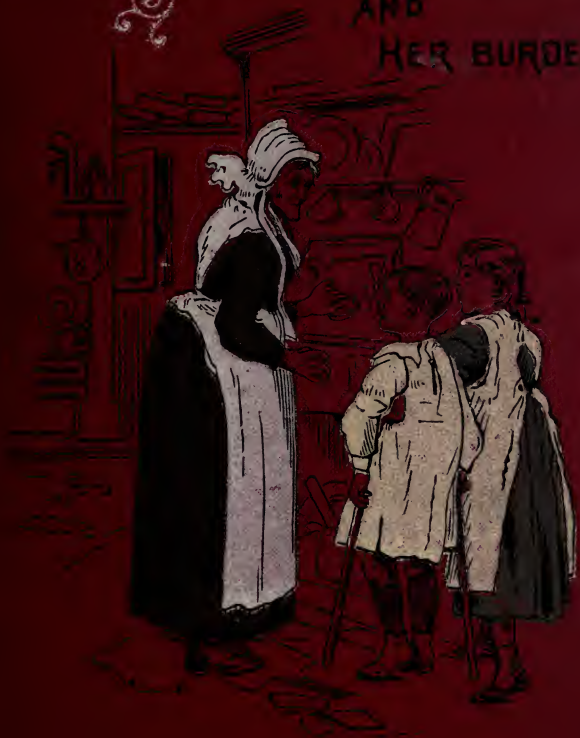
TAMSIN ROSEWARNE

AND HER BURDENS



NELLIE CORNWALL

Prize
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from

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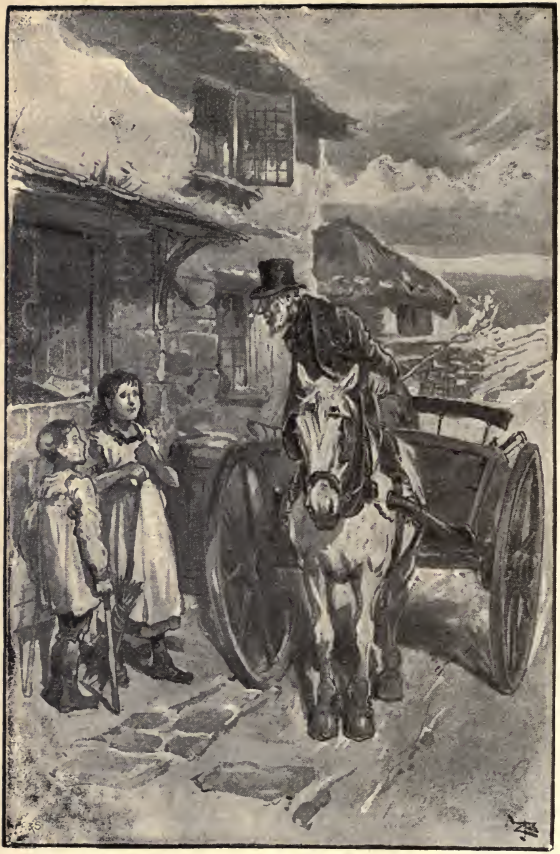
"Looking unto Jesus."



"THE BURDEN OF YOU CHILDREN WILL BE THE DEATH OF HER." (*p.* 13).

TAMSIN ROSEWARNE

AND HER BURDENS

BY

NELLIE CORNWALL

AUTHOR OF "TWICE RESCUED, OR THE STORY OF LITTLE TINO;" "HALLVARD HALVORSEN, OR THE AVALANCHE;" ETC.

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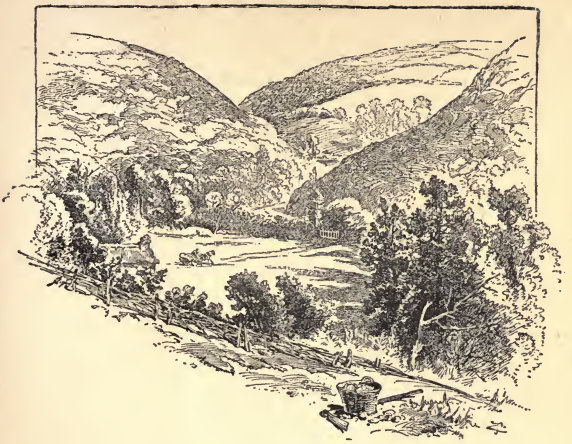

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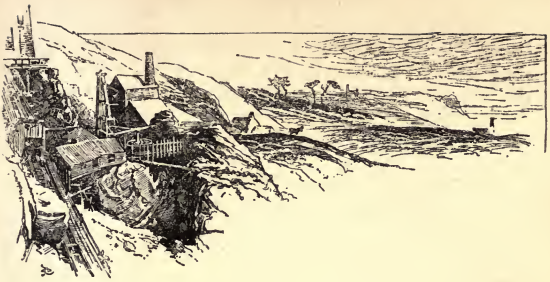


TAMSIN ROSEWARNE.

CHAPTER I.

TAMSIN ROSEWARNE BRINGS THE ORPHANS TO HER HOME.

ONE glorious afternoon some time ago, two children were sitting on the doorstep of a small granite cottage on one of the picturesque moors of Zennor, by the Cornish sea.

The elder of the children was a girl of eleven. She was big for her age, but not pretty, according to the recognised ideas of beauty. Her features were irregular, and her thick thatch of dark brown hair, which seemed to take a delight in falling wildly over her merry hazel eyes, was coarse, and her skin was as brown as a berry. But she was an interesting little creature, and a striking contrast to the quiet, delicate-looking little lad by her side. He was as fair as she was dark, and his face, framed in curls the colour of chestnuts, was lovely. His eyes were grey, beautiful and dreamy, and the long, almost black lashes that veiled them, made them look darker than they really were. His mouth, too, was

beautiful, but there were lines about the childish lips that told of suffering, sad to think of in one so young (he was two years his sister's junior), which, with a pair of crutches lying at his feet, explained the look of patient suffering and refinement in the tender little face.

The boy was suffering from hip-disease. This, the doctor to whom he had been taken said, was draining his life away.

These little ones were the orphaned grandchildren of an old woman called Tamsin Rosewarne, with whom they had been living for the past eight years in the granite cottage on the lonely moors. Their names were Alsey and Blaze, and they were born in the outskirts of St Blazey, after whose patron saint the boy was called. When he was a year old his father, John Rosewarne, a quarryman, was killed whilst working at Luxulian. His death was a fearful blow to his wife, who was young and delicate and who did not long survive him, and the two little orphans were taken in by a kind neighbour until the news could be sent to Zennor, to their only near relative, Tamsin Rosewarne, who, as soon as she heard of the friendless condition of her grandchildren, set out for St Blazey to bring them to her home. She travelled the greater part of the way on foot, and arrived there weary and foot-sore.

The little ones took to the old woman at once, and as for tiny Blaze, when she held him in her arms, he nestled his golden head on her bosom, and cried when she went out of his sight.

After she had sold all the furniture to pay the debts the poor young mother had incurred during her brief widowhood, and tied the children's little belongings into a large cotton handkerchief, she set her face homewards again with Blaze in her bosom, the three-year old Alsey slung in a *cowal*, or fish-basket, on her back, and the bundle on her arm. She trudged many miles on foot with her *burdens*, riding whenever she had the opportunity; and more than one kind driver, seeing

her so strangely laden, and taking compassion on her, gladly offered her a lift. At Hayle she was met by one of her neighbours, Miss Admonition Kernick, of Zennor Churchtown, in her donkey-cart, and soon found herself in her cottage on the moors. She often wondered afterwards how she managed to travel so far with two small children, and said the Good Lord must have given her strength for the journey.

Tamsin was a very poor woman, and a widow. Her husband, who had been a turf-cutter, had died several years before Alsey was born, and she made a scanty living by making and selling brooms, rush-mats, and other articles, the materials for which she could gather in the neighbourhood. She was as brave and true as she was poor, and took upon herself the care of her tiny grandchildren with a thankful heart. She was a woman of strong faith, and was confident that God, who she believed had sent her to bring the orphans to her humble home, would help her to work for them, and that He being the Father of the fatherless would not fail to send those little ones of His all they needed.

Tamsin was glad to have the company of the children, for her life, although a busy one, had become very lonely before taking them to live with her, and it did her good to watch their pretty ways and listen to their sweet young voices as she sat and worked, and her faith grew even more simple in teaching them of the Loving Father.

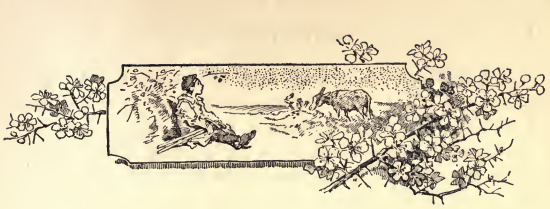
We need scarcely say that Alsey and Blaze were well cared for, and up to this time had lacked nothing that was really needful for them; and if the food they ate was plain it was nourishing, and the clothes they wore though old-fashioned kept them warm.

But the old woman had to work early and late to support them, and denied herself many a meal that they might have enough. She had no friend who could afford to give her anything towards the maintenance of the orphans, and even if she had we doubt if she would have accepted it. She was a very inde-

pendent old soul, as independent as she was poor, and "did not like to be beholden to anybody, even for a crust," she said, quite forgetting in her strong independence that the Son of God, who took upon Himself our flesh and became a poor Man for our sakes, accepted that which was needful for His body's sake.

Still, we admire her brave spirit, which shrank from pauperism as she would have shrunk from an adder in her path; for, alas! there is too little of it in these days. Tamsin was deemed very proud by her acquaintances, but they admired her all the same. Before she took upon herself the burden of the children, she had put by a small sum, the savings of almost a lifetime, against the day when her strength should fail her, for the bare idea of the Union was a terror to her; but most of it was already spent in medicines for poor little Blaze who, three or four years after she had brought him to Zennor, began to suffer with his hip. So she was afraid as to what would become of them, if the time ever came when she could no longer earn bread for herself and the little ones; for who among us does not sometimes lose heart when the little hoard of silver or gold put by for a rainy day gradually disappears and poverty stares us in the face?

But Tamsin, when she was very much cast down, would open her small bag and show her Lord how her little store was decreasing, "and tell him her fears for the future." She would gather strength in the simple act of laying before Him her troubles, and brace herself up in His own most gracious words which He whispered in her ear:—"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;" and she tried to trust her Heavenly Father's care—not only for that day, but for *all the days*, and went about her work with a strong heart.



CHAPTER II.

MR ABNER SWEET.

"WILL grannie be here soon?" asked Blaze, as he sat looking down the road.

"No, not for a long time yet," answered Alsey. "Our old donkey is slow, and is never in a hurry coming back from St Ives. I hope grannie has sold those pie-dish mats, because you made them," she said, gazing fondly at the tiny cripple. "I think they were made beautifully, quite as well as those grannie did last week, and you've got such small hands too. You know what she is going to bring home to you for making the mats?"

"Yes," returned the boy, "a penny whistle."

"You will let me blow it, won't you, Blaze?"

"Yes," he answered again. "I love music; don't you? The moors are full of it, hark!" and the little lad, lifting his finger, pointed to a trembling black speck in the azure sky, where a lark was shaking such a delicious flood of song from its tiny throat that it filled the moors with gladness and Blaze's heart with delight.

"It is a lark singing; I wish we could make such beautiful music."

"*You* can," returned Alsey, giving her brother an admiring glance. "Grannie says you sing *beautifully*, and make sweeter music than the birds. And Miss Admonition at Churchtown told her that whenever she hears you singing she thinks of the angels. There are

two larks making a nest not far from the donkey's stable," she said, after a pause, as Blaze had not noticed her complimentary remarks on his voice. "They will be laying creamy little eggs in it when it is finished, and then there will be dear little baby birds for them to feed."

"Will you show me the place where the birds are making?" asked the boy eagerly.

"I will, to-morrow. We mustn't leave the house now, for grannie said we must not until she came. She won't be here before six o'clock."

"What time is it now?"

"Only half-past four," answered Alsey, turning her head and looking at a clock that stood against the wall facing the door. "When it is a quarter after five I must bring in some furze from the shed and light the fire."

"There is a cart coming," cried Blaze.

"It is Mr Abner Sweet's cart, and Mr Abner his very own self," said Alsey, standing up and shading her eyes with her hands, and gazing down the road. "Whatever does *he* want? I don't like him, do you, Blaze?"

"No. He always speaks crossly to us, and finds fault with grannie for bringing us to Zennor. I wonder what for?"

"I don't know," Alsey returned, with a nod of her shaggy head. "Miss Admonition said he was sweet on grannie before we came here to live, but he is sour enough now. He thought we ought to have been sent to the Union, instead of coming here."

As the little maid spoke, a light, roomy cart drawn by a white horse, out of whose skin the bones protruded—but whether from semi-starvation or extreme old age it was hard to tell—stopped before the door, and an old man, as lean as his horse, turned to the children and said abruptly—

"Where is your grandmother?"

"Gone into St Ives to sell brooms, sir," Alsey answered.

"What business had she to go to St Ives? I have come out here to buy a kneeler."

"To get money for us," Alsey said, replying to his first words, and meekly fixing her eyes on the ground.

"Grannie did not know you wanted a kneeler, Mr Sweet," put in Blaze's soft, musical voice.

"Then she ought to have known," growled the old fellow.

"We'll tell grannie that, Mr Sweet," Alsey ventured to say.

"Hold your tongue, Miss Forthy; you are as forthright as a mare's infant. Little maidens like you should be seen, and not heard," grumbled Mr Sweet. "Tamsin was nearly always at home before you two little good-for-nothings came to Zennor to wear the shoes off her feet and the flesh off her bones. That little chap," pointing with his stick at poor little Blaze, "will be a heavy drag on the old woman. She isn't so young as she once was, and the folks say that the burden of you children will be the death of her, and I believe what they say."

"Grannie says she was never so happy and strong as she is now she has us," spoke up Alsey, raising her bright face to the sour visage of the man who seemed to take a grim delight in wounding these little ones.

Mr Sweet was by no means a prepossessing looking person; his face was very narrow and long. Alsey declared he "washed it every day in vinegar." His sour face was an index to his character, and he had not one sweet spot in his nature, in spite of his sweet-sounding name. He was a bachelor, and, long before the death of Tamsin's son and daughter-in-law, had expressed a hope of making her his wife, but the arrival of the orphans had upset his matrimonial intentions, at least so far as Tamsin was concerned. He hated children, and would not have had one in his house for all the Tamsins in the world. He had a grudge against Alsey and Blaze for having come between him and their grandmother, whom he greatly respected—

more on account of her industry and thrifty ways than anything else, and he believed it would have saved him many pounds a year if he could have made her his wife. So, whenever he saw the children, which, mercifully for them, was not often, he took the opportunity of saying something that left its sting behind. He was well-to-do, and owned and farmed an estate called Trebergas, situated in the parish of Morvah, which bounded Zennor on the west. It was said that he was as near as the grave, and never used even a tallow candle to light himself to bed, even in the darkest night in winter. He lived by himself, and his only domestic was an old woman who gloried in the name of Amanda Rowse, and who was as sour and as miserly as her master.

