadfully troubled to learn that the ship was not considered safe by an old sailor; but I could not make out what he meant by saying the captain had not 'served up,' the only use of those words which I had ever known being in reference to the dinner, about which the captain was always very particular with the steward. I at last asked one of the sailors, who laughed, and said it meant that the captain had not come up from the forecastle, but had come in at the cabin windows. After this I gave up asking questions of the crew, and puzzled myself alone over their queer sea terms; but I took all the more notice of their ways towards the captain, and soon found that he was not so great a man with them as with the passengers. What knowing looks they would give each other, when obeying his orders! There!—I knew when you were speaking of Mr. Cantari's smile, it reminded me of something like it that had happened years ago; it was that look, of those sun-browned, good-natured sailors. I seem to see the captain now, standing so handsome and gentlemanly on the deck, the color mounting into his face as he gave some order about taking in sails, or tightening ropes, or such things, and the crew going about this way and that, and looking sidewise at each other, with that good-natured, wicked smile; I do believe the captain was more afraid of that than he would have been of a pirate ship. There was one old man, in particular, who was more grave than any of them, and never moved his face, but had an odd way of smiling with his eyes at the men, and putting out his cheek with his tongue; and the captain's voice always seemed to be a little tremulous when he was giving an order while this man was standing by. I was very fond of him still; but it was a great shock to me to find the crew thought so little of one in whom I had

placed such unbounded confidence. What was to become of us now in case of danger?—though of that I thought less than of that awful sea which lay day and night beneath us; and now, more than ever, there seemed to be but 'a plank' between me and it, now that the captain was no longer between the plank and me.

"Then I thought how safe and careless of danger the sailors seemed to be, and that it must be because they knew the ship so well, knew every timber in it, and where it was, and how strong it was; and I determined I would learn too, and asked the captain to tell me all about it; but I found his knowledge of it did not reach much below the cabin floor, and the passengers could tell me little. Then I said to myself, I will go to the forecastle and 'serve up,' for I had found out by this time what that meant; and this, Miss Revere, was really what you would call 'earning my living.' I learned from the crew, and particularly from the same old man who troubled the captain so much with his silent smile, and who would cut little ships, and parts of ships, and put them together for me, so much, that at last I could stand upon the upper deck and know every deck below, and the principal timbers of the frame down to the very keel. I suppose I could not have known all this very well, such a child as I was; but I had learned enough to feel safer and to feel the motion of the waves through the whole ship, up to the planks on which I stood; so that I felt no longer like a loose piece of ballast, rolling helpless about, but as if the ship were a great living thing, and I was its spirit and life. About that time I used to go to the bow of the ship, when great waves were buoying it up, and repeat, with my hair streaming behind my head,—

'And the waves bound beneath me, as a steed
That knows his rider!'—

some lines that I had heard from a passenger; till one day I turned round, and there was the old sailor putting out his cheek, and winking to one of the men; and I ran off as if I had seen a shark, and I believe I never went forward of the cabin after that."

“But, Fanny, how could you remember so well what happened when you were such a mere child as you must have been then? What you say does not sound like a very little child,” said Effie.

“I dare say many of the things I am telling were at the time very indistinct and confused; but if I should tell them in the same way, they would not have form enough for you to see them. Then I cannot remember the voyage in course,—day after day,—but particular times I remember just as distinctly as if they had happened yesterday. If I should confuse a little what I felt then with what I have felt since, it would be perfectly natural; for I do feel sometimes as if I had never left that ship. I wonder if we never have but one thought all our lives? That ship was then the whole world to me, and now the whole world seems the ship. And that carries me back to one splendid night,—the only perfectly beautiful night in the voyage,—in fact it is the only night I remember; I suppose the nurse usually kept me below for fear of the night air. That night there was a great deal of noise and talking in the cabin, and I stole away to the deck. All was stillness and starlight, with a gentle sound in the sails like the cooing of a dove, and every thing as if it had been going on so for hours. A few long swells reached to the horizon, and I could see their waving lines against the sky, and the light came up from beyond them, so that the whole world seemed to be ocean, and the ship the only living thing, swaying on its bosom as lightly as Anna's cross, (what a beauty it is, Anna!) and the top of the masts sweeping over whole tracts of stars, and the stars blinking as if keeping time with the dipping of the vessel, till it all seemed a dance, ship and stars together, the stars seeming ships in an ocean of space, and the ship to hang in a liquid sky, and I,—there I was alone on the deck, my world under my feet; and who knew but that in each of the stars was a being whose steed bounded beneath him as intelligently as mine? Would not these sometimes speak each other, as the passing ships? Perhaps they do now, I thought, in a way as much finer as the ocean on which they all sail is larger than ours; and by listening attentively perhaps my ear will become fine enough to hear them. Now, what are you laughing at Kate?”

“Only to think how Humboldt would look, to hear you describing the world which you had conquered so scientifically.”

“Just as if I felt so now, and did not know that only a little child as I then was would ever have such magnificent ideas of itself. I don't believe even then I looked any wiser than you, when you came to school with your new Geology, walking as grand as if you were treading on the old red sandstone.”

“Now don't, Fanny! We all feel proud enough of our new studies; it seems like having attained the greater part of a science to have bought the books; but we feel humble enough to make up for it on examination day.”

“But all the time you have not said a word about the shipwreck,” suggested Effie.

“O, yes, the shipwreck!” exclaimed the girls.

“I know that is all you want to hear; but you have put me out, so that I shall make but a short story of it. Besides, as I said before, that was the least part of it.”

“Not long after that splendid night, I was called up on deck by the cry of a sail in sight, which, you know, is the great event at sea. It passed at some distance, though near enough for us to see it distinctly; but it was a clouded sky, and the waves, dark and foreboding, left such a dreary space of water between it and us, and the poor ship looked so forlorn and helpless, tumbling about on the great loose waves, that all my old fear came back. I thought perhaps there were those on board that dismal little bark who thought, as I had, that they were carrying the centre of the world along with them; and perhaps there were hundreds of other such, scattered all over the sea in their poor little cockleshells, and our great ship would seem as little and helpless to them as theirs to us. After the ship was out of sight, and I was looking off indifferently in that direction, all at once the back of an immense fish arose out of the sea and disappeared. Perhaps it was the coming up of a storm which spread a gloom over the sea, and made that huge black thing so awfully distinct and lonely; but it was the most fearful sight I had ever seen. There was

that creature, out there in the middle of the ocean, in a security frightful to think of, and we in an artificial fabric, which, at best, was only the 'single plank.' To feel as safe as the fish, was now my only desire, and I tried to give up all thought of the ship, and commit myself boldly to the waves,—as I had heard Arion did, who was saved by the dolphin,—not really, you know, but I could not even imagine it; when it came to the last point, I could not even think of plunging into the deep sea, and I went to bed dreadfully depressed, partly owing, I dare say, to the mournful sound of the rising storm in the rigging. All I remember afterwards was dreaming the fish had changed into a mermaid, and was holding out her arms to me, and waiting for me to make up my mind, and I was thinking that if I leaped into them, the sea would have no power over me, and then plunging down and finding not her arms, but the cold sea, then waking up and actually feeling the cold water dashing over me, and a moment after, some one seizing me, and hurrying me on deck amid shrieks and screams,—and then finding myself in a little boat, crowded with wet people, and tossing about in the dark, not knowing which was sea, which was sky. Only one thing I remember after this, and that is—after the storm had gone down, and the boat was rising and falling on the great swells, the sailors resting on their oars, and a clergyman in the boat offering up a prayer, and then reading from a little wet Bible about Jesus walking on the water and holding out his hand to Peter, telling him if he had faith he could walk on the sea, as he did. I thought this was better than Arion and the dolphin, and I could really understand how it could be, though it is all gone now. I can only remember lying, crying, in the bottom of the boat. I was so happy and weak,—for I think we had nothing to eat after we left the ship,—and I would keep falling asleep and seeing some one stretching out his hand to me, and saying 'It is I; be not afraid;' then half waking up, and hearing some one say, in a solemn tone, 'But a plank between us and eternity,' and if it had not been for something, 'every soul on board'—and that is the last recollection I have of any thing, until we were coming into port in another ship; and every thing, as I said, was just as if nothing had happened, only I was very weak, for I had been quite ill; and the captain,

when he saw me coming on deck, caught me in his arms and kissed me, which he had never done before, and the grave old sailor with the queer smile gave me *such* a hug. The smile was all gone now, and when we left the ship I saw him shaking hands with the captain, with the most serious face I ever saw. I had overheard the old man telling some one the captain had shown he had the real grit in him, and if he had not had the misfortune to be born a gentleman he would have been as good a sailor as ever did something or other, I forget what; as if he had said he would have been as good a sailor as he had shown himself a brave man."