Mr Sweet's unkind remarks had stung the sensitive soul of the crippled child more hurtfully than ever words had stung before, and the pain about the tender little mouth, and the grieved look in the great grey eyes, spoke plainly how deeply he was wounded.

"The ghastly old man," cried Alsey, doubling her fist at him as he turned his horse round and drove back the way he came. "I'll tell grannie of him as soon as she comes home. He sha'n't have a kneeler—no—not if we had a hundred thousand millions! I wish grannie didn't rent this dear little house from him. And—and——"

Alsey's tongue had gone the length of its tether, and the anger died out of her eyes, as she sat down beside her brother, and, putting her arm around his neck, buried her face in his curls.

How quiet was little Blaze, how white and stricken the small face, and how full of suffering the beautiful grey eyes!

"Blaze, don't you look like that. What's the matter?" she said, looking at him and gently shaking him.

"Shall we *really* kill grannie?" asked the boy in a low, distressed voice.

"Of course we sha'n't," she answered promptly.

"What does a burden mean, Alsey?"

"I don't quite know, except that it is something to carry."

"We are grannie's burdens, ar'n't we?"

"The Zennor people say we are. But I don't think grannie minds it at all. The other day she said that the *heaviest* burden was light to love, and grannie loves us *dearly*, Blaze. She said only last Sunday that we were her little blessings and comforters. We mustn't mind what Mr Abner says. Grannie told us to let his words go into one ear and out at the other, as the waves do through the holes in the caverns."

But the little cripple would not be comforted.

There was a long silence, and Alsey, who was a light-hearted child, and in whose heart anger could not linger long, had apparently forgotten what the crabbed old man had said, and was trying to catch a sunbeam that lay on a leaf of a dandelion growing beside the cottage door, but the tiny hands of her little brother lay folded on his lap, and his beautiful face was uplifted to the sky.

"The Lord Jesus had a burden to carry, hadn't He?" he asked suddenly, looking at his sister.

"Oh dear! the pretty sunbeam won't let me catch it," cried the little girl, not heeding Blaze's question. "I b'lieve sunbeams are the jumping ropes of the small people (fairies). Perhaps, if we were to keep quite still for a whole hour, we should see the dear little creatures jumping and skipping. Miss Admonition told me that they can't be seen unless we have a four-leaved clover in our hand. Would you like to see them, Blaze?"

"Yes," he answered.

"Wouldn't it be nice if we were rich?" asked the little maid, as a thought struck her.

"We can't be rich, because we are poor," returned Blaze, looking in surprise at his sister.

"Yes, we can," she said, tossing back her dark locks.

"How?"

"I'll tell you. Miss Admonition said that the fairies know where the crocks of gold are hidden (people used to put their money under the ground when they went off to the wars), and that if we caught one he would be sure to tell us where the crocks are, just to let him go back to his mammie. We should be very rich," she said, "and have more money than we know what to do with. When we have got the gold we won't let grannie work hard any more, will we, nor let her sell brooms?"

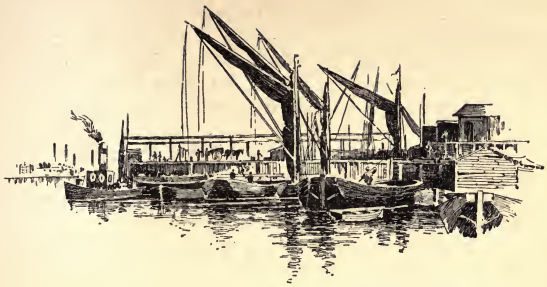
"No," answered the little cripple.

"And, Blaze," cried the small maiden, as if already in possession of unlimited wealth, "I'll buy you a donkey-cart like Miss Admonition's, that won't hurt you a bit to ride in, and our old Roger shall have a new harness, and we'll ask grannie to take us to Penzance to see the shops; won't that be splendid?"

"I suppose so," he answered doubtfully.

"And we will have fine times then," cried Alsey, getting excited. "Every day shall be a feast day, like Feastentide, and we'll have ducks for dinner and cream cakes for tea. We will buy this cottage from Mr Sweet (we shall be able to call him Mr Sour then, and not be afraid to do so), and build new rooms to it, and we will keep cows, only we won't starve them like Mr Sweet does his, and we will be as happy as the small people themselves. And——Why, Blaze," she cried, stopping short, and gazing down the road that led to the Church-town and to the picturesque old town of St Ives, renowned not only for its funny old rhyme, but for its grand cliff scenery, "is that one of the small people riding up the moor?"

Blaze turned to where his sister pointed, and saw a black pony, which, in the distance, looked like a liliputian steed.



CHAPTER III.

GENTRY.

THE children watched with eager eyes the small pony cantering up the road, and, as it drew near, Alsey saw it was a boy and not a fairy that bestrode the little animal.

"It isn't a fairy," she said, in a tone of disappointment, "it is *only* a boy after all on a black pony. But it is a beautiful pony," consoling herself. "Oh, look, Blaze, there is a carriage just come in sight, and prancing horses!"

"Where?" asked her brother.

"There, Carn Galva way. I believe they are gentry come to stop at the Falcon's Crag."

"How do you know?"

"Miss Admonition told grannie that there were gentry coming, and that her niece has been to the Big House cleaning up and putting the place straight for them."

The little ones grew very excited as they watched the carriage and the pony galloping on in front, and, as the latter drew near the cottage, Alsey burst out again, waving her arms in her excitement.

"What a lovely pony! he is as black and shining as our best shoes. And see what a lovely long tail he has—right down to the ground!"

"And hasn't the boy who is riding the little horse a funny dress?" asked Blaze, his eyes fixed on the advancing pony, on which was seated a young lad in a Highland kilt and bonnet.

Before his sister could reply, the boy dashed up to them, and pulled his steed up suddenly, causing it to stand on its hind legs, to the terror and yet admiration of the little peasant children on the steps.

The youthful horseman was a boy about three years older than Alsey. He was a handsome lad, with a dark face and clear cut features, of a slight build, but well made, and he sat his fiery little steed like a trooper, the dress he wore setting off his bright young beauty. His name was Howard, and he was the only son of Lord and Lady Staversworth. His mother and his cousin, little Lady Marjorie Darmont, a motherless child of his father's sister, were come to spend the summer at the Falcon's Crag at Zennor. Lady Staversworth, his mother, was not in good health, and her physician had strongly advised her to try what the Cornish air would do for her; and, as her husband was about to start for Russia, and she was not well enough to accompany him, she had been glad to take the advice of her medical man, and was now on her way to the Crag (Zennorites generally called it the Great House), which was built on the high ground at Pendour, facing the sea, and which she had taken for the summer and autumn.

"Would you kindly tell me if this is the way to Pendour?" asked the young gentleman, politely doffing his hat to Alsey.

"Yes, sir; straight on through Churchtown and out to Pendour," gasped Alsey, dropping a curtsey.

"Thank you," said the young stranger. "I am glad we are on the right road," and his dark eye rested with a pitying gaze on Blaze's little face, and then turning the pony's head he galloped back to meet the carriage, which was slowly advancing towards him.

"We are on the right road, mother," he shouted. "I say, isn't it glorious here," pointing with his silver-

handled whip to the wide sweep of moorland before him, backed by Carn Galva—a great granite-crowned hill rising some 800 feet above the level of the sea, gorgeous beyond words with the bloom of the furze, above which in many places were blocks of granite showing so white in the full sunshine as almost to dazzle the eyes; and away as far as eye could reach lay the heather, now beginning to open their beautiful rose-pink and purple bells, and which the afternoon sun was throwing up against the soft green of the turf and broom. Here and there were great banks and rounded hillocks almost smothered in brambles and honeysuckle, which later on in the season would make the moors a marvel of beauty and fragrance. And not far from where the carriage stood (it was now pulled up to allow the ladies in it to enjoy the glorious view) a small stream like a thread of silver twisted and twirled in and out amongst the granite boulders cushioned with variegated lichen and moss, and sang its little song as it did so; and on the ground where it made its ripple and its music the Cornish money-wort spread its delicate leaves.

"It is the loveliest bit of moorland scenery I have seen for some time," said Lady Staversworth, looking about her, "and the air is so balmy, and yet so bracing, I feel better already," she said, with a fond motherly glance at her handsome son.

They did not at all resemble each other, the mother and her boy. She was small and fair, and her face was rather plain, but exceedingly sweet and pleasant looking.

"I am *so* glad you decided to come to Cornwall, mamma," cried the lad. "It is such a change from London; don't you agree with me, Marjorie?" he asked, looking down on the upturned face of a small girl about Blaze's age, who was sitting by Lady Staversworth's side nursing a large flaxen-haired doll.

Lady Marjorie was a pretty child, and the sweet face that peeped from a large white sun-bonnet was quite as

lovely in its way as the little cripple's who still sat on the doorsteps a few yards from the carriage watching them, but her cheeks were rounder, and the soft fair skin wore a look of health which his did not.

"Why don't you answer me, Marjorie?" said the boy impatiently.

"I am not sure if I shall like it here or not, Howard," she returned at length, gazing wistfully over the flower-covered moors. "There are no shops here."

"Nor any doctors," chimed in Miss Thonger, little Marjorie's governess, a tall, thin lady in spectacles.

"Not any doctors!" ejaculated the boy. "Whatever will poor Marjorie do if one of her large family of dolls should have a fainting fit or get scarlatina and no physician to call in?" he said, with mocking gravity, which made his cousin's sweet little face grow crimson under her bonnet.

"What a tease you are, Howard," said Lady Staversworth, shaking her head reprovingly at her boy.

"Howard forgets that my dolls will benefit by the Cornish air as well as ourselves," said her small ladyship, in a quaint little voice.

"Then I hope Lady Betty and Lady Susan will not get a pain in their dear little——I beg your pardon," cried the lad, "or the butterflies," he said, catching Miss Thonger's eyes fixed reprovingly on him. "Oh, what was I going to say—their dear little jaws," he cried smacking his whip at a red admiral flying over a bed of nettles.

Do look at that delicate-looking child on the step of that quaint cottage up there," said Lady Staversworth, pointing to Blaze. "He looks as if he were in need of medical skill in spite of this bracing air. What an exquisite face he has! It reminds me of a picture, by one of the old masters, which I saw in a church in Rome three years ago."

"I like the bright, eager face of the girl," said Miss Thonger; "what a picture they both make!"

They do, indeed" responded Lady Staversworth.

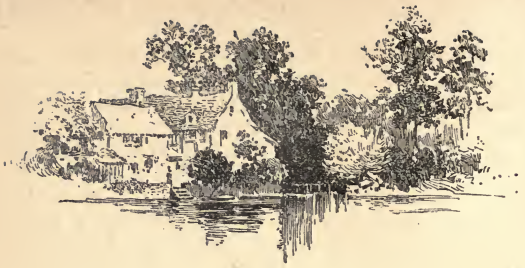
"The quaint smock and breeches the boy wears suit him, and the girl's elfin locks, untidy as they are, make her quite a picture. I must ask permission to sketch them and the cottage."

They certainly were a picturesque little pair, and made quite a picture, as the ladies had remarked. The girl was simply dressed in a tinker's blue frock, low-necked, and short band-like sleeves, and over it a pinafore, white as blossom with bleaching. Blaze's dress was much more striking: he had on a smock which was as white as Alsey's pinafore and prettily honeycombed; nankeen breeches, buttoned at the knee with tiny steel buttons; blue worsted stockings, which his grandmother had knitted in the long winter evenings, and low-heeled shoes. Tamsin was very old-fashioned, and believed that what became her brothers and sisters was also becoming to her grandchildren. Before she was married she got her living by smock-making, and it pleased her old eyes to see Blaze in a smock of her own handiwork now, and his breeches were cut from a pair her son had worn when he was a child!

Lady Staversworth smiled at the children as they passed the cottage, but they did not notice it. They had eyes only for the handsome boy on the pony and the solemn coachman and footman.

"Oh, Blaze," said Alsey, with a long-drawn breath, as the carriage disappeared, "didn't the gentleman look elegant and the boy too? I expect they are quite as beautiful as the small people. Won't grannie be vexed she wasn't at home?"

For a long time the children could talk of nothing else but the strangers, and the former quite forgot in her excitement how quickly time was passing until the clock struck five, which reminded her of her duties, and getting up she ran into the cottage to light the fire.



CHAPTER IV.

TRUE RICHES.

AN hour later an old woman leading a donkey came down the road towards the cottage. She looked very tired and walked slowly. She quickened her steps, however, when a turn in the road brought the cottage into view, and the donkey pricked up his ears and hee-hawed, which brought Alsey and her brother to the door. The former ran up the road to meet her, and the small cripple hobbled after her on his crutches.

"God bless them, the darlings," murmured the old woman, as she saw the children's eager haste and the smile of welcome on their faces.

"You have come back, grannie," cried Alsey, as her grandmother stooped her tall form to kiss her.

"And you have sold all you took to St Ives," shouted Blaze, as he drew near and saw that the donkey had nothing on him but an empty sack. "We shall soon have to go and pick broom again."

"We shall, indeed," cried the old grandmother, folding her arms about the boy, and printing a fond kiss on his lips. "God has blessed me to-day; I have sold every mat and broom I took to St Ives. Miss Screech, who lives down on the quay, told me I had better make haste and make more."

"Did you sell *my* mats?" asked the boy anxiously.

"Yes; and Miss Screech was delighted with them. She not only took them, but sent you home a paper of bull's-eyes, for being so handy with your needle. I will give it to you, and your whistle, in a minute. I will just put Roger in his stable, and then I will be in."

"The kettle is boiling, grannie," cried Alsey.

"I am glad of that. I want a dish of tea badly," said the old woman, leading the donkey round the cottage.

The stable was away from the house, and stood on the high ground, commanding a splendid view of the sea.

When the old woman returned to the cottage she found the table laid for supper, and Alsey waiting to pour the water into the teapot.

"You are looking dreadfully tired," she said, as her grandmother sank into an arm-chair by the window.

"Are you more tired than usual?" asked Blaze anxiously, Mr Abner Sweet's thoughtless words coming back and again taking possession of his mind.

"Why, dear?" inquired Tamsin, noticing the worried look in his ingenuous little face.

"I don't like you to get tired, grannie; I wish I wasn't small and hadn't a bad hip, for then I could go to St Ives and sell brooms for you."

"Bless your kind little heart!" ejaculated the old woman. "I wish you were well and strong, for your own sake as well as for mine. But the good Lord Jesus has thought fit to lay a cross on your tiny shoulders to carry after Him, instead of letting you sell brooms for your old grannie. You must be content to be a *little cross-bearer* for Christ, who died on the Cross for you. It is far harder to *bear* than to *do*, my brave little man," she added, seeing the troubled look still on his face.

"If I could only help you as well as be His little cross-bearer, I wouldn't mind so much," said the child, with a sob in his young voice, laying his thin white hand on her large brown one—brown and horny with hard work.

"Why, Blaze, my darling, what has come over you?" she cried, looking into his eyes. "It isn't often you are like this."

"It is that nasty old Mr Abner Sweet!" said Alsey, putting the teapot on the table, which was covered with a coarse table cloth. "He made him feel sad."

"What! has Mr Abner been here to-day?" asked the old woman in surprise.

"Yes, grannie. He came for a kneeler, and was as cross as an old cat when he found that you were gone to St Ives. *I can't bear him.*"

"Hush, cheeld (child); you must not talk in that strain," said Tamsin reprovingly.

"Well, but, grannie," persisted Alsey, "he says such nasty things to us, and I don't like him to hurt Blaze."

"What did he say to wound you to-day?" inquired the old woman, again looking into the small cripple's expressive eyes.

"He said that I should always be a drag on you, and that the burden of us children would be your death. We don't want to *kill* you, grannie," and the sensitive child buried his face in her lap and sobbed as if his little heart would break.

Tamsin's old eyes flashed, and if Mr Abner Sweet had been anywhere near at that moment he would have had a word from her! She was naturally very quick-tempered, as was also Alsey, and felt keenly anything touching her grandchildren, whether an unkindness or otherwise. It was some minutes before the anger died out of her eyes, but, as soon as she could command her temper, she gathered the sobbing boy in her arms and comforted him as only good old grannies and tender mothers know how.

"My Blaze must think of Jesus' Cross and Passion when thoughtless people speak unkindly and say things that are not true," she said softly, when the little fellow was quieted somewhat. "Evil-minded men said many a taunting word to the Blessed Saviour. That was a

part of *His* Cross, as perhaps it will be a part of yours, my tender lamb. It is true that you and Alsey are grannie's burdens, but she would not be without them for all the gold in the Bank of England. Why!" she cried playfully, pushing back the waves of chestnut hair from the lad's broad brow, "two mites like you and Alsey would not break a grasshopper's back, much less *mine*," and she laughed merrily, much to his relief.

"Grannie!" cried Alsey impatiently, "the tea is going cold and you haven't taken off your bonnet yet, and I have boiled an egg for your supper, and warmed the pie."

"An egg!" exclaimed the old woman. "I shall soon be as fat as a pig, with so much good living," touching a small egg which the child had put on the table in front of her, with pretended delight. But her eyes showed that she was troubled on account of Blaze, whose little face was looking very white after his outburst of tears.

"It is the egg Blaze was keeping for his Sunday's dinner," said the girl in a whisper. "He *would* make me boil it, because he wanted you to be stronger to bear your burdens."

"Bless you both!" cried the old grandmother.

She took off her bonnet and shawl and asked Alsey to take them upstairs.

When the child returned she found her grandmother eating the egg, her brother sitting on a small stool in the window-seat watching her, and looking as happy as if there were no cross-grained, vinegar-faced old men in the world.

The room where they sat—it was the only room, downstairs—was humble but very clean, and the lime-ash floor strewn with yellow sand. There was no lack of furniture in it, and everything was good of its kind. The most noticeable thing was a large dresser, painted red, the shelves of which were filled with most of the crockery the old grandmother possessed. The walls of the room were white, and threw out the dresser in

strong relief, and also a hanging cupboard, black with age, which was suspended from a crook over the table in front of the window at which Tamsin and Blaze were sitting at supper. In a corner facing the door was the grandfather's clock before mentioned, and by the clock a heap of dried rushes, reed-grass (Tamsin called them spires), and a quantity of blackberry brambles. This part of the room she called the work-shop, and the rushes, grass, and brambles were the materials for the mats and other things she made to sell.

Blaze was not hungry, and scarcely touched the bread and milk which Alsey had made for him, and, although she told him that she had put a *pinch* of sugar into his basin, he only toyed with the spoon. She had a splendid appetite, and ate not only her own share but her brother's as well, and declared she was still hungry.

When they had finished supper Tamsin gave the boy the whistle and sweets that had been sent to him, which he shared with Alsey, and the latter remembered to tell the old woman about the "gentry." Blaze's tears and the business of getting supper had driven all thought of them out of her mind, but now she was eager to give a full description of them, and did so, much to Tamsin's amusement. After she had finished, she added, "and the boy was such a nice boy, grannie, and spoke so soft and pretty when he asked me to tell him the way, didn't he, Blaze?"

Blaze nodded.

"They are the gentry who Miss Admonition said were coming to live in the Great House at Pendour, ar'n't they, grannie?"

"I suppose they must be," she returned, smiling at the excited child. "I was told in Miss Screech's shop that they were very grand folks—people of title, in fact."

"What are people of title?" asked Blaze.

"Folks that have lords and ladies put before their

names, I suppose. But I am ignorant in matters like that, so I may be wrong."

"Is the boy who rode the pony a lord?" Alsey asked.

"I don't know; but a woman who was in Miss Screech's shop said he was a son of a lord, and that being a lord's son made him an honourable. The Honourable Howard Staversworth she called him."

"What a long name!" Alsey cried, opening her eyes to their widest extent. "Was he christened that?"

"I am sure I don't know. But neither he nor his name concerns us. It is time I milked the goat."

"But, grannie, how did the folks in St Ives know what the little gentleman was called, when he came to Zennor only this afternoon?" asked the girl, catching hold of her grandmother's gown as she was going out. The gentry came the way we come from Penzance."

"Their servants arrived at Pendour two or three days ago," answered the old woman, "and some of them have been into St Ives, and I suppose they told folks about them. I met Miss Admonition's niece as I was coming up the Stennack. She said that the gentry were expected to-day sometime. What else does my curious little grandchild want to learn about the great folks?" she asked kindly, laying her hand on the child's rough head, and smiling half sadly. "Don't let them fill your head, darling," as she did not speak. "Rich people like them don't take notice of poor folks like us."

Alsey did not like the gentle rebuke, and there was quite a cloud on her usually sunny face as her grandmother left the cottage, followed by Blaze. As we have said, she was quick-tempered, and they had not gone many minutes before the cloud had vanished, and she ran out after them, and found them up by the donkey's stable, where the old woman was milking the goat, and Blaze watching the milk frothing into the pail.

Tamsin kept a goat, which supplied her and her grandchildren with milk the greater part of the year.

She also kept fowls, and they and their eggs helped to pay the rent of the cottage.

When Nan—as the goat was called—was milked and stabled, Tamsin and the children stood watching the sun going down behind the carns.

"How beautiful the sea is looking this evening," remarked Blaze. "Sundown makes me think of the angels; and when I see the gold and the crimson light moving quickly across the sea, I think it must be flashes from their lovely wings."

"Sundown makes *me* think of the crock of gold the small people have hidden away under the ground," said Alsey.

"What does sundown remind you of?" asked Blaze, looking up at his grandmother.

"Of *Him* who made all things, cheeld," she replied, smiling into his delicate little face. "It also reminds me of the riches we have in Him," and her eyes wandered over the hills of gorse behind her, the moors and hills to the left of her, and the sea in front of her, all gloriously golden in the rich light of the setting sun.

"*We* ar'n't rich, grannie," cried Alsey abruptly. "We are *dreadfully* poor."

"Are we, dear? I did not know that," said the old woman quietly. "Nobody is poor whom God has made rich with the knowledge of Himself."

"Grannie," cried the small maid again, not noticing the old lady's remark, "Miss Admonition told me the other day that there are crocks *heaped full of gold* in our moors somewhere. She said, too, that the small people know where they are, and that if I were lucky enough to find a four-leaved clover I should be able to see the fairies and get the gold."

"I don't think it kind of Miss Admonition to fill your head with such foolishness," returned the old woman, "especially when you are so eager to listen to tales that are not true; and I can't imagine what a little maid like you can want with crocks of gold, even if it were possible to have them."

"Why, grannie, we should be as rich as the grand folks we saw this afternoon, and have whatever we wanted—ride in a carriage, and eat our own eggs and fowls instead of selling them, and you should be a lady *every day*, and never soil your hands with work. We would keep a servant, and be as happy as the small people who dance in the moonshine——"

Tamsin laughed, and said "she should be the unhappiest old body in the world if she could not do her own work, and toil for her little grandchildren." Then, seeing a look of discontent on the child's expressive little face, she added gravely—

"Do you *really* want to be rich, cheeld?"

"*Of course* I do, grannie."

"You can, my dear."

"How?" asked the little maid eagerly.

"The Lord Jesus says—'I counsel thee to buy of Me *gold* tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich.'"

"Why, grannie, will Jesus *really* give me gold?" exclaimed Alsey, clapping her hands, and dancing at the thought of it.

"He will indeed; and His gold will make you rich *for ever more*."

"But I haven't any money to buy Jesus' gold," said the child wistfully.

"It can be had *without money and without price*. He knows you are only a poor little maid."

"Does He? I am glad He will let me buy the gold for nothing. Perhaps if He has a lot He will give me a pinaforeful," and Alsey's hazel eyes glistened. "I'll ask Him this very evening to give me some."

"Don't you want to have some of the Lord Jesus' gold, grannie?" asked Blaze.

"Yes, darling. But He has already given me some, and I am very rich—as rich as anybody in Cornwall, perhaps," answered the old woman softly, and her fine old face lit up with joy, and her dark eyes grew tender and dreamy, as she gazed westward where the sun was going down in splendour into the sea.

She was a grand specimen of an old Cornish peasant woman, tall, and, notwithstanding her weight of years, upright as a dart. Her face was somewhat rugged in outline, her features were large, and her chin massive; but her face was softened by a pair of expressive eyes and snow-white hair, which lay in rich abundance under her white bordered cap—a fitting frame for so fine and homely a face—and the short clip, low-necked gown, the opening filled with a cotton kerchief, was in keeping with herself and humble surroundings.

Alsey opened her eyes and mouth in astonishment at her grandmother's words.

"You ar'n't telling stories, are you?" she asked.

"No, cheeld. I *am* rich. He has given Himself to me, and with Himself riches unspeakable."

"How funny grannie talks," whispered the girl to her brother, somewhat awed by the brightness on her face.

Blaze was also awed by the exalted look, but, as he gazed at her, something of her meaning broke on his mind, and turning to Alsey he said in a low voice:—"Grannie has got Jesus' gold in her heart, and it is *that* which makes her such a *dear* grannie, and so good. I shall ask Him to give me some too, to make me as *rich* and happy as she."

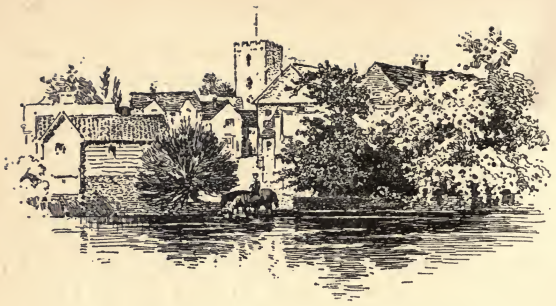
"I sha'n't," cried Alsey with a characteristic toss of her shaggy head. "It won't give us ducks, and donkey-carts, and carriages, beautiful frocks, cows, and new rooms to our house, or anything I want. No, Blaze, I *sha'n't* ask for Jesus' gold. I shall try and find a four-leaved clover, and get the small people to tell me where to find the money crocks, which will buy me everything nice, and I shall be happy in spite of what grannie said. I don't believe she is as rich as she says," and with another jerk of her head that sent the thick locks of hair dancing, she ran down the slope to the cottage, leaving the little cripple standing in amazement at her presumption in doubting their good old grandmother's word.

Tamsin still stood with her face towards the west.

She was so wrapt in her own thoughts that she had not heard Alsey's remarks nor noticed she had gone. Blaze hobbled close to her, and heard her repeating to herself the verses that have comforted and strengthened so many hearts in all ages: "'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sin, according to the riches of His grace.' Ah, I am rich indeed, although I haven't more than a pound in the world, for I have Him, my Lord, who will not fail to supply all my needs;" and then stooping her tall form, she took up the pail of milk.

"I forget myself when I watch the sunset," she said to Blaze. "Alsey has gone in, I suppose? We must go in too, for the dew is falling, and the sea-birds have gone to bed in the cliffs."

And down to the cottage they went, and when they had reached the door the great red sun had disappeared.



CHAPTER V.

TAMSIN ENTERTAINS STRANGERS.

ONE afternoon, a few days after Lady Staversworth's carriage had passed the moorland cottage, Tamsin was sitting opposite her open door making brooms. On a low stool beside her sat Blaze with a half-finished mat on his knee, a ball of red worsted, a skein of thread, a needle-case, and his whistle on a chair by his side. Alsey was not at home, her grandmother having sent her to Morvah, which was some little distance from where they lived. Tamsin had been broom-making, for an hour or more, and quite a pile of them lay at her feet. She had been accustomed to making brooms, rush-mats, and such-like articles from the time of her marriage, and was quite an expert at her trade, as she termed it, and she tied small twigs of heather together, and cut them into broom shape with her large scissors, or broom-shears, with a rapidity that was surprising.

Alsey and Blaze always looked forward to the days when their grandmother stayed at home to make brooms, not only because it was less lonely, but because they liked to listen to the stories she told them; and when they were finished they sang hymns, which made the time fly all too quickly for the children. They

were all three good singers, especially the small cripple, whose young voice was sweeter and fuller than the rejoicing larks that sang their rapture in the sky above the cottage. But the old woman had told no story this afternoon, because Alsey was not at home to hear it, and Blaze had been playing on his whistle instead of singing. He had whistled until he was tired, and had now taken up his mat and was working away with a right good will. It was pleasant to watch the boy, Tamsin thought, as she glanced up from her broom to look at him twining the reed round and round the mat, stitching it together with needle and thread. The work was simple enough in itself, but it was the skilful manner the lad did it that made it interesting. The mat grew rapidly under his small hands, and, as soon as the last row was finished, he threaded the needle with the worsted and worked a quaint pattern with it on the edge which made it not only artistic but more valuable. He had only lately begun to make these useful little articles, and it gladdened his heart that he could in this way earn money for his grandmother.

When the boy had finished his mat and the old woman her last broom, they suddenly became conscious of a change in the weather. The morning and the early part of the afternoon had been very bright. Blaze had sat on the doorstep the greater part of the morning listening to the larks and enjoying the lovely view, whilst his grandmother heated the small cloam, or earthenware oven, in the side of the chimney, where she baked her bread and pasties. The sun was shining brightly when Alsey set out for Morvah, and Tamsin, versed as she was in all the signs of the moors, had never dreamed of such a change in the weather in so short a time. The sky was dark and heavy with clouds, and the bushes were turning up their leaves as the wind now and again gave a low-breathed sigh and moan as it passed the cottage.

"Why, Blaze," cried the old woman gazing out of the open door and up at the lowering sky, "we are

going to have a storm, and Alsey is not back from Morvah yet! If it comes on to rain, as I believe it will, she will be caught in it," and getting up she went to the door and looked anxiously out. "I fear we are going to have a thunderstorm," she muttered to herself; "she ought to have been here by now. It is five minutes to four," glancing over her shoulder at the clock.

Everything was quiet on the moors except the sighing wind; the birds had stopped singing, and only a few faint chirps were heard from the furze-brake near the cottage.