"Is that all?" said Effie. "I thought when you came to the shipwreck it would be something grand and dangerous."

"I suppose you would like to hear that the ship was struck by lightning, and went down in the middle of the ocean, with every soul on board but me, and that I drifted for days on a single oar, and at last came to a savage coast with a horde of wild Arabs ready to pounce upon me the moment I should be dashed upon the beach."

"That would be nice."

"Or to have had me swallowed by a shark, thousands of miles out of sight of land, and then you might have told the story for yourself."

"O, I did not mean to complain of your story; and I dare say if it had happened to one of us, it would have been the greatest event in our lives."

"Just like my night in the woods which Fanny's starlight night reminded me of. I have been thinking of it ever since she came to that part."

"There, Linda! I knew you were thinking of something else than my story, and I believe that is the reason it began to sound so flat towards the end."

"But I should not have thought of it, if it had not been for what you were telling; so that it shows I really was interested, as you would believe, if you knew how much it was like that night of my own."

"Do tell us about it, Linda; were you out all night alone?"

“The whole night long. But I begin to think it was not so much of an event after-all; you girls are so critical. It seems to me sometimes we are like those stones which are full of caves, and grottoes of crystal inside, to ourselves, while to others we are only common paving stones.”

“But you must remember it is just so with all, and not contrast the inside of your paving stone with the outside of others',” said Anna.

“I was thinking whether there was outside enough to my little adventure to make it worth telling. But if it is thinner than that of the rest, it will be easier to break open.”

“There, Linda, you have let that stone roll long enough; now let it rest with me and gather moss.”

“I understand you, Ella. You are off now on one of your fairy stories, and I shall have one listener the less. Well, I am glad of it, for I shall not have you looking at me in your calm way all the time, and thinking how much better you could tell the story.”

“O Ella, let us have the fairy story, and call it the paving stone if you please. Never mind if it is not clear to you yet, but think as you go along,” said Fanny.

“No; leave me alone. Perhaps it is nothing, and I know too well that no story is good for any thing, unless one knows what it is going to be before one begins.”

“I hate stories with morals; they are just like going in the cars, where all you think of is the end of your journey,” said Kate.

“But unless you know where you are going, you would never go at all.”

“But it is so pleasant to go off for a day's walk without knowing where you are going, and with nothing to do but to enjoy what you see.”

“Exactly as I thought when I set out on the adventure which led to that eventful night. But you were about to say something, Ella.”

“I was only going to say that things never look so well to me as when I have some place to go to, and see them on the way. But the adventure.”

“O, I set out without knowing whither I was going, though I found something so like a moral before I was through with it, that my story would be nothing without it.”

“That may be, but you will not tell it in the same way.”

“No, for I know well enough where it leads to, and my only fear now is, that incidents on the way will not seem interesting enough to make it worth the telling.”

“Leave that to us, Linda; and now for the adventure.”

“You remember what a time I had with Madam Irving, three or four years ago; you were here, Fanny, and you, Miss Revere—you remember, of course.”

“When you ran away from school and frightened Madam Irving almost to death, and were so glad to get back again?” said Fanny.

“Well, I will not dispute you.”

“But do not look so resigned about it. If you could only have seen the contrast between yourself leaving the school room with the air of Queen Catharine leaving the court, and your first appearance on the morning after your return!”

“I suppose I did look rather cowed; but if you had gone through what I did! It was all very well the first night, though I slept on the floor of a miserable little hut,—well, I may as well compress it, for I see you know something about it,—in the bed, then, of that little ragged berry girl who lives up on the mountain. I slept on the floor at first, but it was so cold that I had to give in.”

“You might have foreseen, then, how long you would hold out with Madam Irving.”

“Now, Fanny, you know I have always said—but it's no use. Well, girls, I lay awake most all that night arranging my plans for the next day. When I left the school, I had some vague idea of going home on foot,—three hundred miles, you know,—with nothing but that little bundle,

(how long it took me to make up that bundle! I thought I never should get off;) but then I feared I should be sent back, and the idea of facing Madam Irving after taking leave of her as I had done—"

"Yes, it did come hard; I really pitied you."

"Fanny, you are too bad. Well, my mind was made up that night, and every thing was clear before me for the next day's campaign. It seems that word made a great impression on that little, impertinent Jenny. She was here the other day at the door with her berry basket; and when she saw me, do you think, she looked up sidewise, with the smile those girls have, and said, in a subdued way, 'Campaign.' I wished she were in Guinea. To think of the solemn way in which I had talked to that girl about the importance of the step I was to take, and confided to her all the reasons for my leaving a society with which I could not agree, and giving up all the associations in which I had been born, and which were at variance with my views of life, and living henceforth dependent upon no one but myself; for I was really quite eloquent, I assure you, and inspired her with such enthusiasm that she readily agreed to follow me, and share, as my servant, the fortunes of the new life which opened before me. Poor thing! She had nothing to lose, and every thing was gain to her. She had nothing to come down to, either; for with her bare feet she was as near the ground as she could be, and I had still a pair of shoes between me and the rough fields over which we rambled all that day, though I did think of taking them off at first, as I did not wish to have any advantage over her. I found, however, before night, the advantage was altogether on her side, for she made nothing of stones, and brambles, and bushes, that put me out of breath, and tore me all to pieces. What a sight I was that evening as we came to an overhanging rock on the mountain side, and chose it as our camp for the night. The sun was just setting over an immense tract of country, entirely new to me; and I might have been on the Cordilleras for any thing that I recognized in that scene. It occurred to me, that, although, when out on a ride or a walk before, I always took notice of every thing, here I had been a whole day, and had actually never thought of looking up from the

ground. And even now, with all that splendid view and sunset before me, and the feeling of being fairly embarked on a new life, where school and civilization were already so distant that they were not to be thought of, yet I am ashamed to say, the great subject that occupied my thoughts was our supper. We had provided against that event, which we had looked forward to half the afternoon—a great store of blackberries, which I had conscientiously refrained from touching, though I was as hungry as a bear."

"What an expression for a young lady!" said Kate.

"I really believe we all should be bears if we lived out doors, as I did, for any length of time. Besides, any one who has seen you look at the baskets when we have a picnic!"

"Ah, yes! On the mountain when I'm tired of gazing at a great, vague view."

"You know I think as little of such things as any one when we are at home; but when we are out for the day, I declare a biscuit on a rock looks more picturesque than any thing in the landscape," said Kate.

"That's a confession!"

"I believe you would all say the same, if you would acknowledge the truth, except Leonora; and I suppose a tree or a rock looks just the same to her as a luncheon basket would to us."

"You are always talking about the picturesque, Kate, like every one else except Leonora. Now, once for all, what do you mean by it?" asked Anna.

"Leonora, you must answer for me, for I am sure you ought to know, if any one."

"I was thinking that you had already defined it as well, perhaps, as it could be. But if I should tell you all you have reminded me of by your comparison, we should never hear the end of Linda's story, in which I was becoming quite interested. I was thinking what a good sketch she would have made, sitting a little way down that mountain side with the ragged berry girl, and that great sunset before them. So you must let me

go on quietly with my drawing, and while Linda is finishing her adventure, I will be finding a point of view for my thoughts, which are just now rather indefinite. If I knew precisely what the picturesque is, perhaps I should not be sketching it; but if you must have a definition, perhaps this will do for the present—to say it is the look of home which things have in a strange place; and perhaps, to a party of hungry girls, a prettily-arranged lunch on a rock, in the shade of a beech tree, with the light glancing up under it from a bend of brook below, would be as near an approach to that look as the circumstances would permit."