As she stood on the step a flash of lightning lit up the dark sky, followed by a distant rumble of thunder.

"The good Lord hide my little dear under His sheltering Wings!" she ejaculated, still looking with anxious eyes over the moors; and then she went out of the cottage and gazed in the direction of Morvah and saw—not Alsey, but a lady and a child hastening towards her. It had begun to rain, and heavy drops were splashing on her cap.

"May we come into your cottage until the storm has passed?" asked the lady, as she and the little girl came to where Tamsin was standing.

"Yes, ma'am," she answered, dropping a curtsey, and she led the way to the cottage. "Wait a minute whilst I clear away the brooms and stuff for the little lady to pass in," she said as they entered. "The spires would hurt her small legs. There now, come along in, my dear," tossing the brooms, brambles, and reed into a corner, and hastening to pull out a green-painted elbow-chair for the lady to sit down.

"I hope we are not in your way," said the stranger, glancing at picturesque little Blaze, as she took the proffered seat.

"Indeed you ar'n't, ma'am," returned the old woman. "Here, my pretty, let me lift you into this chair," she said, looking at the child, who had a large wax doll in her arms. "Now, my dears, make yourselves as com-

fortable as you can. I hope my little grandcheeld, Alsey, is under shelter too."

"What! have you a grandchild out in this weather?" asked the lady.

"Yes, ma'am. I sent her to Morvah with a bee-hive, and she hasn't returned;" and again Tamsin's anxious eyes swept the moors. "The cheeld is terribly afraid of thunder and lightning," she said, turning again to her visitors. "I hope she will remember that the covering Wings of the Eternal are spread over her."

"Do you *believe* they are?" asked the lady, looking intently at the old woman, and observing for the first time what a beautiful old face she had.

"I do indeed, ma'am. I do not for a moment fear that my little granddaughter will come to any harm. I gave her and Blaze there," nodding at the boy, who was still working, and was peeping at the strangers out of the corner of his eyes (he saw they were the same he and Alsey had seen in the carriage), "into the Great Father's keeping before I left my chamber this morning. Why, the Bible says for our comfort and ease of mind, 'He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings thou shalt trust.'"

"Thank you for reminding me of God's protecting care," said the lady in a sweet low voice. "I was feeling anxious when I came into your cottage about my boy, who is on the moors somewhere."

As she was speaking another flash of lightning lit up the heavens, followed by a deafening peal of thunder, which made the little girl spring off her chair and rush into the lady's arms. But Blaze sat on his stool without a shadow of fear on his beautiful young face.

"The small lad," said Lady Staversworth (for it was she), looking at Blaze when the thunder had died away amongst the hills, "is evidently not afraid."

"He isn't, ma'am," returned Tamsin. "My Blaze is afraid of nothing but doing wrong and hurting me," she said, in a low voice. "He is one of those little ones who has a perfect trust in God."

More flashes of lightning and thunder-claps made further conversation impossible for sometime, and then came a downpour of rain, after which it cleared a little.

"You have a nice cottage here," remarked Lady Staversworth, when Tamsin had shut the door to keep out the rain, which she did not like doing, as it was like shutting Alsey out, she thought. "I was struck with the quaintness of its exterior as we drove by here a week ago, and I find the interior is almost as quaint," she said, looking round. "I shall ask permission to sketch your cottage some day."

"You can, ma'am," returned Tamsin, wondering what the lady meant. "She won't do anything I shouldn't like," she said to herself. "Her face is too sweet for that. I wonder if she is one of the gentlefolks from the Great House? She can't be *the* lady herself, I suppose, because she is dressed so plain, but she is a *real* lady, whoever she is."

The rain continued to fall heavily, and the shrieking wind flung it against the diamond-shaped window-panes.

"I hope the weather will not continue like this," said Lady Staversworth, glancing out of the window. "I don't know how we are to get back to the Falcon's Crag if it does."

"It won't clear yet," Tamsin answered, with a sigh, still thinking of the absent Alsey. "You are tired," she said, looking down into the sweet, delicate face of her guest with a kind, motherly look in her eyes. "I will gladly get you a cup of tea if you will accept it, and if the little lady will have a cup of goat's milk she will be very welcome."

"You are *very* good," said Lady Staversworth. "I do feel tired. But I am afraid we are troubling you, and hindering you from your work," and she glanced at the litter on the floor, and the brooms thrown in the corner.

"It is no trouble at all, ma'am, but a *pleasure*"

cried Tamsin, with that innate good-breeding which would not have disgraced a princess; "and I had almost finished my day's work before you came. It is our tea-time, and it isn't often we have the privilege of entertaining strangers," and she hastened to lay the cloth and prepare a cup of tea for her guest, thereby forgetting how late it was, and that Alsey had not yet returned.

The worst of the storm was now over, although rain was still pouring down. The little girl had gone back to her seat, and was sitting watching Blaze at his work, every now and again bending her flower-like face over her doll, which was dressed in long clothes.

"Go and show your baby to the little boy, Marjorie," said Lady Staversworth.

"Boys do not like dolls, auntie," replied the child, unwilling to leave her seat.

"You must not judge all boys by Howard," returned her aunt gently.

"Blaze is very fond of dollies," Tamsin put in. "Alsey has a doll upstairs that a friend of ours, living at Churchtown, gave her, and my little grandson likes playing with it, more than his sister even."

"Does he?" cried little Lady Marjorie. "Then he must be a kind boy," and she got out of her chair and carried her doll to where the lad sat.

"I am grieved to see that your grandson is lame," said Lady Staversworth to the old woman as they watched the little girl showing her treasure. "It is very sad."

"It is indeed sad for *him*, ma'am," returned Tamsin.

"Does he suffer much?"

"At times. But he is so good and patient it isn't often he complains, except when the pain is more than he can bear. Even then he strangles his sobs, and tries to bear it in Christ's patience."

"Can nothing be done for him?" asked the lady.

"I am afraid not, ma'am."

"What does he suffer from?"

"Hip disease, our doctor calls it."

"I thought so. I wonder if you know that in London there are doctors who make hip disease their study? They have made many wonderful cures. Could you not take your small grandson to London?"

"What? all the way to London Churchtown?" cried the old grandmother, aghast.

"London is not so very far away," said the lady, smiling. "We think nothing of making long journeys in these fast-travelling days."

"Perhaps not for ladies like yourself," said Tamsin, with a shadow on her face.

"You call the boy *Blaze*. It is rather an unusual name, is it not?" remarked the lady, anxious to change the conversation, for she saw that the old woman had not taken kindly to her suggestion.

"It is, ma'am. He is called Blaze after the patron saint of the parish where he was born."

"Little Saint Blaze!" cried Lady Staversworth.

"Not *Saint* Blaze, ma'am, but *plain* Blaze," Tamsin hastened to say.

"I suppose the saint after whom the dear child is named was the good Bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, and who suffered martyrdom about the year 316?" said the lady, looking thoughtfully at the small cripple.

"I have no idea, ma'am."

"Do you know that St Blaize, or Blaise, of whom I speak, was torn to pieces with iron combs because of his adherence to his faith!"

"No, my dear."

"He was then. Your little Saint Blaze, too, has suffered; I can see by the look of his patient little face. And perhaps he has borne his pain in the same brave spirit that his great namesake did. He makes me think of the beautiful lines:—

> 'Meek souls there are who little dream
> Their daily strife an angel's theme,
> Or that the rod they take so calm
> Shall prove in Heaven a martyr's palm.'

God has His martyrs even now, and who is a martyr but he who bears his cross of suffering patiently and quietly for the great Martyr's sake—Christ, our Blessed Lord."

Tamsin listened attentively, but she only said, as she went to the dresser to take out a loaf of bread and a small cream-cake which she had baked that morning, "that he was a dear, *good* cheeld."

The cake was made of cream, and very nice it was. She had made it for Blaze's next day dinner, but as she had nothing else fit, as she thought, to set before her guests, save a cup of goat's cream and a pot of honey, she brought it out and put it on the table. "The tea is ready," she said, when the table was laid to her satisfaction. "Let me put your chair closer to the table. There, ma'am. The little maid shall sit on the stool in the window-seat. Come," she said, turning to the child.

"Will you hold my baby whilst I have my tea?" said the little girl to Blaze.

"Yes," he answered shyly.

"But little Saint Blaze must want his tea as much as my niece," said Lady Staversworth.

"He has never had the pleasure of holding such a beautiful doll before," said Tamsin, lifting her small ladyship into the window-seat, "and I am sure he would do more than hold a dollie for a *lady*."

Before the old woman helped her guests to anything, she stood at the table and said simply—

"If you please, ma'am, we will ask the dear Lord to bless our food," and bowing her head over her folded hands she asked a blessing; as she spoke the great Master's name she curtseyed low, and the boy with the doll in his arms half rose from his stool and bowed.

Lady Staversworth was much impressed by the simplicity and reverence of these poor cottagers, and the old woman's evident gratitude for the simple meal spread on the table was very touching. She felt ashamed that she, with all her abundance, had never

shown such gratitude as this poor old Cornish woman, and was almost grateful to the rain that compelled her to take shelter in the cottage.

"This is indeed a refreshing cup of tea," she remarked after a while, "and the cake is really delicious."

"I am glad you like it, ma'am," said Tamsin.

"My niece is enjoying her cream and honey," said Lady Staversworth, smiling at the little girl. "It is a long time since I have seen her eat so heartily."

"I am pleased to hear that too," cried the old woman again, her face lighting up with pleasure. "You must come again, and bring the cheeld with 'ee."

"I will, and Marjorie must bring some of her picture-books to show little Saint Blaze."

"The sky is clearing a little," said the old woman, looking out of the window, "but I don't think it will be *very* fine this evening."

"I hope my boy is at Pendour by this time," said the lady; "the groom is with him, so I trust he is all right."

"Then you are one of the great folks from the Falcon's Crag?" asked Tamsin.

"Yes," answered the lady, laughing at the funny way the old woman put it; "I ought to have introduced myself. I am Lady Staversworth, and this small maiden is my niece, Lady Marjorie Darmont," she said, turning to the little girl. "You knew of our being at the Falcon's Crag, then."

"Oh, yes, ma'am; I have heard all about you, but I didn't know you were the great lady her very own self," cried Tamsin, much flustered. "I should have been afraid to ask 'ee to have a dish of tea if I had known before."

"I am glad you did not; for I do not know what I should have done without this delicious cup of tea," and her ladyship laughed merrily.

"Well, ma'am, I never looked upon a live lady of title before," exclaimed the old woman, looking her guest up and down with her kind old eyes, "and—and——"

"You are rather disappointed, are you not?"

"To tell the truth, I *am, in your dress.* I have always heard that real ladies, like you, dress in silks and satins, and you have only a cotton gown on, and you look so simple, even to your bonnet."

"Do I indeed!" cried the lady, greatly amused.

"Yes," answered Tamsin. "Why, you are as much at home in my little place as if you were one of my own neighbours, and I am as comfortable along with 'ee as if you were Miss Admonition Kernick up to Churchtown, who is one of the comfortablest old bodies you ever set to tea with."

"I feel greatly complimented, I assure you," said Lady Staversworth, laughing more than ever.

"And I feel greatly honoured," returned the old woman simply. "The sky is looking glowering again," she said, once more scanning the face of the heavens. "I can't think where Alsey is."

"Perhaps she is looking for a four-leaved clover," suggested Blaze, who was listening.

"That is it, is it?" cried the old grandmother, "and I told her not to stop on her errand. I didn't think she would have disobeyed me," and a grieved look came into her eyes. "What a foolish cheeld she is, to be sure. I hope she won't have to pay for her foolishness. Hark: there is a sound of wheels," and she and her visitors looked out of the window.

"It is my carriage," said Lady Staversworth. "How thoughtful of Wilson to come in search of us. Will you kindly open the door and tell him we are here?"

"I am so glad I've found your ladyship," said the coachman, touching his hat, when his lady appeared at the door. "We did not know where to look for yer ladyship in this heathenish place."

"Is Master Howard at the Falcon's Crag?" asked his mistress anxiously.

"No, my lady. We thought he might be with your ladyship. Frost 'as gone to look for 'im."

"What! did not Frost accompany his young master?" cried Lady Staversworth, looking very much alarmed.

"He went with 'im a little way, my lady, but the young gentleman ordered 'im back, because he said he wanted to hexplore this unknown land by 'isself."

"The foolish boy!" cried the poor mother. "Nobody knows what has happened to him. I thought I could trust Frost."

"Don't trouble, ma'am," put in Tamsin timidly. She was quite as much awed at the liveried servant and prancing horses as her grandchildren had been, and kept well in the background. "The cheeld, like my Alsey, is under God's wide Wings."

"Thank you much for again reminding me of God's care," returned the mother, looking at Tamsin with soft, grateful eyes. "I also thank you for your kind hospitality. We do not live far from each other, and I shall hope to have the pleasure of coming to see you before long."

"Please do; we shall be delighted to see you any time. And I hope the little gentleman, your son, will be safe at home by the time you get there."

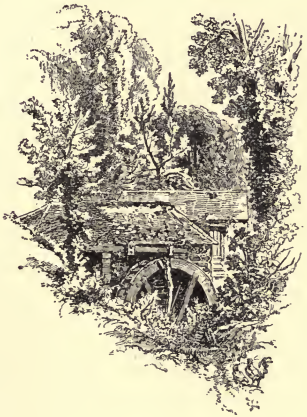
"Thank you for holding my baby," said Lady Marjorie shyly to Blaze. "I hope she hasn't made your arms ache. She grows very heavy; nurse says it is time she was short-coated," and her small ladyship held out her arms for her doll, which the little cripple placed in them very carefully, and she followed her aunt to the carriage.

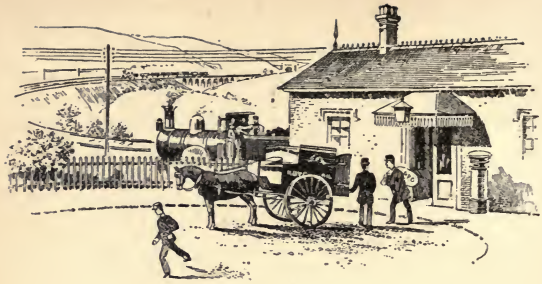
The carriage had not gone long before Tamsin saw a small figure rushing towards the cottage.

It was Alsey, and looking a miserable little object indeed. Her grandmother hastened to meet her and clasped her in her arms, dripping as she was.

"Oh, grannie! grannie!" sobbed the child, "the sky caught on fire, and I thought it was going to catch me on fire, 'cause—cause, I was looking for a four-leaved clover, and, oh, I will never, *never* want the crocks of gold any more. I would rather have Jesus' gold to make me afraid of nothing, like you and Blaze."

"Why, you are wet to the skin," cried the old grandmother, feeling her. "You must go to bed at once. Ah, my poor little maid, you have been quickly taught that riches are not everything when trouble overtakes us. You would not have minded anything, if you were trusting Him whose Wings are outspread for all who will take shelter under them."





CHAPTER VI.

MISS ADMONITION KERNICK.

WHEN Alsey left Bosmergy farm, which belonged to a Mr Nancollas, who was a kind-hearted man, both he and his wife being ever ready to do Tamsin and her orphaned children a kindness when they had the opportunity, the weather was still bright, but oppressively warm, and the wind was beginning to make those dreary little sounds that often foretell a storm, but as she drew near to Carn Galva the sky was heavy with clouds. When that romantic Carn was reached,—which, from the south, looks like a giant's castle in ruins, and from another point of view like a great hill crowned with boulders, gorse, heather, and whortleberry trees, with battlements away on its crest,—she stopped and looked up at the *Logan* or rocking-stone. The old people of Morvah say a giant sat on it and rocked himself when the sun flamed down the western sky and dropped into the sea. The grey rocking-stone was on the summit of the Carn facing the west, and it was not difficult to move. Alsey had often ascended the side of the Carn—which was not only piled with great boulders, but had beautiful terraces of turf, lovely with flowers and ferns, which grew wherever they could find a place—just for the pleasure of making it rock,

and trying to picture the old giant resting himself after the exertions of the day on the grey old stone. But she took care not to venture up except when some one was near, for she was a nervous as well as an imaginative child, and half believed that the giant still lived in the Carn, and might pop upon her. Not that she need have minded, for if we can believe the old legends, he was the kindest old giant imaginable, and never did any harm, except once when he crushed in a man's skull accidentally with his huge thumb!

Alsey was tired with her walk, and sat down at the foot of the Carn to rest and eat a jam-cake which the farmer's wife had given her for bringing the bee-hive.

"Miss Admonition said it was somewhere here the money-crocks were buried," said the little maid to herself. "I wish I could find the four-leaved clover, 'cause then I should be able to see the small people with my own two eyes. Oh! wouldn't grannie and Blaze stare if they saw me come home laden with gold. Grannie would wish she hadn't laughed at me then."

The thought of the buried treasure filled her with covetousness, and, putting her cake on the ground, she began to climb the lower slopes of the Carn in search of clover. She was on her hands and knees when a loud voice calling out "Alsey Rosewarne, what are you doing?" made her gaze fearfully around.

"Why, you are gone as white as sloe-blossom. You don't suppose I am the giant of Morvah, do you?"

The child was too alarmed to move.

"Don't you know who it is, you little goose?" cried the same loud voice again, and looking down Alsey saw to her relief a donkey-cart, in which was seated an exceedingly fat woman.

"It is Miss Admonition Kernick!" she cried, running down the slope; "I was just thinking of you, and wishing you were here."

"And here I am, a donkey-load of flesh, not to speak of the bones!" said the woman with a loud laugh, that rang out over the moors. "Talk of the giants, my

dear, you see their likeness. Don't 'ee climb into the cart, whatever you do," she cried, as Alsey was about to mount the shafts. "'Another ounce'will cause a break-down,' Mr Abner Sweet told me when I was at his place just now. He also informed me that I could make my fortune if I went round the country in a caravan. Poor old fellow! he is envious of my fat, or the money he would get by it if I went round the country to be exhibited, for he hasn't enough about his poor old bones to grease one of the small people's pie-dishes on a baking-day."

"Do the fairies have baking-days?" asked Alsey in surprise.

"I thought I should get a rise out of you," said Miss Kernick, with another hearty laugh.

She was not a bad-looking person, and good-nature beamed from every part of her large fat face. Her features were regular, and her eyes as dark as midnight. She had on a red plaid shawl, and her head was adorned with a large Leghorn bonnet or hat—it is difficult to say which—and its only trimming was a rusty black ribbon fastened to its crown, and brought down the sides of the brim and tied under the chin.

"What were you doing on the Carn when I called to you?" she asked, as the girl stood patting the donkey.

"Looking for a clover leaf to see the fairies," the child replied. "You told me if I found one I should be able to see the dear little creatures."

"I know I did, and an old soft I was to tell you."

"Did you ever see any of the small people, Miss Admonition?"

"No," cried the spinster. "But my grandmother told me that her grandmother told her that her great-grandmother told her grandmother that she had."

"Why, that was a long while ago, wasn't it? Almost back to the days of Noah!" said Alsey, looking up into Miss Admonition's twinkling eyes.

"No, you goose! it wasn't more than three hundred years ago."

"Did your grandmother's grandmother's great grand-

mother's grandmother really find the four-leaved clover, and see the small people?" asked the little girl anxiously.

"My grandmother told me so. But she was *cranky*, as I think *you* are, little maid," returned the spinster.

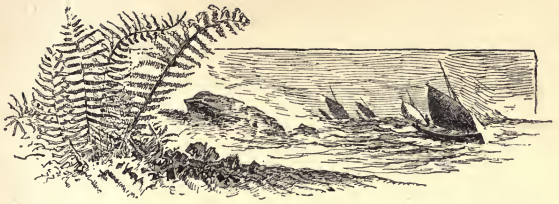
"And what did she see?" said the child, not noticing the reflection on herself.

"She saw, when she got the clover leaf in her hand, the little people dancing on the turf in the moonlight, some of whom were swarming over the heather like a swarm of bees, others galloping over the moors on tiny white horses, not much bigger than grasshoppers, with bridles of silk as fine as the thread of money spiders. She saw where they lived, and where they held their fairs and markets. They sold wonderful things, she told me, such as we poor mortals never dream of, and their standings (stalls) were laid out with loveliest fairings."

"Oh!" ejaculated Alsey, clasping her hands, and gazing at Miss Admonition with her eyelids far apart, "I shall never rest until I find the right clover that I may see the small people too. Can you tell me anything about them?"

"A great deal more," returned the spinster. "But I cannot stay to entertain you with fairy nonsense. I was on my way to your cottage to see your grandmother, but now I have met you I shall save my donkey's legs. Tell your grannie that I will buy all the eggs she can spare. The gentry at Pendour will take all we can get for them, and will give a good price. Also tell grannie that I sha'n't want a farthing for any we sell for her. I have been to see Mr Sweet, as I told you just now, to give him an opportunity of having a good market for his eggs, not that he deserves it, the stingy old fellow—he wasn't willing that I should have anything for my trouble of selling them. How does he think folks can live—'pon potatoes fried in their own fat, like he and his old housekeeper do, I suppose! Now good-bye, Alsey, and make haste home, for we are

going to have rain or something worse soon," she said, lifting her big face to the sky, which seemed hanging oppressively dark over the rugged Carn. "Don't go stopping to look for clover now—it isn't often a four-leaved one is found; and don't forget that my old grannie was as foolish as yours is good and wise, and it is far better for you to listen to her than to my old tales," and Miss Admonition Kernick, nodding a good-bye, drove slowly away.



CHAPTER VII.

IN THE THUNDERSTORM.

ALSEY watched the donkey-cart out of sight, and then she took up her cake and sat down again to eat it, heedless both of the threatening sky and Miss Kernick's advice. She sat for a long time in dreamland. If the fairies had appeared from the underground world and danced on the turf before her she would not have been very much surprised. But a few drops of rain made her look round, and to her delight she saw a black pony cantering up the road.

"It is the pony, and the boy with the grand name," she said to herself. "I wonder if he will speak to me again. I am glad I didn't go home. I don't mind a drop or two of rain."

"Hullo!" cried the lad, as he caught sight of the child on the stone, and lifting his cap. "What are you doing here, and where is that poor little chap I saw sitting on the step of a cottage as we were going to the Falcon's Crag. Was he a relation of yours?"

"Yes, sir, he is my brother. We are two little orphans, and live with grannie."

"Orphans are you—you poor little chicks. My little cousin Marjorie who came with us to Cornwall is next door to being an orphan; her mother is dead, and her father hasn't much time to look after his little girl."

"Marjorie is not a very pretty name—I mean, not a grand name like *yours*," said Alsey thoughtfully.

"You don't really know my name, do you?" asked the boy in surprise.

"Grannie heard what you were called in St Ives," said Alsey. "You are Master Honourable."

"You Cornish are very wise, I think," said the boy; "you seem to know more about us than we know ourselves. But don't go yet, please. I haven't seen a soul to speak to since I left the Falcon's Crag. My mother has taken quite a liking to you and that little lame brother of yours."

"Has she!" cried Alsey, turning round. "But I ought not to stop, 'cause it is going to rain. Are you really feeling wisht?" she asked, drawing nearer the pony, which was pawing the ground with impatience.

"What is *wisht?* Is it a Cornishism?"

Alsey looked puzzled for a moment, hardly knowing how to explain, and then she said simply, "we—Blaze and I—feel awful lonely sometimes when grannie goes to Penzance and St Ives on market days and leaves us at home by ourselves, and then we say we are *wisht*, so I suppose it means *lonely*. You do not know everything, although you *are* gentry, if you don't know what wisht means," she added gravely, fixing her bright hazel eyes on his open face.

"My father says I am an ignoramus," answered the boy quite as gravely, but his beautiful dark eyes twinkled mischievously nevertheless.

"I believe you are laughing at me," cried Alsey, "and you ar'n't so nice as you look."

"Well, you are not particularly polite, and—why, where are you off to?" cried the lad, looking round.

Alsey had uttered an exclamation of delight as he was speaking, and dashing away she began to climb a steep bank, the top of which was white with clover blossoms, and, forgetting everything but her wish to find a four-leaved clover, she threw herself on the turf and began to gather the soft green leaves.

The young horseman made his pony get over the stones and climb the bank where the child was.

"I say, what are you looking for?" he asked, glancing down at her busy hands.

"Looking for a four-leaved clover, Master Honourable," she returned, not pausing in her search even to glance at the boy.

"Is that all? Why, I thought you had discovered a treasure trove."

"I shall see the small people and have heaps of gold if I find a four-leaved clover," answered the foolish little maiden, plucking the leaves by handfuls and putting them into her pinafore.

"Whatever do you mean? Have the goodness to explain yourself, will you, please!"

And Alsey, as soon as she had gathered most of the clover, sat up, and, crossing her legs tailor-fashion, told the interested young stranger all the wild fancies and longings that filled her little brain, picking over the clover in her lap the while. So strong was her belief in what she told the boy, and so earnestly did she speak, that he almost believed it too.

"I say, that Miss Kernick is a person worth knowing," cried the lad, when Alsey had finished. "You must introduce me to her one day soon, and if you find a four-leaved clover I hope you will let me hold it. I am quite anxious to see the fairies just for the fun of it, if for nothing else."

"But you don't want to be rich, do you, sir? you are rich already, ar'n't you," said Alsey.

"My father is rich, I believe, but I am poor enough, and there are no end of things I should like to buy if only I had the tin."

"Tin!" cried Alsey disdainfully. "There is plenty of tin in the old bals (mines). So you had better turn miner, sir; you could have as much as ever you wanted then," and she turned up her nose as she threw away the three-leaved clover sprays.

"You are a little Cornish girl, and do not see my

meaning," said Howard, laughing. "My little cousin would have understood. Tin is a slang word, and means money. I've got to be something by and by, so I may as well be a miner as a soldier. I am not particular."

"Why don't you be a tinker, sir," suggested Alsey. "Tinkers get a lot of money, I think, and can have a bright new saucepan whenever they like."

"Can they indeed? How nice! I should enjoy being a tinker immensely. I like hammering old kettles. My grandpapa—Lord Staversworth—was a sort of tinker; he used to make all kinds of tin things. My mother has a pair of candlesticks and a pepper-box which he made for her, and which she values almost more than anything she has. So you see——What are you called?"

"Alsey Rosewarne, please, sir."

"So you see, Alsey, that I shall not be the first tinker in our family."

"Then you ar'n't *real* gentry after all, if your granfer (grandfather) was only a tinker," cried the child.

"But my grandfather was a gentleman," declared the boy, with a laugh, "in spite of the tin articles he made and gave to his relations. But he was careful to tell them that a good honest heart was better than all the blue blood in their veins. He was a very good man indeed, and a humble follower of the Lord Jesus Christ my mother often speaks of, and, like the great poet, thought it 'only noble to be good.'"

"That is like my grannie, sir. Perhaps he had some of Jesus' gold in his heart, as she has."

"I don't see what gold has to do with being good. What do you mean?"

"Grannie says that it is written down in the Bible," said Alsey, "'I counsel thee to buy of Me'—that is the Lord Jesus, you know"—she interpolated—"'*gold* tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.'"

"Then I don't see, if you can have gold from *Him*, what you want of the gold under the ground," said the boy thoughtfully.

"But you don't understand, Master Honourable. Blaze says that the gold which Jesus speaks about is His love, so it is not *really* gold, and it won't give us lovely things like rich people have, and what I can have when I get the money to buy it."

The boy laughed.

"There ar'n't any four-leaved clover here," she said, shaking the clover out of her pinafore, and getting up.

"What are you going to do now?" asked the lad.

"Go home to grannie. It is getting late, and it is going to rain," said Alsey, lifting her face to the skies, "and I've got my best frock on. Listen to the wind. 'Tis like as if the old giant has hurt himself, and squatted down behind the Carn and is groaning awful."

"I should like to get up on the 'Giant's Cradle,' as you call it," said the boy, gazing up at the Logan stone.

"Don't to-day, sir. It would be dreadful up there if it were to thunder. I saw the lightning licking the great stones with its long red tongue once when I was here with grannie. The Giant's Mark is up there too," she said, pointing to another part of the hill.

As Alsey was speaking a flash of lightning blinded her eyes for a second, followed by a peal of thunder which seemed to shake the great Carn. She had from her infancy a terror of thunder and lightning, and to be here at the foot of Carn Galva with only a boy not much older than herself was terrible. As soon as the thunder was lost amongst the boulders, she looked wildly around her, and then took to her heels as if the giant of the Carn were after her!

Howard Staversworth scarcely noticed she had gone, for his fiery little steed was as much alarmed at the artillery of the heavens as Alsey, and he had enough to do to keep him from bolting. He was prancing and bellowing like a war-horse, and more than once the lad was in danger of being thrown off.

Now that the storm had begun, there was a succession of lightning flashes which seemed to set the sky on fire, and they were followed by such awful thunder-claps

that Howard more than once thought the Carn was falling on him. No wonder the pony was frightened and eager to bolt! In a pause of the storm the boy's dark eyes swept the rain-drenched moors—for the rain was descending in torrents by this time—and he saw Alsey running at full speed, not towards her cottage home, but in another direction where there were old mine-works, and which he had discovered that afternoon in exploring the moors.

"Poor little thing," he said to himself, "how frightened she is. But it is not surprising, seeing she is only a girl, and out in one of the worst thunderstorms I ever saw, even in bonnie Scotland. But she was stupid to go off like that. I would have taken care of her. Come, Firefly," he said to his pony, patting his glossy neck to quiet him, "we will follow her."