"I wish you had been with me, Leonora, instead of that little imp of a berry girl. It was just that sense of not being at home that made that mountain life, at last, so unbearable to me. Yet home without that seemed so flat and lifeless, down on a dead level, with not a street or garden but could be counted and measured. I thought if I could only have a hut on the mountain side, with a goat or a dog, or something to give life to it."

"With a little girl or an old woman to do the work," said Effie.

"And some of us to come and take tea with you every other afternoon," said Kate, "out in front of the house, with that great view before us. Would it not be charming?"

"Would you believe it! I talked with that child as if she had been my dearest friend, and I should be afraid to tell you how near I crept to her side that night, as we slept under the shelf of rock. What I should have done without her I do not know. I knew the next night, as you shall hear; for, do you believe, that creature, after all I had done for her—"

"What had you done for her?" asked Kate.

"Why, I had—well, I had treated her like a friend, besides giving her fourpence for carrying my bundle, and another for her share of the blackberries, though I never thought of it till this moment, I believe she had picked them all. In the morning, after waking rather cold and with a feeling as if I had been jolted all night on a rough road, though nothing could be more different from travelling than that still rock,—how still it was, and every thing else too in that early dawn, every thing gray and

unsocial!—I tried to call out to break the silence; but the sound of my voice frightened me. Just then the sun began to stream over the tops of the trees, and a blue-jay pierced the air with a scream, as if from the heart of the wilderness, and yet as if he had a right there which I had not —as if he was at home while I was only thinking of it. There was a harsh warmth in that single note, as if the sunlight was to him what a good fire would have been to me, which I believe I needed sadly, for it was at that time in the autumn, when the nights are cold, though the days are so warm. I said that the sense of not being at home was at last unbearable; I had not come to that point yet, and I resolved, come what might, that I would stay on the mountain till I should feel as much at home as the blue-jay, for I felt how really splendid such a life was, even though I had had no breakfast; for I forgot to say that, seeing a house at a distance, down the mountain, and having a little money left, after what I had given the day before to that ungrateful girl, I gave it all to her, to go down and buy something for us to eat. Just this once, I thought, and then we will live like the birds and the squirrels. Yes, said I to the distant house, as if it were the civilized world, I have now parted with the last link that binds me to thee, and repeated aloud, in the excitement of the moment, 'I have burned the ships behind me! I have cast the die, and passed the Rubicon!' I must tell you that after I had given utterance to these words, I turned round involuntarily to see if there were not half a dozen of you girls behind me; and nothing can give a better idea of the solitude of the place than that you were not. My only auditor was a little striped squirrel, who disappeared with a chit, leaving an acorn with the marks of his teeth upon it, which I picked up, wondering if I could not also live upon acorns. I bit it, and found it could be eaten in case of necessity. Now, I thought, I can be entirely independent of all the unnecessary comforts of civilized life. Wherever I may be, I can earn my own living by adapting myself to the place, and assimilating to myself the fruit of every situation."

"The what?" said Effie.

“Well, I cannot remember exactly what I was philosophizing about. The other day I found in one of my old dresses that very acorn with the marks of my teeth and those of the squirrel upon it; I tried to bite it again, but it was so hard that I could make no impression upon it. Then it brought all that day's questioning back to me, and I thought if I had only finished and settled it then, while it was new and soft, I could have made it clear for my whole life perhaps, instead of letting it go as I did, till it is so hard now that I must leave it where it is, and go back to that girl, for whom I waited and waited until I was almost famished. Then I looked around, and there were the rocks all waiting so silently, and looking as if they had been waiting for ages, and could wait ages longer; and there was I, like that single blade of grass growing in the crevice of one of them, with only a summer to see and know them all. I could bear it no longer, and rushed wildly down the mountain in hopes to meet the girl; for any human face, even hers, would be better than that eternal silence. The motion restored my courage, and before I had gone far I felt ashamed of what seemed a retreat. I wonder if any of you ever feel so about any thing that you particularly dread, that if you do not meet it then and overcome it, it will come up again and again all your life, each time more fearful than before, and harder to conquer. I felt so then, and determined I would not give way; so I turned to retrace my steps; but I had rushed down at such a rate, that I could not remember the way, and taking, as I thought, the general direction, I went up and up, till I lost myself in a labyrinth of rocks, that grew higher and higher, and I saw that I had taken entirely the wrong way. But I was too tired to go farther, and finding some bushes covered with blackberries, which I suppose no one but myself had ever seen, I began to pick them for my late breakfast. When I had picked enough,—and if you ever want to know how good blackberries are, you must pick them, as I did, when there is nothing else to be had,—thinking I had time enough before me to find my way out, I sat down in the shade of a rock, and gradually lost myself in that great dream of a day. What a day it was! I wondered if they were always such on the mountains; it seemed to have an existence of its own, and I could understand how a day can be as a thousand years. The insects

murmured, and buzzed, and chirped about me, as if they had such a sense of it, and were concentrating all life into their little existence, perhaps as long to them as my life to me, which I am sure would not be long enough to remember and tell all that I thought of in that day.

"Then at last I began to come back to my former life, which seemed already so far back, and to think of a little, common school day, and what you were all doing. They have had the forenoon recitations, I thought; they have had dinner, and now,—where can that girl be? I exclaimed, as I looked up and saw that the sun had left one side of the ravine in the shade, and that I must hasten to find my way out. But the farther I went, the more I became involved, and at last I became aware, all at once, that I was lost. It was as if some one had made the announcement to me, and I received it at first with calmness, or as if it was felt suddenly by something within me, and had not yet come to my understanding; but I knew it was coming, and though I was perfectly calm, a great deal more so than I am now in telling it, I walked quickly to a place where I could sit down, and when I reached it, trembled so that I had to lean against a rock for support. I did not then comprehend my situation, or hardly think of it. I only felt frightened about myself, and thought if I could only get my breath, or if my heart would beat, or stop beating, whichever it was, and the tremor would pass off, I could look the danger calmly in the face. At last I recovered so far as to feel all that had burst upon me at once come back, step by step, till the truth of my situation stood before me, solid and bare as those cruel rocks. It was late in the afternoon when you could see, in the sunbeams over the shaded ravine, every insect; not a breath of air stirring the leaves, and the great cliffs overhanging, as if just ready to fall. The silence was stifling, and I tried to scream; but the sound of my voice was so faint and childish, among those great rocks, that I threw myself on the ground in an agony of terror, and if I had ever wished for a good cry, I had it then. If it had been on the open mountain side, or any where else but shut in there among those rocks!—but I really felt they were closing in upon me, and would crush me. I cried till I was too weak for fear, and then I found myself thinking of the blade of grass in the crevice of the rock, and I

seemed to be that grass blade, and lifting at one end that whole weight of rock, never to get out of the place till I succeeded; and then I thought of the tender flower stem, which I had read of, lifting the heavy clod, and I tried to be quiet, (if I struggled or moved I knew I should be crushed,) and to pervade that whole mass with the gentle pressure, till I could lift it from off me. This sense seemed a new breath of air in my lungs, to keep the mountain from pressing me flat beneath it; and now I seemed to myself breathing my own life into the inert mass, till imperceptibly it became lighter and lighter, and at last I was free.

"When I waked up the stars were shining over me, and I seemed to be set into the dewy ground, I had lain there so long. I positively thought for a moment I had been actually crushed, instead of only dreaming it, and that my body lay dead beneath me; for I could neither stir hand nor foot, and every thing seemed so cold and distinct about me. I saw a moment after that this was because I was chilled through by the night air and dew; but the sensation was so pleasant—to feel free like a spirit—that I remained just as I waked. How I did think of every thing that night! There I was, lost; but I had lost all fear of that, so long as I was sure of being there myself. This seemed a new starting-point, which it was strange I had never thought of. Suppose I should be where I had been in the morning; I should know almost as little where I was as now; for without that girl's help I could never find my way back to the school; and if I were there I should still be lost, unless I knew my position in respect to every part of the world; and if I knew all that, still the earth would be a ship without a compass, unless I knew its place in reference to all the stars. The only place that I felt certain about, after all, was where I was, for I kept coming back to that; and then it seemed to me I was a ball of yarn, that had unrolled as it went, and now all I had to do was to wind it up to where it started from. Would not this lead, I thought, at last to the point from which all things have their place? Then I remembered the long, sharp teeth of that little squirrel, and how every animal has an organ which enables him to earn his own living in his own way, and it seemed unreasonable to think that man had not one to enable him to follow that clew. I had thought, at one time, of praying for

a direct interposition of Providence, which I had heard was the shortest way of leading one out of trouble, for it seemed so much more direct, the clear space above, with nothing between me and the stars, than to be losing myself farther and farther among those black woods and rocks. But then, I thought, what is prayer but feeling our way along that thread? and is not my *sense* of this the faculty by which I may follow it up? That thought was like a new sense of touch, and I felt the thread within my hand, and was certain that every thing has within itself the way out.