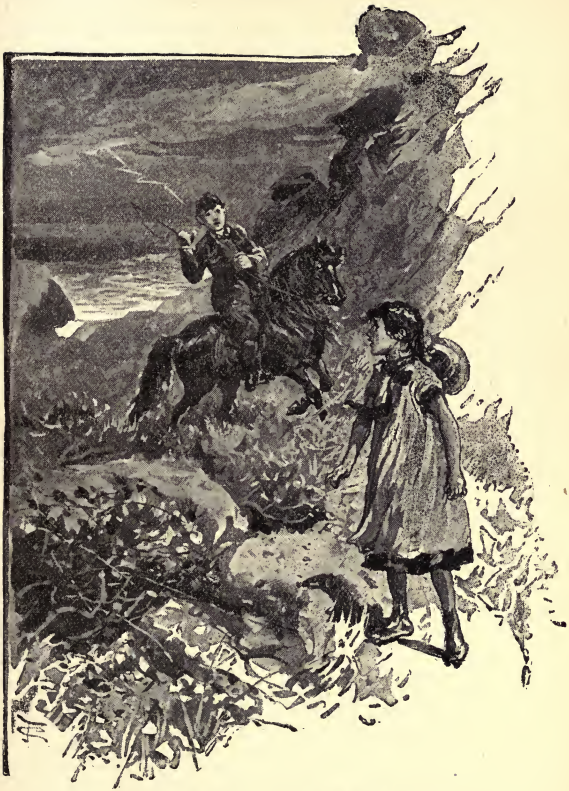
They soon overtook Alsey, and Howard called to her to stop, but she only ran the faster.

They were close to one of the old mines or *bals* as they were called, and Alsey, although she knew it not, was in great danger of falling down its open mouth. The boy saw the yawning shaft a few yards in front of her, and called out to her to look where she was going, but his warning fell on deaf ears, and seeing she was making straight for the opening he sprang from his pony, tore after her, and caught hold of her dress as she was rushing headlong into the low bushes that grew around the shaft.

"I'll tell my grannie of you," was all the thanks the lad got for pulling her back.

"Do you want to kill yourself?" he asked angrily. "You would have been down the throat of that big hole in another minute, and what would your 'grannie' and that poor little brother of yours have done then?"

Alsey was still too frightened to realise what the young stranger had saved her from, and another fearful flash of lightning and a deep bellow from the clouds made her rush off again, happily in the direction of her grandmother's cottage.



"ALTHOUGH SHE KNEW IT NOT, SHE WAS IN GREAT DANGER."

Howard gazed after her, and then looked round for his pony, and found to his consternation that he was flying homewards too.

"Well, this *is* a kettle of fish," he exclaimed. "How am I to get back to the Falcon's Crag? I shall have to tramp it, I suppose, and I am already drenched to the skin. Firefly will soon reach his stable, and I am afraid when they see him rush in without me on his back they'll jump to the conclusion that I am killed. I hope they won't tell the dear little *mater* their fears. I would not have her worried for all the *money crocks*—as that odd little girl called them. I must hasten home in case she is alarmed," and he made his way over the moors to Churchtown, which consisted of a church, vicarage, and a few houses, some of them old and straw-thatched, and lay in a valley about seven minutes' walk from the cliffs. It was a wild spot, and boulders were scattered about everywhere; big stone hedges wandered up the hills and over the hills as if they had nothing to do, not even to separate field from field, for the parish was chiefly moor, croft and down. The valley in which Churchtown lies forms the west side of a great hill called Burn Downs, generally dull-looking, but bright now with gorse, which even the rain could not rob of its golden gleam.

When he reached Churchtown he was met by the coachman and groom on horseback, both looking very much scared.

Howard laughed to see the change in their faces when they caught sight of him, as he was having a peep into Miss Kernick's shop window, in which was displayed a few bottles of sickly-looking sweets, and such articles as are usually sold at small country shops.

"I am a deluge in myself, as you see, Wilson," he said, as the horses stopped. "I am almost afraid to go home, fear the sight of me will frighten my mother into another illness, and Lady Marjorie's dolls into rheumatic fever."

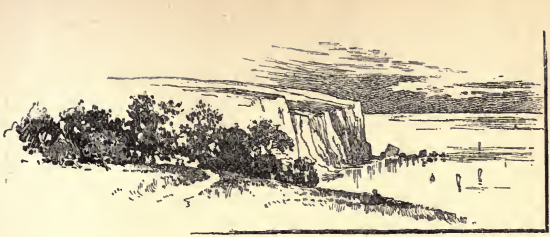
"We are thankful to find you alive, sir," cried the old coachman in such a relieved voice that the boy laughed again. "Never mind your being wet. When Firefly rushed into the stable-yard with 'is eyes starting out of their sockets, and without you on 'is back, sir, we were afraid you were killed outright."

"I am very much alive," said Howard. "Did you tell my mother your fears concerning me?"

"Her ladyship had only just come 'ome when Firefly flew into the yard, sir," returned the man. "She sent Frost and me off at once; she is fearfully anxious."

"How vexing that my mother should be alarmed for nothing," cried the boy. "Please lend me your horse, Frost," turning to his groom.

The man dismounted, and Howard sprang into the saddle, and in a minute was galloping to Pendour.



CHAPTER VIII.

ALSEY IS RESOLVED TO SEEK THE TRUE GOLD.

TAMSIN had no sleep on the night of the thunder-storm. Alsey was very restless and feverish, and Tamsin feared she was in for an illness, for, whenever she dropped off to sleep, she talked wildly about fairies, giants, gold, and fire, and that the fire was trying to burn them all up, and the gold too!

Blaze was also restless and suffered much. When Alsey was quiet, the old woman heard him trying to stifle his sobs under the bed-clothes. She went to him several times, and looked at him anxiously. "Is your poor little hip *very* bad, my darling?" she asked tenderly.

"It hurts a little, grannie," he replied reluctantly, "but I am Jesus' little crossbearer, you said, and I must not mind if it hurts. I have been thinking of what He suffered for His little Blaze," trying to keep back his tears.

"You brave little soul," cried the old grandmother, and putting her arms under the boy she lifted him out of his bed, and wrapping him in a blanket sat with him on her lap by the window. Day was beginning to break, but the light was not yet strong enough to hide the stars shining down on the silent moors. She sat there until the sun came up behind the hills and put

out the starlight. How she longed that night to relieve the poor little child of his suffering, and how helpless and miserable she felt when he hid his face on her bosom that she might not see how terribly he was suffering. When he, like Alsey, had dropped off to sleep, she put him back into his bed, and as the light fell on his little face she was quite startled to see how white and drawn it was.

"I wonder if the great London doctors could really do my little dear good," she muttered to herself, as she stood gazing down on him. "It will break my heart to see him suffering as he has to-night. And yet I could not bear to part with him even for a few weeks. God help me not to think of myself, but of what is good for my little dear. How patient he has been to-night; nobody but a saint could have borne his pain so bravely. Ah, little Saint Blaze, as the lady called you, I think you are worthy of that title through the merit of your patient suffering," and bending her tall form over the sleeping child she kissed his brow reverently. Then kneeling beside him she prayed that she might be made more worthy of the sweet little lad, and for guidance in the matter of what the lady had spoken. After spending sometime on her knees, she went and lay down by Alsey's side until it was time to go down and light the fire and get the breakfast.

Alsey was still feverish, and Tamsin would not let her get out of bed, which was quite a punishment to the child. But when she found that Blaze was not well enough to go downstairs either, she was consoled.

The boy slept more from exhaustion than anything else, and felt better, although he looked more ethereal than ever—"as if a puff of wind would blow him away," Tamsin said.

When Blaze was dressed he sat by Alsey's bed, and he and his sister had a long talk together, and the talk did them both good; for, when their grandmother came up to see how they were getting on, Alsey was eager to tell her that she had made up her mind never to want

four-leaved clovers nor gold nor anything that wasn't good for her again. In other words, she meant to be contented with what God had given her.

"And she is going to ask for the gold tried in the fire, to make her rich and happy like you, grannie," put in Blaze.

"Blaze has been asking Jesus to forgive me for wanting the money-crocks under the ground," said Alsey meekly, "and for not coming home when you told me. It was naughty of me, grannie; I *am* so sorry. I might have fallen down into the old mine; I *nearly did.* I remember now that Master Honourable pulled me back from tumbling in."

"God's mercy is even greater to me than I thought," cried the old woman. "Ah, cheeld, what His love keeps us from! But I did not know the young gentleman from the Falcon's Crag was with you on the moors."

"He was; and he talked to me so kindly. He isn't a bit proud. But I don't think he is gentry, 'cause his granfer was a candlestick and pepper-box maker. But I like him, and I think he is almost as nice as Blaze."

"But, my dear, the young gentleman is a nobleman's son, and he was only playing on your ignorance. His mother was here yesterday, and I am sure a sweeter lady could never be. We must not judge folks by their clothes nor their grandfathers."

"Blaze told me that the great lady and the little girl were here when I was out," cried the child regretfully, "and that the little maid brought a lovely doll with her which could open and shut its eyes, and had *real* teeth and hair. I wish I had been at home to hold it in my lap whilst the gentry were having tea."

"You would have been here had you come back *straight* from Mr Nancollas'," said the grandmother.

"I know," returned poor little Alsey. "But Blaze says the gentry are coming to see you again soon."

"Grannie," said the little cripple, as the old woman turned to go downstairs, "isn't God rich in mercy as well as love?"

"Yes, my darling; why do you ask?"

"Because Alsey did not think He could be rich in forgiveness too."

"Why not, cheeld?" she said, looking at Alsey.

"I was afraid He would not be very willing to give me His gold after wanting the other old stuff," she answered in a low voice.

"It shows, my Alsey, that you know very little about our loving, gracious Lord, and that mine of wealth, the Bible! Ah, cheeld, God is *full* of mercy and forgiveness; although we sin against Him often, He is willing and ready to forgive us, for the Word of God is love and mercy from beginning to end; and you will find that the older you grow—if you study the Bible. There! there is a knock at the door," and she hastened downstairs.

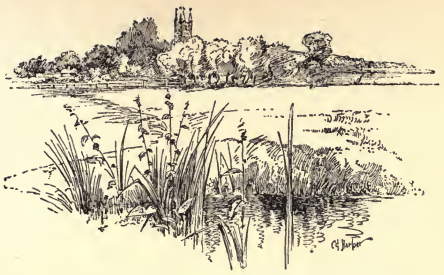
"'Tis one of the carriage gentlemen on a big horse," cried Blaze, peeping out of the window. "What has *he* come for? There! he's going." Alsey was almost in tears to think she did not scramble up in the bed quick enough to see him ride away.

It was Frost, whom his young master had sent to inquire if the little girl, Alsey Rosewarne, had reached home safely the previous evening.

"It was kind of the little gentleman to send all the way from the Great House to ask after a poor little maid like you," said Tamsin, when she had told who the man was.

"He is *gentry*, although his granfer did make candlesticks and pepper-boxes," cried Alsey, which remark made her grandmother and brother both laugh.

"The man said that his young master was not well or he would have come himself," remarked the old woman. "I hope he won't be ill through having been out in the storm."



CHAPTER IX.

TAMSIN FINDS HER MONEY-BAG GONE.

MAY was gone and June had come before Alsey had quite recovered from her soaking; and she was still *really* in earnest in seeking after God's best things. Her young face had now a contented expression, which showed that God was already answering her prayers, and filling her heart with His love, which could alone give her true and lasting happiness. And, as for Blaze, his grandmother said she could see him growing in the gentleness and patience of Christ daily. He suffered more or less every day, and some days was continually in pain, but he never complained, and it was touching to see what trouble he took to hide his sufferings from Tamsin's watchful old eyes. He even tried to make his little mats, but she saw more than he thought, and longed more earnestly for something to ease his pain. But there was nothing that she could do except to pray for him, which she did constantly.

The old woman had been to St Ives and Penzance every week, as was her wont, to dispose of her brooms. She usually went to the latter town on one of the market-days. Since the beginning of May she had had a ready sale for her work, and she told Alsey that the next time she went to Penzance she would buy her a new frock and Blaze a pair of shoes, as his old ones

would no longer keep out the wet. The little maid was delighted at the thought of a new dress; for her Sunday one was almost up to her knees, and there was nothing with which to lengthen it.

Every day she and her brother had looked out for the promised visit from the gentlefolk, but to their disappointment they never came. Tamsin was also disappointed, for she believed that Lady Staversworth was not one to make a promise and not fulfil it. But she heard in her travels to and from St Ives that Howard had been suffering from a feverish cold, and that his mother was far from well. But as she also heard that they drove often to St Ives, she came to the conclusion that her ladyship had forgotten her.

When June was half through, Blaze seemed to suffer less, and his grandmother hoped he would soon pick up strength again, and she set out for Penzance one Tuesday morning with a light heart. But she returned with a heavy one. She had not been able to sell any of her brooms and rush-mats. Added to that, and one or two other worries—small in themselves, but great to her, from the very fact of her poverty—as she was coming through Zennor Churchtown on her way home, somebody told her that it was little Lady Marjorie's birthday on Friday, and that Lady Staversworth was going to honour it by a tea on the cliffs, to which everybody in the parish had been invited.

"Of course, Tamsin, *you and your grandchildren* were the first to be asked," said the woman in conclusion, "for we were told that their ladyships have drank tea in your cottage."

"It is the first time I have heard anything about the little lady's birthday," returned Tamsin.

"Well, to be sure!" ejaculated the woman; "why, Parson was sent to ask my man, little maid, and me, two days ago. You must have offended them somehow, Tamsin. Gentry are terrible touchy, I've heard folks say, and that if you only step 'pon their toes 'tis all up with you in the way of favours."

The old grandmother felt hurt that she and her grandchildren should be left out in the cold, especially after Lady Staversworth and the child, whose birthday was to be made the occasion of a holiday for the whole parish, had been to their cottage, and had seemed so pleased. Her pride was deeply wounded that such an open slight should be shown to her little dears. "We shall not be invited now," she said to herself as she walked along by the donkey's side. "Alsey will be sure to hear of the tea, and so I must give them a little pleasure of some sort to make it up to them, if I can."

The little maid saw the old woman coming and ran out to meet her; she could tell by the sound of his crutches on the floor that Blaze, too, was hastening to greet her.

"Grannie," cried Alsey, when she had received the usual kiss, "we have had visitors this afternoon."

"Have you, dear," said the old woman, her face growing bright again, thinking from the child's eager manner that the visitors could be no other than the ladies from Pendour with an invite for them to the *fête*. "The gentlefolks, I suppose?" she added, with a smile.

"No, grannie, it wasn't *them*, it was Mr Abner Sweet—more sour than ever—and Miss Admonition's niece."

"What did Mr Abner come again so soon for?" asked poor Tamsin, trying to hide her disappointment from the keen-eyed Alsey by looking away over the moors.

"He did not come for a mat this time," answered the child, "but for his rent."

"His rent?" echoed the old woman. "It isn't due till next week. How queer of him to want his rent before 'tis due. What did you say to him?"

"That you had gone to Penzance market, and that I could not give him his rent. He came into the house all the same, and stared round with his queer little eyes, and said it was worth more than what you give for it—two pounds a year, and that he should raise the

rent, and if you could not afford to give it he knew somebody who would be only too glad to have it."

Tamsin sighed deeply, but she made no remark. Blaze, however, was not slow to note the shadow of distress that for a moment darkened her fine old face, and hobbling up to her he laid his little hand on hers. She understood that tender sympathetic touch, which, as she said, straightened her soul.