"While these thoughts were passing through my mind, they seemed gradually to become audible, and when they passed away, the same tone went on; and as I listened, I could hear, in the stillness of the night, the dripping and flowing of some little stream, far back in the mountain. As soon as it was light, I followed the sound, and then the brook, till it led me down the mountain to the open fields; and where do you think, girls, I came out? Why, up there on the cleared part of the mountain, directly in front of the school house."

"I saw you when you came in at the gate," exclaimed Fanny; "and what a sight you were! But that is always the way; we always come back to where we began. It is the reason, I believe, why we never have better stories nowadays."

"You must allow there is some difference between coming back to the beginning, and merely being there because we have never been away. As for the story, I told you at the outset that you had nothing to expect. But come, Leonora; I have given you time for your point of view, as you call it; or perhaps, as I have come to a full stop, I can furnish you with one."

"You could not give me a better, for I have been thinking all along that your story would almost do for mine."

"Do look, girls, at what Nora has been drawing," exclaimed Kate. "Here we all are just like life, only so much better. How charming it is, when we are all going on so, without thinking of any thing but what we

are doing, to find we have been making a scene for some one else! It is just like sitting talking in a boat, and looking up suddenly, and finding ourselves afloat on the lake."

"And you know I always enjoy more sitting on the shore, and seeing you, than being in the boat myself," said Leonora. "It seems odd, perhaps, that such a scene of life as that is should remind me of Linda when she waked up and thought she was lying dead beside herself. But did you ever, Linda, feel more alive than at that moment?"

"I believe I had never thought of myself at all before. You know I said that all the time I was so troubled because I did not know where I was, I never once thought of being any where."

"That, to be sure, is the most important, for it would be hardly worth while to go round the world to find where our house was situated, and to come back and find it occupied by some one else. That is often the case with those who travel from home, and I believe we must come back every night to be sure of not losing it."

"How every thing brings in every thing else!" said Kate. "I believe you will never begin."

"I soon learned that," answered Leonora, "and that brings me to the beginning of my story, if you will have it that I am to tell one, though I would rather tell it in my own way, by drawing the illustrations to Linda's, which, as I said, would almost answer for mine; but why should it not, as we were each to tell something in our experience resembling Clara's?"

"Poor Clara! I had almost forgotten her," said Fanny.

"None are poor but those who think themselves rich. How proud I felt of my first poor little drawings! How well I remember them! The house, and the fence before it, and the lattice in the garret window, and then the great elm and the brook, and by degrees the distant hill behind, for I kept adding to my pictures as I advanced, having to go back farther and farther for a point of view, till at last the hill on the outskirts of the village, overlooking the whole, was my favorite spot for sketching, if I may dignify my stiff little achievements by such a term. Still it was the

house that was the centre of the picture; but, as Kate says, one thing leads to every thing, and I found there was no end to the things I must introduce; and yet they did not seem to belong to the house, but to be fastened to it in some way. I could not get them off, and remember, when some one was saying that a painter of his acquaintance could not get his pictures off his hands, feeling a certain pride in knowing that I was contending with one of the regular difficulties of the art. But at last I succeeded, in some degree, in getting my picture right, and did not altogether disbelieve what every one said at home, that it was beautiful. As I was led, however, farther and farther back, by the necessity for a wider view, the house began to have rather a subordinate look; but still it was my home, and nothing seemed a picture without it. As yet I had had no instruction, as you would easily believe if you should see my productions of that period, until one day, as I was bending over my drawing board, (I was very particular about my drawing paper then, and always had the best,) and had just got in the house, a shade fell across my picture, and looking up, I saw a young man with camp stool and portfolio slung across his shoulder, looking down at my work. I drew a little back, that he might see it better, rather pleased that he should see that I also was in that line. He glanced at the landscape, then looked again at my sketch with a smile. He had not said a word, and yet the opinion of all my family, aunts, cousins, and all, admiring my picture on a thanksgiving day after dinner, would not have weighed a straw with me against that smile. Yet he asked me to go on with it, which I did lest he should go away, looking up now and then, and seeing him regarding my work with the half-curious interest with which one would watch an ant-hill, till at last I threw down my pencil, and asked him if he would not oblige me with a sketch of his own.

"He gave one look at the landscape. What a look!—it was a new revelation to me in art,—like an eagle taking in the whole view at one sweep. He seemed to hold every hill and valley fixed with his eye as in a vice, and to weigh the place and proportion of every thing as in a balance, on the firm line of his mouth. All at one glance too; for, without unstrapping his camp stool, he placed his portfolio on his knee, kneeling

on the other, and hardly looking up twice, handed me in a few minutes a complete sketch. I say a complete sketch, for I had not known till then that a sketch may be as complete as a finished picture. But I forget that my story also must be a sketch, and I will not spoil it by details which cannot be interesting to you.

“As soon as I saw his sketch, I found, to my astonishment, that he had left out the house altogether; and even the village he had put away at one side as of no importance. On mentioning the oversight, he took out his eye-glass and looked at the house, asking me what particular importance I attached to it. I timidly replied that I lived there.

“'Ah,' he exclaimed, and apologized for his omission, saying he would not forget so important a feature in the landscape. 'Come' said he, 'you shall be my guide over these hills, to which I am a stranger. Let us forget the house for a while, and look up a new view of the village, which does not come in very well here.' How strange it seemed to me that he should speak of the village where I had been born, as a thing to be introduced here or there at his convenience. Already his words seemed to set it afloat; but when, after a long detour, leaving it quite out of sight, we came suddenly upon the edge of the mountain, where the whole valley lay like a toy village almost directly under our feet, it was like a fairy enchantment. There was the actual village, every house and garden in its place, so near that it could be seen distinctly, and yet so far down that it had a foreign look. Then he took out a spy-glass, and adjusting it, handed it to me. 'Now for the house,' said he; and after carrying the tube over half the village, I exclaimed for joy. There I was directly at the gate; it was at the back of the house, and the forenoon work was going on as usual. My father was standing at the door giving some silent direction to the man, who seemed to answer him without saying a word, and Jane was going about like a historical personage, hanging out clothes.

“It was exactly as if I had been looking at a place I had been reading about in some old book; and yet the persons were so familiar to me, more so than ever. I handed the spy-glass to the stranger that he might

share my delight, but he did not care to look. 'That is the way,' said he, 'all places look to me. To the artist the familiar is strange, and the strange familiar.'

"I only thought the remark was strange, and wondered if it would ever be familiar to me.

"Then he went on to describe the village as if he were looking at it, with me, through the glass. 'Do you see the old woman at the window, looking down the street? And the man asleep on the church steps? And the single figure crossing the green?' Just as if they were all regular figures in a picture, and not people who happened to be there at that moment, as they really were.

"'Now for something new!' he said, putting the glass in his pocket and leading me over the mountain. But nothing seemed new to him. He appeared to look at every view we came to as if he saw it for the first time after a long absence, and remembered every tree and stone in it. When I told him so, he sat down, and opening his portfolio in a place unlike any I had ever seen before, and not, I thought, particularly interesting, he began to sketch, and to tell me at the same time, so that I should not be tired, the old story which we have all read, (the first, I believe, we ever read,) but which I let him tell, it was so new as he told it, about the little child that was carried away by the gypsies, and years after, when they came back to his native country, strolled off till he came to the house where he was born; and the sense by degrees came over him that he had been there before, and it all became clearer and clearer, until at last the gate and the doorstep were no dream; and as he went over the whole story, he would give a touch here and a touch there, that seemed to waken a recollection in me, as if I were the little child he was telling about, coming nearer and nearer, till, with a few strokes, he finished the picture; and there, to be sure, was our very house, and I *was* the little child he had been telling about. It was all perfectly clear to me, though it is a mystery even now how he could have made it so. When I looked

again, I saw it was not exactly our house; and yet it looked even more like it than if it had been, and there was nothing in it that I could have altered without spoiling the picture.

"Then he would walk on, and sit down again and take another view with a different house, but with the same home-like look, and yet exactly suiting the landscape. And at last he would draw places without any houses at all, and yet as if a human being was looking at them, to whom they were in some way a home, just as he drew my bonnet and portfolio on the edge of a hill, so that any one would have known I was somewhere about.

"As we went back, at the close of the day, every object he pointed out seemed to light up with a life of its own, and every step we took was like finding a bird's nest in the grass. He parted with me in the road, saying that he had left his horse somewhere on the hill where he had found me in the morning, and that he should remember the day with pleasure.

"As for me, I thought, as I walked slowly homeward towards the fading sunset, that I never should remember any thing else. When I have read since of the great days of Creation, which are believed to have been years of our time, I have thought of that day, and it has not seemed necessary that the old time should have been different from ours. It seemed an age since I had left the village in the morning, and every thing looked as it does when we go home at the end of term."

"We seem so much older, too, then," said Fanny, "and as if we had seen so much, and should meet ourselves at the gate, little things as we were when we left."

"I thought of myself, and my little sketches of the morning, as if I had been a tame pigeon pecking about before the door, with its little, short feet; and now I had seen the eagle which I had heard of, and his great wings had opened for me all the wide space behind the rim of the hills which enclosed the village. And yet it looked all the more like home for being encompassed with that great region. Every thing looked so old, with a new meaning, and as I approached the house, it looked as it had when I saw it through the spy-glass, and the gate, as I opened it in the

stillness of the twilight, seemed to say, with its creak, 'The familiar made strange;' for these words were to me like a sentence in old German text in an English book.

“As I was dressing for tea, I heard the sound of a horse's hoofs, and a moment after a knock at the door. Could I ever know the meaning of those other words of his, 'The strange made familiar,' as I did when I heard it in the sound of the stranger's voice?

“He had called with my portfolio, which he had carried for me, and I had forgotten to take from him. I heard my father inviting him in, and when I went down, there was my eagle sitting at the tea table, bending forward, courteously, to take a cup from my sister, like any other visitor.

“'You see I am keeping my promise,' he said, 'not to forget the house which I treated with such neglect in the morning.'

“I was too bewildered with the joy of my surprise to make any reply; and taking my seat, which happened to be next his, I could only sit in silence, and try to comprehend my happiness. It was as if I understood perfectly the answer to some riddle, without knowing what the riddle was. The china on the table, and the people, had always given me the feeling of being fixed to it, like a doll's tea set, where the table and dishes are all in one piece; and it made no difference how learned or profound my father's visitors might be; when they spoke it gave me the unpleasant sensation of taking up your cup and having the saucer come with it.

“Then, too, we were all so near at home, that we never gave each other room; and if we did, it was by going away entirely.

“But here was a person who set every one off at a respectful distance, himself among the rest, and yet preserved their relation to himself and each other by encouraging their peculiarities, outside of that limit, and set us all agoing by placing us at the right point of view, with, in some mysterious way, the common sense of the whole party as spectator; so that we were like figures in a landscape, which, while we were looking at them, I knew, without knowing why, to be ourselves.

“Even grandmother, who always comes dead upon a stranger, and there is no shaking her off, could not get within the charmed circle, but had to keep in her orbit; and really she appeared like quite an entertaining old lady, and all the more so for her peculiar style of conversation, which is apt to be the family consternation at table. Our little group that evening reminded me of a system of stars revolving around each other, with a general motion of the whole in reference to some point without, which I had a sense of, though I did not understand it; but I felt sure that our stranger did; and this, I think, was what attracted me towards him, for I felt the need of something out of the sphere of everlasting praises for wretched little drawings, which I knew were only good so far as their defects showed there was something better. Now, he stood on the outside of all the things that he drew, and I knew he could see them as they were.”

“I am sure I am on the outside of all you are saying,” interrupted Kate. “Which of us was it who hoped to get rid of moralizing by calling upon Nora for a story?”

“Pictures themselves, as Anna said, may perhaps have no moral; at least, they are not so prosy in telling it as I am; but those who have no moral, no idea, are not usually the persons who paint them. But I see I have been going out of my province; for a picture, whatever else it may be, should be intelligible, and the painter's account of himself ought to be no less so. So I will not tell you how I learned from one person, who had a place to stand upon, how nothing can be seen as it is by one who has none. I have at least learned to prefer standing on my feet to having even so excellent a teacher as Mr. Moran for palanquin bearer.”

“No doubt he would be glad if we all would relieve him, in the same way, of a burden which he carries with such resignation,” said Anna. “But he certainly will be much indebted to you for the valuable information you can give him in regard to your fixed point, although I believe the only point he thinks of when here, is that on the clock, which marks the end of his hour.”

“I am not so presumptuous as to think a school girl's ideas could be of any value to an artist like him, though, if we may believe men, they all draw from us their best inspirations. Perhaps, after all, it is the destiny of us girls, in some unconscious way, with the finer instinct which men attribute to us, to spend our lives in winding up Linda's ball of yarn for them to throw out again.”

“Thank Heaven the ball is wound up so far!” said Kate. “Now, Ella, do break off the thread, and give it to the fairies to play with.”

“O, yes, Ella, do! After all this scraping and tuning, let us have the dance at last,” said Effie.

“Positively I have not a word of it ready,” answered Ella. “I thought of something when I spoke, but it was like turning a kaleidoscope; with every turn it became something else. And then I began to listen to Linda, and to Leonora, and my story became so confused with theirs, that you would not know it for a fairy story, if I should tell it to you; but if you will let me off until I disentangle it, Anna, I know, will take my place, for she never wants a moment's notice. If you should wake her up in the middle of the night, and ask her for a story, she would immediately begin with 'Once upon a time,' and go on telling it after we were all asleep. Come, Anna, take the kaleidoscope, and I will give you the princess, the castle, the grim father, and the disappointed suitors for beads to put in it. So give it a turn, and let us see what it will be.”

“There was once a princess, who was the most beautiful who had ever been seen—”

“O, of course!” interrupted Kate. “Who ever heard of a princess, in a story, who was not?”

“Did you ever hear, my dear, of one who was so beautiful that of all her maids of honor (each of whom was so beautiful herself, that a whole village would go crazy about her if she but drove through it) not one, however they might dispute for the preference among themselves, ever thought of raising the least pretension to beauty in her presence? There never was but one such, and that was my princess.

“Although her father, who was the wealthiest and haughtiest prince of all that region, lived in a castle so grand and stately, and although in sight of the highway, separated from it by grounds so severely elegant and august, that except for the beautiful princess no one would have ventured to approach it, yet it was open to all, and many a bold youth, who had heard of her fame, preserved his courage all along the avenue, until he reached the stately front door, nor remembered, until it was opened by the awful footman, that he did not know whom to ask for.