"What did Miss Admonition's niece want?" she asked, turning to Alsey.

"Eggs, grannie; I let her have all we got. I put the money on the dresser, under the basin. Have you got my new frock and Blaze's shoes?"

"No; I had trouble to sell my brooms, and had to leave them at the shop in Market-Jew Street. I sha'n't be paid until they are sold."

"Oh, grannie!" cried Alsey, looking disappointed, "you said you had money enough to buy stuff for a frock, and shoes for Blaze."

"So I had, dear. But I bought a bottle of strengthening medicine for this poor darling instead," resting her hand for a moment on the small cripple's chestnut hair, "and there was a little bill owing to the blacksmith for shoeing Roger, which I had forgotten until I passed the blacksmith's shop to-day."

"Roger is always wanting to be shoed," said Alsey pouting, "and other little maidens get new frocks."

"But they haven't such a dear grannie as we have," put in Blaze quickly.

"I know they haven't," returned the child, penitent in a moment. "I'll *try* not to mind, grannie dear."

"That is right, cheeld. Ah! I see you are *really* trying to be contented, and 'tis a great comfort to me."

Alsey looked pleased for a second, and then her face clouded again.

"What is the matter now?" asked the old woman.

"Mary Ann told us that there is to be fine doings at the Great House on Friday. The gentry are going to

give tea to all the poor folks in Zennor. Everybody is asked except *us*, Mary Ann said; didn't she, Blaze?"

"Yes," answered Blaze.

"Mary Ann wanted to know if we were going. I told her I didn't think we were, 'cause the gentry hasn't asked us. She thinks it is very queer," and the little maid's lips quivered, and then she burst into a flood of tears.

"The world is full of disappointments and slights, Alsey," said the old woman. "The dear Lord Jesus, when He was a little cheeld like you and Blaze, had *His* little disappointments and slights too, and felt them as keenly as you are feeling yours, I am sure."

"Oh, grannie!" cried the child, not noticing her grandmother's remark, "they are going to have lovely cakes for tea, and all sorts of delicious things. It is to be out on the cliffs, and there is a band of music coming from Penzance to play whilst the people are eating and drinking the best the gentry can give them. That is what Mary Ann told us, and she said too that there are to be all sorts of games. The gentry are going to serve tables their own selves, and the little girl who is called Lady Marjorie is going to show all the little maidens her dolls, 'cause 'tis her birthday," and once more Alsey sobbed bitterly as she thought of all the delights in store for the whole parish except her poor little self, grannie, and Blaze.

"The lady promised that the little girl should bring her picture-books to show me," Blaze said, "and she hasn't come."

"They have enough to do without coming to see us poor folks," said Tamsin. "And I heard when I was passing Miss Admonition's shop that Lady Staversworth has been very unwell."

"She is well now, grannie," persisted Alsey, "else she wouldn't be giving a party next Friday. Oh! I *do* wish we had been asked to it too."

"'Tis no use crying for what we can't have, cheeld," said the old grandmother. "We must be very busy

to-morrow and Thursday," she added, after a pause, smiling down on the two sad little faces, "*extra* busy, I mean. I intend having a holiday on Friday."

"Really, grannie?" cried the children in a breath.

"*Really*, my pretties. We will make the ling we've got into brooms, and we will spend a long day out in God's fresh air. We'll take our dinner and tea with us and enjoy ourselves."

Blaze clapped his hands with delight at the promised outing, and Alsey dried her eyes.

"Where shall we go and have our holiday?" they asked.

"Wait till Friday comes," returned the old woman.

"Oh, grannie, let us go where we can see the great waves jumping on the rocks," cried Blaze.

"Perhaps we will go to Bosigran Castle. That is a grand place to see the sea," she said, looking at the boy.

"Please make one of your cream-cakes," cried Alsey.

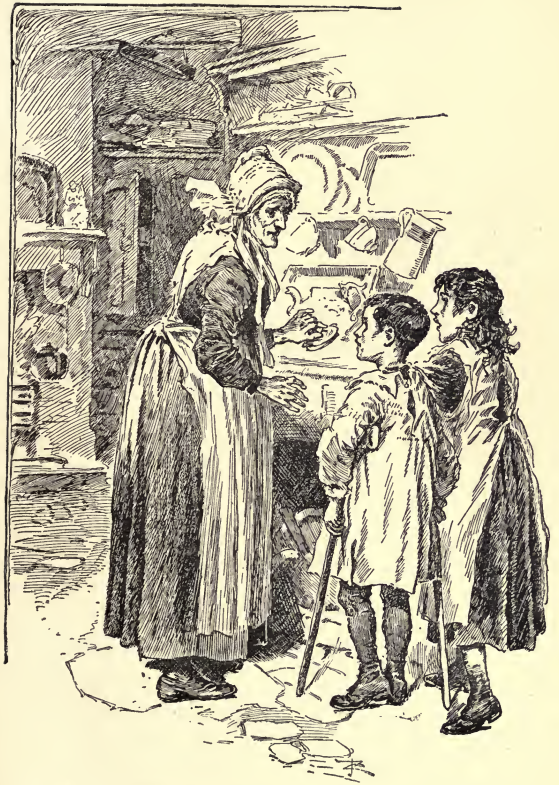
The old lady smiled indulgently, but her eyes grew troubled as her small granddaughter skipped away, and when she saw that Blaze was occupied with his whistle she turned to the dresser to take sixpence from her little hoard of silver, which, as already explained, she kept in a small bag. "'Tis strange Mr Abner Sweet should come for his rent before it is due," she said to herself. "Thank God! it is almost made up. I'll send Alsey to Trebergas with it as we go to Bosigran Castle." She kept the bag behind a large china tea-pot, which she seldom used, and lifting it saw that the bag was not in its usual place. A startled cry broke from her lips, which brought Blaze to her side as soon as his trembling limbs and lameness would let him.

"What is the matter?" he cried.

"The bag of silver is gone. It isn't here anywhere," she said, hastily removing the things.

"What is gone?" asked Alsey, coming into the cottage.

"Grannie's bag," returned Blaze, answering for his grandmother.



"'THE BAG OF SILVER IS GONE,' SHE SAID, HASTILY."

"Grannie's bag gone," exclaimed the little maid, looking up at the old woman with frightened eyes.

"Yes, and the money too!"

"Who could have taken it?" asked the child.

"*Somebody*," returned the old woman, giving Alsey a searching glance; but, although her little face went white, her eyes met her grandmother's unflinchingly.

"What will you do?" she cried.

"I don't know," Tamsin answered, with a catch of pain in her voice.

"We can tell the Lord Jesus about it, can't we?" whispered Blaze. "*He* knows who took it."

"How much money was there in the bag?" asked Alsey.

"Nineteen shillings and sixpence," the old woman answered. "I was going to take sixpence from it to make up the rent. This is terrible," she groaned. "Troubles never come singly, they say."

"Nor blessings, *you* said, grannie," put in Blaze.

"You *dear* little comforter," she ejaculated.

"But who can have taken the money?" cried Alsey again.

"Nobody has been here except Miss Admonition's niece and Mr Abner. *They* would not steal your money, would they, grannie?"

"No; Mary Ann is as honest as the sun, and as for Mr Abner—what would *he* want with a poor widow's mite? No, cheeld, he would not steal my money; he has plenty of his own."

"You would not think so, to see his old coat," said Alsey.

"You didn't go out and leave Mary Ann and Mr Abner here alone, did you?" asked the old woman.

"They didn't come together. Blaze and I were up looking at the larks when Mary Ann came. She came first. Mr Abner came about an hour after she left. We saw him coming in his old cart, and Blaze was afraid to meet him, and I took him up to Roger's stable till he was gone, and when I came back Mr Abner

was standing at the door. Then he came in and looked around."

"What did he say, cheeld?"

"What I told you, grannie, and lots of cross things besides. He said, too, that you were like the Mayor of Market-Jew, sitting in your own light. What did he mean?"

Tamsin smiled, but did not tell her little granddaughter that he evidently referred to her refusal to marry him.

"The money is gone safe enough. The Lord knows who the thief is," and again the old woman looked searchingly at Alsey. She knew the child's love of money, and was half afraid she had been tempted and had yielded to the temptation. Again the small maid's clear hazel eyes met hers unflinchingly, but her brown face went scarlet.

"I believe grannie thinks I took her money," said Alsey to her brother when Tamsin had gone up to her chamber. (She went to tell out her trouble to her Loving Friend the Lord Jesus.) "It hurts me that she should think I would *steal*. I didn't take the money, Blaze. I expect this trouble has come upon us because I wanted to be rich like the gentlefolks."

"Perhaps," suggested the boy, "the money is gone 'cause Jesus wants to *clean* out all the love of money from our hearts, Alsey, before he fills them with His riches. Grannie says when we've got His love and grace in our hearts we can bear all things, even when people say unkind things of us."

"You remember everything grannie tells you."

"I *try* to," returned the little lad.

"Grannie never thinks unkind things of *you*, Blaze," cried Alsey jealously.

Tamsin stayed in her chamber a long time, and when she returned to the children the troubled look in her eyes was gone, and her old face wore quite a cheerful expression.

"Have you found the money?" cried the children.

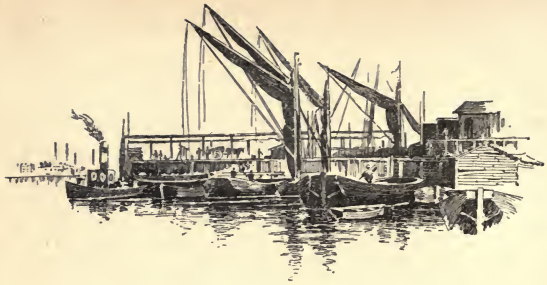
"No, my pretties; but I have found something better—some of His meekness and patience. I have rolled my care upon Him, and have taken up my cross again. I clean forgot how rich I was—that I have a mine of wealth in Him, although I am poorer in a worldly sense than I was when we saw the sun go down behind Carn Galva;" and again the children wondered to see the shining look in her dark eyes. "We have *Him*, darlings, who was *rich*, yet for our sakes became poor—so poor that He had not where to lay His head—that we through His poverty might be rich."

"Then we need not trouble about the money, grannie?" said Blaze.

"No, cheeld; but we must pray for the one who took it, and work all the harder to try and make it up."

"Sha'n't we be able to have our picnic now?" asked Alsey.

"Yes; our staying at home won't bring back the money, only we will combine work with pleasure, and pick a lot of broom. Now, put the supper on the table. I shall be ready for it as soon as I have put Roger into his stable and milked Nan."



CHAPTER X.

A SAD ENDING TO A DELIGHTFUL DAY.

FRIDAY dawned grey and gloomy, and the hills and moors were wrapped in a thick mist.

Tamsin and Alsey rose early, and the latter, when she peeped out of the small casement-window, was dismayed at the dismal outlook.

"'Tis a dreary morning," she cried; "'tis going to rain all day, just to keep us at home," she added fretfully.

"Hush, Alsey, never talk like that," said the old grandmother gravely. "God is the maker of the weather, and whatever He sends we must be thankful for. But I think we shall have a beautiful day," glancing out of the window. "It is only the pride of the morning. Before we have finished our work the sun will be shining."

The old woman was right; before her clock struck ten there was scarcely any mist left, and the sky was as blue as it could be, and the hills and moorland shone in the sunlight.

Soon after ten the donkey was brought round to the door. Blaze was lifted on its back, together with his crutches and a basket of provisions and bottle of milk, and in a few minutes they were off. Tamsin led Roger and carried a reaping-hook, and Alsey skipped along in

front, singing at the top of her voice as if there were no such things as care and disappointment in the world. The little maid had apparently forgotten the *fête* to which her neighbours had been invited that afternoon, and Blaze was in "high glee," his grandmother said. He was very excited, and his tiny face was as pink as the wild rose-buds that were throwing off their tender green sepals and showing their delicate tints against the soft grey of the boulders over which they climbed. The boy's lovely eyes were all alight with gladness as he lifted them to the sky, barred and streaked with pearly clouds, and thought his little thoughts as the old donkey stepped along. As for dear old Tamsin herself, she was as merry as the birds which twittered and sang and made love to each other in the brambles and furze. She was determined not to spoil the children's pleasure by any croakings, if she could help it.

Over the moors—now beautiful in purple and rose-coloured heather, which mingled its rich bloom with the fading gold of the gorse—they went, on and on, between the high hills lovely with summer green and flowers, down and up, up and down, across little commons and babbling streams, until they reached Bosigran Castle, a huge mass of rock lying out in the sea, where they could command a glorious view of the open ocean, which sparkled in the vivid sunshine.

They sat down on the turf to rest, and to drink their fill of the grand sea-scape opened out before them. The cliffs here are as fine as any in Cornwall. Some of them are most fantastic in form, and their bold fronts are softened by gold and ruby lichens. Others, grim red-grey rock-walls, were lit up by the sunbeams, and went down sheer to the apple-green water. To the right and left, as far as the eye could reach, they stretched, with here and there a slice cut out of them, forming baylets almost inaccessible, but golden-floored and strewn with boulders. Headlands thrust huge lengths—Gurnard's Head and Pendeen Watch being the most conspicuous—

far out into the fretting foam. Bosigran was once a fortified cliff castle, and there are still remains of the fortifications on the point.

Alsey, who was not a lover of nature, soon grew weary of gazing out on the sea, and she wandered about the old ruins, peeping into the rock-basins, of which there were several on the headland, and making up stories about them, until she grew so hungry that she had to cry out for her dinner. Her impatient cry brought the others back from their reverie to the fact that they could not live on air and cliff scenery. So the old woman got up, and opening her basket took out a cloth and spread it on a flat stone, and set on it all the eatables she had brought with her.

It was quite a little feast to which they sat down—pasties, cream-cakes, buns, and last, but not least, a rabbit-pie, the gift of Mrs Nancollas of Bosmergy.

Mr Nancollas happened to be going to St Ives early that morning, and his wife had a pie she could spare. She asked him to take it, and he came out of his way to hand it in to the old grandmother. "God knew we were going to have a picnic to-day," Alsey remarked, when she saw the pie.

They did enjoy their feast, and all the while they sat around the stone and ate, the "holy larks" made music over their heads. And when they had finished, and given God thanks as was their wont, and Tamsin had washed the cups and plates in some water in one of the rock-basins, she and Blaze sat down on the turf again, and looked out upon the sea. The old woman and the little lad were delighted with everything, even the weird cry of the sea-birds that had their nests in the lofty cliffs. But the wide ocean—

"A rushing world of dazzling blue,"

with its crowns of silver foam, gave them the greatest pleasure. It was but seldom the lad could be taken to the cliffs, and the splendour of the sea, with its ever-

changing colour, "its voice mysterious," its leagues and leagues of shining waters, the sunbeams playing at hide-and-seek amongst the smaller waves far out beyond the headlands, and the breakers coming in in long steady rolls that seemed now and again to break in one grand whole against the cliffs, filled his young soul with unspeakable delight. As for Tamsin she was overcome, and it all seemed to her the Presence of the Almighty. She told herself, as she sat there by her little grandson, that He who could rule the mighty ocean, and control the waves breaking in all their glory, would never fail her, nor allow the trials and afflictions of this troublesome life to overwhelm her; for would they not be held in check by the Master Hand—the hand of her dear Lord who stilleth the noise of the tempests. She learned many lessons that lovely June day which served her when His chastening hand was laid upon her.