“For it seems the people, through the influence, probably, of the maids of honor, had begun to copy the manners of the court, and every pretty girl in the country had begun to fancy herself a princess; and one day when her father was walking through the town, he was so annoyed at hearing every third child called by his daughter's name, that he went home, and shut her up in the castle, and declared she should never again be called by any name, until some one should come who would give her his own. You may be sure there were not wanting youths who would have been happy to present her with such a gift; and it was not long before she numbered among her suitors the princes of all the provinces in the kingdom, each of whom had appeared at the castle gate with full assurance that his name would be one which the princess would be only too happy to accept. But their names were not so powerful at court as at home. The maids of honor, each of whom was a princess in her own country, did not fail, like mischievous things as they were, to take advantage of the confusion arising from there being no name for the princess, to go down when any one was announced, in one of her dresses,—of which you may imagine the number when I tell you she never wore the same twice,—and impose herself on the unsuspecting visitor, as the princess whom he wished to see. What fun, to be sure, all the rest must have had, listening at the half-open door of the next room, to hear the protestations, one after another, of these poor, deluded lovers, each to a different lady! They did not once think what troubles might arise among so many suitors, each of whom considered himself as the chosen one, if they should happen to meet where the princess was the subject of conversation. However, this very circumstance, which

occurred, turned out for the benefit of the princess, if not of the suitors; for a young nobleman in their company, hearing them disagree so widely in their descriptions of her beauty, very naturally concluded that each had seen a different one, and that neither, perhaps, had seen the princess herself. So he called the next day to see for himself, and soon found, charming as the young lady was who came down to see him, that she was assuming the air of a higher personage than herself; for one who knows what he seeks is not so easily put off by appearances. So he took leave, and coming next day in disguise, beheld another lady; and so every day, until he had seen them all, and satisfied himself that he had not seen their mistress. With all their grace and beauty there was an air about them as of reflected light, and he fancied he detected now and then a listening kind of look, as if the main life of the house was going on somewhere else. Yet he did not wonder at the passion of the suitors, for each of these maids of honor was so lovely, that the lifetime of almost any man would not have been too much to devote to her. But he looked at them as one looks at the moon when waiting for the daybreak, and was not long in sending a message by the footman, that brought down the princess herself, who entered the room in all her loveliness, leaning upon the arm of her father. A single glance sufficed to tell the youth that she was indeed the princess that his heart had foretold, but also that he never could win her without the consent of the stern old monarch upon whom she leaned. Nor did he feel dismayed, for he also valued that ancestral pride, nor without reason; for in the veins of the poor young nobleman also ran the blood of a royal line, although the sword that hung at his side was all that was left him of its former glory; and the old king might have seen it flashing in his eye with a trace of the old splendor, as he boldly asked the hand of his daughter. But though the father frowned, the daughter smiled, for the glance of the youth had sparkled in her heart, as if it were already the marriage ring upon her finger.

"'Come hither,' said the sire; and the youth followed him to the balcony which overlooked the country about the castle. 'On every side,' said he, 'farther than the eagle's flight can measure in a day, behold my

domain. Think'st thou I will permit this inheritance of my fathers to go into the hands of a man of yesterday? Let him win it, then I may know that he can keep it. Go down again, and look up over the castle gate, and see the escutcheon of this house. No heraldic device is that, but the veritable coat of arms which the founder of this house placed there as the seal of his work. Know also the traditionary challenge to whoever aspires to the hand of the daughter of the house. Only as an equal can he win her from her father's hand, who will condescend to meet in arms none but those who can take down and wear that armor.' Then with an inclination of the head that seemed to freeze the air about him, he dismissed the youth, who feared him not, but saw in him only the massive foundations of that stately castle, from the upper window of which the fairest princess in the world waved him a farewell of hope.

"When he was outside the gate he looked up, and there was the coat of arms, not, as one would suppose from the careless glance usually given on entering the door of a palace, an ornamental escutcheon,—though of enormous size, as befitted the proportions of the edifice,—but the veritable arms themselves, which must have come down from a race of giants. Even if he could have worn them, it would have been impossible to take them down, as they were built into the wall of the house, and indeed seemed so essential a part of the structure, that it was, as it were, the face of the whole front, and could not be taken away but with the whole body. No wonder he felt for a moment disheartened, as he stood before the frowning portal; and perhaps he would have turned away in despair, had not his eye caught at that moment the merry faces of the maids of honor peering out, one over the other, at the side windows, and been drawn thus to a golden gleam at the great oriel window above, which was no other than the radiant face and arm of his princess; and although she disappeared the next minute, yet that light seemed for a moment to lift, from within, the whole dark castle, and to fall upon the device on the shield of the escutcheon, which was so effaced by time, that he had not observed it before. With a smile that would have become the stern face of the lord of the castle himself, he gayly turned, and walked down the long avenue, not for years to return, touching now and

then the hilt of his sword, as one would pat the neck of his war-horse, which was pawing for him to mount; and well did that sword deserve his trust, for though it was his all, a king's ransom would not have purchased it. It had been the sword of his greatest ancestor, and possessed the charm of giving to the arm of its wearer the strength of every one it overcame.

“But before he left, in return for the information the deluded suitors had so unwittingly given him, he told them of the arms, and the condition upon which the princess was to be won. Did he not fear that in his absence the prize might be carried off by one of these other suitors, so much more powerful in name than himself? Or had he a reason of his own for keeping them from their own dominions?

“Now, each of these suitors was the ruler of one of the provinces of the kingdom, and each had been attracted thither by the fame of the princess's beauty. In the old time the kingdom had belonged to a race of giants, and the provinces were departments, bounded by no territorial limits, and the tenure upon which they were held was the right of the strongest.

“In the mining district, the ancient ruler had been the mightiest smith.

“In the forest he had swung the largest axe.

“And so, through all the provinces of that kingdom, each ruler had been the master of his own craft. But the ancient heroes, thinking the posterity of the strong are the strong, and that no state is safe unless maintained by the same power which won it, had left a challenge, each, on his castle gate, which was open to all who should come in after times; and whoever should accept it might contest with its occupant the possession of the castle and its domains. In former times this challenge had been no empty form; but for many years no one had appeared to accept it, and it now hung at the castle gate unnoticed, as a portcullis, whose chains have rusted with centuries of peace.

“Now, the rulers were absent, with no thought of their provinces, wasting their strength in useless efforts to take down the king's armor, not dreaming that they might be losing their own and fighting among

themselves in rivalry for the hand of the fair princess, whom neither of them had ever seen. How many of them flattered themselves that they should succeed in single combat with the old monarch, whom they could not even meet in his grounds without awe, cannot be known, but the coat of arms had many a tug from that day; and we can imagine the feelings of each suitor, as he retreated ignominiously down the long, straight avenue, the subdued laughter of those tantalizing maids of honor behind him, at the windows, stiffening his elbows, and twitching his knees, till by the time he reached the highway, he was breathless, as if he had been fighting the ancient wearer of the armor himself.

“Meantime, where was the youth upon whom the princess had smiled? In the remotest hamlet of the kingdom, disguised as a peasant; in his hands the charmed sword had become an axe, with the fame of whose exploits the woods still ring. Nor was he long in winning the strength of every woodman's arm, and with the last stroke the axe in his hands became a hammer, with whose lusty blows, ere long, every anvil in the neighboring province echoed, till with the last blow the hammer in his hands became a ploughshare; and thus, through each province, beginning at the foot and leaving at the head, until there was not an acre in that vast domain which he did not know better than those who tilled it; no forge or furnace at which his arm had not proved the strongest; no art or craft that did not own him master. Then the sword returned to its sheath, and he said, 'I have served my apprenticeship; now let me take my degrees.'

“Then he boldly presented himself at each castle, and demanded the ancient right of trial.

“At the gate of the first hung a mighty axe, which the giant arm of the ancient lord had placed there, as a defiance to after times, with the inscription, 'To him who can wield it.'

“He took it down as if it were a toy, and sunk it to the helve in the gate post, carving on the handle the words, 'To him who can draw it.' Then he entered the castle, and investing himself with the rights and titles that belonged to him as victor, and leaving the province in the keeping of a

suitable deputy, he went on to the next, at whose castle gate hung the ponderous hammer of the royal smith, its former owner, with the inscription, 'To him who can swing it.' This he not only swung around, as if it were a walking stick, but left buried to the head in the gate of massive oak, and with unmoved breath bade the chamberlain, who, with all the retinue of servants, had flown to open it at his thundering summons, to carve upon the handle the words, 'To him who can take it.'

“Then entering, and assuming his rightful authority, and leaving the administration of the province in proper keeping, he went on to the next castle, where at the gate stood a huge plough, with the inscription, 'To him who can hold it.'

“Breaking to the yoke the wild bulls of the old stock,—for there were none of the present race who could move it,—he ploughed a furrow half round the castle, and left it buried to the beam, cutting upon it the words, 'To him who can finish it.'

“He turned loose his team into the forest, and entering the castle, left it, as he had the rest, in the charge of his own deputy; and thus proceeding from castle to castle, and leaving each province as its lord, because its master, he completed the round, and thus became possessed of all that kingdom, save one castle; but that was the king's. 'I have the parts—now for the whole,' he said, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword.

“But before he went forth on his last trial, he gave a year to the ordering and uniting of his separate provinces. 'The body is ready for its head,' he then said, and went forth to the king's castle.

“As he drew near, he observed the suitors still tugging at the armor, the maids of honor still watching them from the windows, though with less mirth, and each with more interest, he thought, in some one whom her eyes followed.

“But above all, in the great oriel, his own fair princess, fairer than ever, held out both arms to him in welcome.

“One glance at the armor, and the inscription on the shield, 'To him who can wear it,'—which he could hardly see, so covered was it with the figures of the suitors,—and a smile to think how the armor was wearing them, and he boldly entered the castle, sending his challenge to the king to meet him in equal arms, according to his promise. 'Where is the armor in which you were to meet me?' said the monarch, on entering, with submissive dignity.

“'To him who carries the kingdom on his shoulders, the castle is a helmet, and the arms a crest,' said he, and demanded the hand of the princess. As he spoke, the sword in his hand became a sceptre, and the king, bowing low, with a reverence in which knelt the proud humility of the dethroned sovereign, said, 'Brave prince, we can only have what we earn. I have no power to say that what you have earned you shall not have. You have won it; Heaven grant you a long life to keep it. Long last the throne whose wood the king's own hand hath hewn!'

“Then he placed the princess's hand in his, and gave him, what he already had, yet what without her were not worth having, the kingdom, for her dowry.

“At the marriage which took place, the maids of honor were affianced each to her favored suitor, who loved her no less than if she had been the princess for whom he had mistaken her; and each was better pleased to be the princess of a province than to play at being princess of a kingdom. For to each was given, with the consent of the bridegroom, a province in the dowry of the princess, with a recommendation by him to each restored ruler, who was to hold it in trust to observe the words inscribed upon his castle gate, and to stay at home hereafter and attend to his own department.

“But before the marriage was completed, the father of the bride drew the prince aside, and reminded him that he had sworn his daughter should have no name until one should come who should give her his own.

“'Names are for commoners,' he said; 'kings have none. Know then that the kingdom which I have again made good from the foot, has come down to me from the head, and that the princess's ancestry and mine go back until they meet in the same name. But let her whose name is profaned by all, be ever nameless for me; and lest her maidens again compromise her by assuming it, let them keep it for a surname, and I will couple it with a distinction.'

“Then he named each of them from the name of her province, and their mistress is never spoken of by them but under the title of their queen.”

“Now, Ella,” said Fanny.

“The beginning of Anna's story will do for mine with the change of a word. There was once a brother, the most critical who had ever been seen—”

“It must have been mine,” interrupted Kate.

“Did you ever venture to tell him a story? If you have, you may know how much spirit I must feel at the idea of repeating mine. But as my brother has so large a part in it, I may as well tell you something about him.”

“O,” said Fanny, “if we get on the subject of brothers, we shall never come to your story.”

“But as without mine we never should have come to it at all, as you will see, he is a part which cannot be left out,” said Ella.

“My brother had the gravest way of telling the strangest adventures, as if they had really happened, so that although I might have been taken in by him a thousand times, I invariably yielded the most implicit trust to every new story; while I had such a way of telling real occurrences that no one would believe they were not inventions. If he could tell my stories, I believe they would be better than his; for, telling them in his plausible way, he would need to leave nothing out, as I do, for fear of being laughed at; and they would have the advantage over his, of not

only appearing true, but really being so, which is all the praise I can claim for them now. Yet he would insist that he never told any thing but what he had actually seen.

"'Facts for men, fancies for girls,' he would say; for he had a way of setting up one thing against another, as if nothing could stand alone. Thus he would say the oddest things with the gravest face, and would set me crying with a look like a harlequin.

"But although he laughed at my 'fancies,' I could not but notice he was always getting me to tell them, yet as if for some end of his own which I never could discover; for often when he had set me going in this way, I could feel myself pushed forth from him, as if I were the antenna of some insect with which he was exploring unknown regions, and making in his own wise head conclusions with which I had nothing to do.

"Then he was always fond of having me with him, and had always a new name for me, which I liked because he gave it to me, although I could never see its significance. Now I was his witch-hazel, though I never knew what springs I found for him. Now I was his ger-falcon, but could never see what game he loosed me at, although, certainly, no falcon was ever kept more closely hooded.

"Very different was the confidence I had in him; for whatever was in my mind, I was sure to go to him, and he was always ready to satisfy me. There was nothing so strange that I wished to see, but he could at once tell me, with the most explicit directions, where I could find it; but when I returned, as I almost invariably did, without success, the only explanation he would give was, that I had not found the place. Many a fool's errand of this kind he sent me upon, from which I came back as wise as I went. But one thing he told me which turned out exactly as he said, and it may prove so with others which are a puzzle to me to this day.

"One day, when I had been reading about the fairies until I had the greatest desire in the world to see them, I went to my oracle, whom I found sitting beside the stream above the mill, for our father was a miller, and this had been our favorite spot from my earliest recollection.

He was looking at the water, apparently thinking of something else; but when he saw me coming, he appeared absorbed in a book, which I observed was upside down.

“'Tell me really and truly,' said I, 'do you think such creatures as fairies actually exist?'

“'Certainly,' he answered, 'for I have seen them myself.' I looked at him in amazement, but his serious face assured me he was not joking; and I begged him to tell me where he had seen them, and why, if they really existed, every thing was not known about them. 'There is also a nation in the heart of Africa,' said he, 'supposed to be somewhere about the source of the Nile; but no one has ever discovered them, or, if he has, has not returned, and we have no information about them.'

“'If I lived on the Nile,' I replied, 'I should never rest until I had discovered them.'

“'But,' said he, 'as we live on the mill stream, perhaps that will do as well for us. And, now I think of it, it is the very thing, as I learned from a conversation which I overheard when among the fairies—'

“'But tell me first,' said I, 'how you came to be there.'

“'O,' said he, 'I came upon them once by accident, which is a rare piece of good fortune. I had often before come upon them suddenly in the same way, but they were off before I could fairly see them, or lay like a brood of partridges, taking the color of every thing about them, so that I might look for them an hour, I could never find them. It is no use to wait, for they can wait longer than you can. The only way is to go off and come back again when the affair is blown over, and take them again unawares, when they will again, perhaps, spring up under your very feet, and be off before you know they are there. But by repeated attempts, at sufficient intervals, coming nearer each time, and looking with a certain attentive indifference, you may succeed in seeing them. But it is useless to chase them whither they appear to have flown, unless you have a dog perfectly trained; for Diana's hounds, I believe, are the only ones who have ever been able to follow them up. But as they frequent the same spot, if you leave it, they will be sure to come back, only you must mark

the trees as you go away, or you will not find the place again; for otherwise you might be close by and never know it. I did not neglect this precaution when I saw them; but though I marked the trees, I forgot the mark, and have never been able to recall it. Perhaps you may have better fortune, for there is another way which I learned, as I said, from the conversation I overheard when there. But if I tell you, it must be on one condition—that you will break the twigs, or otherwise mark the way as you go along, so that I can follow.'

"On my giving the promise demanded, 'It seems,' said he, 'the fairies, though living so far apart from men, are still dependent upon them for their bread, and must come down now and then to the mill for their grist, which John takes good care to leave out for them, or they would turn off the water from above, he says. When they are on their way back, they are always in good humor if they have found their grist, and are willing to take up a passenger in their boat. But it must be a girl, and therefore I have never been able to go up in that way myself. They say that women can find the way to their camp, but can never find the way back; but if men should once get in, they would think of nothing but getting back to report it, and it would be overrun with visitors, who would bring nothing with them, and carry every thing away. For it is a custom of their hospitality to present every guest with a gift; to the women an ornament of their beauty with which they would never part, but to the men they could give nothing which they would not carry home to convert into money. So that it is doubtful which of us has the advantage; you who can get in, but can make nothing of it, or I, who could turn it to account, but cannot get in.'

"'O, I, to be sure!' said I; 'for the great thing after all is to get in. But how am I to secure a passage in their boat?'

"He told me I must be asleep on the bank of the stream at the time the fairies' boat would be going up, and they would take me in when they saw me. He had tried to find out from John when they were in the habit of coming for their grist; but John could not tell, or would not, as he did not care to watch their comings or goings, he said. So long as they

allowed him sufficient head of water to keep the mill going, it was none of his business, and they were not people that he cared to meddle with. But he supposed they came, when they did come, at night, or sometimes, perhaps, when he was taking his nooning.

"After that I went every day to the bank of the stream, and did my best to compose myself to sleep; but in vain: the more I tried to sleep, the more I would be awake, in spite of the counsel of my brother, who gave me no peace on the subject of sleep, and was continually telling me of Napoleon, who had the power of going to sleep whenever he chose. At last, one day when I had fairly given up in despair, and had forgotten all about the fairies, and every thing else but the rippling of the stream,—for it happened to be the hour of noon, and the mill wheel was still, which usually drowned the voice of the brook,—I must have been falling into a sound sleep, when the rippling changed into the silver laughter of infant voices, and then a murmuring and consulting, breaking into faint acclamations, as of a busy throng, babbling, in an under tone, of some mysterious plot against some one they were fearful of waking. And then I felt myself borne away on little undulating arms, too far gone in sleep to resist, and then dancing and flickering on tiny waves, and lulled by their liquid echoes, till I lost myself in a deep sleep, which seemed to be pillowed on a sense of being carried on and on into a realm of silence, and then being lifted and carried, as on a living bier, with new senses waking clearer and clearer, as if naked in the delicate air of a new life, and at last waking and finding myself alone in an open space of forest, shadowed by trees of an unknown grace, and lighted by magic vistas where the distance found its last repose on the summits of sun-lit mountains.

"A perpetual afternoon shaded that sward of loveliest green, alive with fairest flowers, with not a breath of air stirring the heavy leaves; and if the slender stems of the undergrowth waved ever so lightly, it was with an almost imperceptible motion of their own. Yet was there not at that moment the same slight movement in every shrub and leaf? and where were those who had brought me hither? Was it a whispering I heard

behind me? There was no one there, but, gradually, as in the silence of the night the air is oppressed by the sense of some one being in the room, I became aware of being surrounded by invisible beings, who were holding their breaths with a general hush, that I might not know they were there. In a moment every thing lighted up with the thought that I was within the charmed circle of the fairies, and a mysterious influence from something close at hand brought back the most distant recollection of my childhood, as the magic word that would compel the fairies to appear. A faint perfume drew my eyes downward, and at my feet was the little violet, my first and earliest love. I stooped to pick it, but an '*Ah*!' of horror stayed my hand, which already held the stem. 'No,' I said, shutting my eyes as if to enclose the dear recollection of my childhood safe from harm, 'thy life is more to me than to know all.' When I opened my eyes the violet was gone, and in my hand I held a wand, as if a line from the purple edge of a rainbow.

"I waved it around my head, and every thing stood clear and perfect in a light that seemed to crystallize with distinctness the texture of every flower and leaf. I waved it again, and it was as if a page of Hebrew had become the most domestic English.

"Was not this enough?

"But I waved it a third time, and Heavens! every tree, and shrub, and flower had disappeared, and in the place of each was a human figure, but one transfigured into a form of inconceivable majesty, grace, or loveliness. But each stood fixed as by its root to its place, and I thought, 'Could I only say the word that would set them free!' A voice whispered in my ear, 'The free only can set free.' Then I felt for the first time how heavy I was in the presence of those graceful creatures, and my weight seemed to sink down into a root that fastened my feet to the ground.

"Was there still another set of fairies, invisible to the eye? I felt myself lifted by unseen arms, and could feel harmonious breaths around me like an atmosphere which I was inhaling through every pore, and which was swelling every fibre with a thrill of lightness, until I only touched the ground like a bird ready to fly. I raised the wand, and a strain from an

unseen band lifted on its wings the whole assembly surrounding the green, who nodded, and waved, and swayed with the opening movement as if catching the time of a tune to which they were to dance; the flute and the violin catching, like a flame, from one to the other, the tortuous wreathing of the bass-viol, with labored ease possessing their limbs, and the bugle and the trumpet, with a gush of melody in which all the rest joined, leaving their graceful heads floating in the loveliest confusion of harmony. Then a pause fell like a shadow, pointing across the greensward; and when it ended, faint as figures in a deep valley, burst forth a chorus of tiny voices, and there were the fairies themselves, in groups on groups, and wreath involved in wreath, dancing to their own song, countless as the fireflies in a meadow on a summer evening.

"'If I were only small enough to dance with them!' said I, listening so intently that I felt myself contracting into the compass of their song, and the wand diminishing in my hand, till there we were, myself and the loveliest little fairy queen dancing together through the mazes of the tiny troop, bewildered by the grace of the faces that passed us like dreams of beauty, and the soft crush of bewitching dresses that wafted, as they swept by us, such dizzy perfumes as only the bee or the butterfly could imagine. The songs to which we danced, every group singing a different one, and yet all in harmony, were without words; but our feet, pattering, innumerable as the drops of a silver rain, or the softest piano and flute accompaniment, echoed with their meaning, and every step was the understanding of emotions, for which language had no name. For we were so slight and pure that there was no interval between the music and the meaning, but our forms, which were only the harmony and enjoyment of both, sparkling into life each moment our footsteps touched the ground.

"'The dance for thought, the waltz for love,' said my fairy queen, looking at me with velvet eyes, and wreathing her arms around my waist. Then we floated off on the violin accompaniment, that seemed to fly from under our feet at every step, gliding through the sinuous mazes of a movement interweaving and unfolding into newer and newer

combinations, till we swam in a delirium of uncomprehended harmony, buoyed up so lightly, as if on half-open wings, that our feet only occasionally touched the ground to remind us of the earth.

“'O, let us fly!' I exclaimed.

“'The fairies belong to the earth, like yourselves,' she answered; 'but would you learn the dance?'

“'O, yes; and I will love you and live with you forever!'

“'Till when?'

“'Till I have learned it, and can take it home with me.'

“'Dear child,' said she, 'the fairies have no homes but yours, and we can only come down to them on your feet. Without you we are only eyes without a smile. But if we cannot come down to you of ourselves, how happy are we when one comes to us who can carry us back with her! How did you come hither?'

“'I sailed up on the stream.'

“'Then take me down with you,' she said, sinking upon my face with a kiss, into which she dissolved like a mist, and I closed my eyes to clasp her to my heart forever.

“When I opened them, the stream was rippling at my feet, and my brother was raising his face from mine with a smile that left me in doubt if I was not still in Fairyland. 'Now tell me, Violet Eyes,' said he, 'all about the fairies.'

“'How do you know I have been there?' I asked.

“'Have you never heard that whoever looks first into the eyes of one who has been there, catches a glimpse of Fairyland? But tell me quick, before you forget. You know you promised to break the twigs as you went, to mark the place for me.'

“'O, I forgot all about it!' said I.

“'Never mind,' said he; 'but tell me what you remember.'

“So I told him all I could, and much more than I have told you now, for he had such a comical look on his face when I was describing the best part of it all,—after betraying me, too, as he had, into telling it, with the greatest appearance of interest,—that I resolved I never would tell it again; so you must blame him, and not me, if I have left the best part out.”

“O, we all know the best part of a story is always left out!” said Kate, “particularly by those who have taken the most pains to put every thing in. But there goes the school bell. I wonder if the fairies ever come down so far into the world as to visit the school room. Fancy Ella dancing with her fairy queen, with an 'Algebra' under one arm, and an 'Elements of Criticism' under the other.”

“There is nothing so heavy that the fairies cannot make it dance,” said Ella. “The trouble is to get their assistance. And what a capital story it would make,—the fairies coming at night and setting our books to waltzing on the school room floor! There is no end to the funny contrasts it suggests.”

“The best stories always come when it is too late to tell them,” said Anna.

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