The afternoon passed all too quickly for Alsey and Blaze, and when they had had their supper the shadows began to lengthen, and it was time to go home. So the remains of their little feast were put into the basket, and soon they were on their homeward way.

They had to pass a road leading to Mr Abner Sweet's farm. Tamsin had brought the rent with her, tied in the corner of her pocket-handkerchief, and when they reached the road she gave it to Alsey, and told her to run down with it to Mr Abner. "And don't come back without the receipt," she said, as the child ran off. "We will walk on slowly till you overtake us."

Alsey was soon out of sight, and did not stop running until she reached the farm.

Mr Sweet's housekeeper came to the door. She was a thin, dirty-looking little woman.

"Well, and what do *you* want," she snapped.

"I've brought Mr Abner his rent," said Alsey, "and, please, grannie wants the receipt."

"Want must be her master, for Mr Abner isn't in. Gone to Rosemaylor to buy a pig. He has got more

money than truth, I should say. He said he couldn't afford to buy a pig last week, and now he has gone to get one."

"There he is," cried Alsey, "and he's got a little black pig under his arm," and she went to meet him.

"What are you doing here, maid?" he said, glancing sharply at the child, who, looking up straight into his face, saw that it had grown suddenly white, and that he turned away as if he were ashamed to meet her eyes.

"I've brought the rent, sir. I must have the receipt, please."

"Take the cheeld into the kitchen and give her something to eat," he said to his housekeeper.

"I am not hungry," put in Alsey, seeing the woman looking very gloomy, "and I must make haste after grannie."

"Why didn't Tamsin bring the rent herself?" growled Mr Abner. "Afraid I was going to give her notice to quit, I suppose!"

"I don't want Tamsin to come here to turn up her nose like a duck against thunder at me and my housekeeping," put in Amanda with a snap. "I believe you would like to put me out and her in. But lah! master, nobody, not even Tamsin Rosewarne, who is burdened with two children, would have *you* with all your money."

"I haven't any money," said the man in a low hurried voice, looking at Alsey. "I am as poor as a church-mouse."

"Are you *really* poor," cried Alsey in astonishment, drawing nearer to the old man. "I am *so* sorry," and there was real pity in her young voice. "*We* are awfully poor *in money* too. This is all we've got," and she laid seven shillings and six sixpenny pieces in his thin, hard hand. "We did have more, but somebody stole it last Tuesday. God knows the thief, and grannie says He has His eye on him."

"How do you know 'twas a *man?*" asked the old fellow, his hand shaking as he conveyed the money to

his pocket, which caused his servant to remark that she feared he was going to have an attack of the palsy.

"We don't know if 'twas a man or a woman who stole our bit of money, but God does. I shouldn't like to be in his shoes, should you, Mr Abner? I expect he does not know the eighth commandment—'Thou shalt not steal'—nor that the catechism tells us we are to keep our hands from picking and stealing."

"You are a chatterbox," said Mr Sweet, and a wave of anger overspread his face, "and as forthright as a mare's cheeld, as I told you the other day. It would be a good thing if Tamsin Rosewarne taught you that part of the catechism which says something about ordering thyself lowly and reverently to all thy betters, and then perhaps you would be a less pert little hussy than you are, holding forth to me as if you were my great-grandmother."

"Why, I was talking of the one who stole our grannie's money," cried Alsey, in great astonishment. "And, Mr Abner, grannie does teach us that part of the catechism; me and Blaze learn it every Sunday. We learn the collect too, and the epistle and gospel and a text every day. To-day's text is, 'For the love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.'"

"Give the little maid the receipt, master," put in the housekeeper, "and let her go, or else you will get more digs than you've had this many a long day."

"I must put this little pig in a sty first," said Mr Sweet, and he glared at Alsey as he walked away, leaving her waiting; her feet twitched to run after her grandmother and brother.

Tamsin and Blaze, meanwhile, had gone on slowly until they reached the moors, and as Alsey was not yet in sight the old woman stopped the donkey and said: "I think we had better wait for Alsey. She is a long time coming. I thought she was cured of loitering," she added, with a sigh. "I will employ my time

in cutting broom. I may as well cut some here as farther on. Sit on Roger; the ground here is too rough and full of brambles for you to get off." Tamsin was soon cutting broom with her old reaping-hook. The spot which she had selected was very wild, and the ground high, and, like many places in Morvah and Zennor, thick with rocks. And it was one mass of purple heather and dying furze, which hid the great stones. More than once, not seeing the boulder, she nearly fell, and Blaze told her that if she did not take care she would "tumble all of a heap like a ha'porth of halfpennies."

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than the poor soul caught her foot in a bramble and down she went amongst the heather and rocks.

"There now, grannie, I said you would fall if you didn't take care," said Blaze. "Are you hurt?" he asked, but she only replied by a groan, and made no movement to get up, and the boy knew she was hurt seriously.

"Lord have mercy upon me," he heard her cry, after a minute or two; "I'm afraid my leg is broken. What shall I do!"

The poor little fellow slipped off the donkey, how he could never tell, his crutches coming with him to the ground, and picking them up he hobbled over to where she lay on her back, her face as white as a sheet.

"This is a terrible job, cheeld," she moaned. "The pain is awful. Oh, why doesn't Alsey come?"

Blaze's face was piteous to see, and even whiter than his poor old grandmother's. He could find no words to comfort her, and sat speechless by her side until his sister came.

The old woman despatched her to the nearest farm-house for help, which happened to be Mr Nancollas'.

The farmer had not long returned from St Ives, and was sitting down to his supper when Alsey rushed into the farm kitchen. He, with his wife and a workman, went to Tamsin's assistance at once.

"'Tis all over, like a donkey's race," the poor old soul said, looking up into Mr Nancollas' eyes, as he bent over her.

"Don't say that, Tamsin," said the farmer kindly, who was a tall, stout, good-looking man.

"Take me home, and let me die there," she moaned.

"Don't talk about dying, grannie," he said. "There is more life in you than in many a young maid. Cheer up, dear soul."

"Take me home to my little cottage," she pleaded again.

"We will do as you wish. I have sent my men to the farm for a horse and cart and a feather-bed and one of them shall gallop to St Ives for the doctor. You must keep up a good heart for the sake of your little burdens."

"Have we 'most killed grannie?" asked Blaze, with white lips. "Mr Sweet said we should be the death of her," he said, fixing his great grey eyes on the farmer's face.

"What are you talking about, my little lad! you are grannie's very life, she will pull through for your sakes. The tables will have to be turned now, so to speak; grannie will be yours and Alsey's burdens, instead of Alsey and you being grannie's; you will have to do all you can for her until she is on her feet again, eh, Tamsin?" he said, looking down on the old woman.

She tried to smile, and her old eyes rested with a world of love and yearning on the little cripple by her side, and then she whispered as he bent over her—"God has laid a cross of pain on both our shoulders now, Blaze, and we must struggle on with them, terrible as they are; He will help us!"

It was almost dark by the time they got Tamsin home and carried her up to her little bedroom, and when the doctor arrived to set her leg the stars were trembling in the dark purple of the heavens, and smiling their silvery smiles on the moorland and the little cottage into which affliction had so unexpectedly entered.

CHAPTER XI.

A TRIAL OF FAITH.

ZENNOR is a thinly populated parish, and houses, except in the few villages so scattered that the news of Tamsin's sad accident took some time to become known. But those who heard of it were very sorry for her, and some came to offer help and to express sympathy, while others called to make suggestions which were not only foolish but unkind, wounding the poor old lady to the quick. They said that now she was so terribly afflicted she ought to send her burdens to the Union at once, and seek parish relief for herself. "Pride must have a fall, Tamsin, sooner or later," one would-be friend remarked, "and the sooner you bend your neck to the yoke the better. The doctor says you will never be the same strong body again, and will never be able to earn enough to maintain the children, so I advise you to let them go to the House *at once*."

"Should you?" returned the old woman quietly; but suffering as she was, her eyes flashed fire. "The Good Lord has enabled me to maintain my grandchildren all these years without help, and I believe He will not fail me now. Nothing but death shall separate me and my little dears. The Lord, for the best of reasons, I feel sure, is chastening me sore, and I feel as Naomi did that 'the hand of the Lord is gone out against me,'

but I trust Him still. You have come to comfort me I suppose, but you have made a terrible bungle of it, like Job's friends did, poor souls. They did not know the ways of the Lord nor the strength of His right hand. You cannot know Him either, or you would not talk like that. And you cannot bear my burden, so I beg of you to leave me. We've never wanted bread yet, and now my Master has laid me on this bed of pain, *'twill be His care to provide for us like He does the birds of the air.*"

The woman left the cottage in high dudgeon, and spread over the parish that Grannie Rosewarne was as proud as Lucifer, and did not want help or sympathy, and that in her opinion she was better off than people had any idea of, and very likely had a nice little store of money to go to, which was the reason of her independence and pride. And some believed it.

After this mistaken person had departed, poor Tamsin wept bitterly before the Lord, and told Him all that had been said to her, and asked Him to forgive her if she had been fostering a spirit of pride in her anxiety to keep herself and little grandchildren from the parish. She asked Him to take from her every wrong feeling, and to give her the meek Spirit of Christ, who drank so deeply of the cup of poverty for the sake of His poor children.

Tamsin was indeed poor, and nobody, except God and her grandchildren, knew how badly off she was—her money and little savings stolen, and she stretched on a bed of suffering. As she thought of these things, her helplessness overwhelmed her, and for a long time she lay wrestling with unbelief and evil thoughts. She prayed for strength to overcome, and grace to bear her Father's will, until she was exhausted and too weak to do anything, save to put out her feeble old hand to meet the strong hand of her Lord—who held the waves in check—and ask Him to prevail *in* her and *for* her. He was with her, she knew, although she could not feel His Presence, and that He would not let the leaping seas of unbelief drown her soul, nor want kill her body.

It was eventide, and the westering sun filled her chamber with a flood of golden light. As she lay, too weary even to cry again to Him, the birds outside the cottage began to chant their even-song, and through her little window floated their music, which brought to her mind the words her Master had whispered when she opened her little money-bag to show Him how fast it was being emptied—"Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls. Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things"—and they fell on her heart with a wonderfully calming power. And then in the sunset glow, which lit up her little room, she felt the Presence of One—

> "Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
> All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs;"

and He drew very near, lifting the load of care from her heart. Spiritual darkness was swallowed up in light, and unbelief fled before the beams of His great love; unspeakable peace and joy filled her soul. She felt that her risen Lord was with her, and promised never to leave her nor forsake her, and she need not trouble herself as to the future, He would care for her. Her extreme poverty would be His opportunity to prove to her the faithfulness of His promises. She must simply trust and lie still, like a little child, in restful content in the Everlasting Arms.

Miss Admonition was amongst the last to pay Tamsin a visit. She toiled up the narrow staircase leading to the little chamber, and sank into an arm-chair by the bed, panting for breath with her exertion, and crying—

"My dear soul, what a burden I am, to be sure—so terribly big!"

"Yes," put in Alsey, who had come up behind the spinster, "and like a bundle of furze tied in the middle."

"The cheeld's right, grannie, and hadn't it been that I've got a mite of love for you, I would never have mounted the stairs for all the tin in the hills."

Miss Admonition came to offer her niece's services for an hour every morning, and a morning every week to do the washing, which was accepted. The kind-hearted spinster did not come empty-handed, and hardly a day passed, until the old woman was better, but that she sent a little something, either for her or the children. She seldom came herself, but whenever she did, she never left without wanting to be a better woman.

Farmer Nancollas and his wife also came to see the invalid, and every now and again they sent or brought a good-sized basket of potatoes and scraps. And so her needs were supplied by one or another, and the children had better fare than before their grandmother was laid on a sick-bed. Alsey and Blaze were a great comfort to Tamsin. The former proved herself to be a perfect little woman. She not only did all the housework, milked the goat, and scalded the milk, but she waited on her grandmother hand and foot, and did everything a loving little maid could do. It was her pride to keep everything in the cottage as clean and bright as she could, because she knew it would please God and grannie. Of course, there were some things an eleven-year-old child could not attempt, but what her small strength would not allow, Miss Admonition's niece Mary Ann did. Mary Ann, who was as slim as her aunt was stout, and as plain as she was good-looking, was not a good nurse, although a willing one, and Tamsin was always thankful when she was gone. Blaze sat beside the invalid for hours, working at his little mats, and singing to her, when she could bear it, and bringing to her mind all the comforting words with which she herself had comforted him when he had been especially suffering. The poor little man still suffered a great deal, but, as usual, he never uttered a complaint. He meant to be brave, he said to himself, because they were both trying to follow

the Great Crossbearer, with their *little* cross of pain, but grannie, who was ever watchful, saw he was often in pain, and that he sorely missed her tender little attentions.

So the days passed on in all the beauty of summer; the moors were still lovely, the birds still sang, although they were not so full of song as in May and June, for June had passed and July had come.

Grannie grew very weak from being in bed and shut up in that little upper room, and she longed to feel her feet once more. Yet she was very patient and restful in her Father's love, although her body was daily losing strength. There was plenty of food, such as she had been accustomed to all her days, in the house, but her appetite was very bad, and she could not eat it. The doctor came often to see her, and one day he told Alsey, as she went with him to the door, that her grandmother should have more nourishing food, such as beef-tea, jellies, and the like, or she would never get better.

"Haven't you a rich friend who could help you?" he asked kindly, noticing the small maid's troubled face.

"Only God," she returned simply.

"Our God is very rich," put in Blaze, who was picking out some grass for his mats.

"Is He? But I was not thinking of *Him*," returned the doctor. "I thought that perhaps some friend could get what your old grandmother needs."

"Our parson is the only one who could give us things, sir," said Alsey, "and he is bad, and gone away for a change. Miss Admonition's Mary Ann told us. Besides, grannie does not like to be beholden. She is our burden now. I wish—glancing at Blaze—*we* could get what she wants to make her strong."

"But you cannot, unfortunately," the doctor said, patting her shaggy little head. "Good morning, children."

"What shall we do, Blaze?" asked Alsey, when the

medical man had driven away. She generally consulted her small brother in any difficulty. He was wise beyond his years, owing perhaps to his suffering little body, which had prematured his mind, and to his being so constantly in the company of his grandmother. "God is rich, you told the doctor. Is he rich in anything else besides grace and love, and all these things?"

"You *know* He is. All the world is His, the big stars, and everything."

"God sends us everything *we* want," said the little maid thoughtfully. "We say, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and He always sends it, but He sends us potatoes, bits of meat, and corners of pasties, and lots of other things *without* asking. I wish he would send grannie what she needs to make her strong. She can't swallow down the bread, she says, nor the broth."

"Have you learnt your text to-day?" asked the boy.

"Not yet. But I will go up to grannie for it as soon as I have scrubbed the table and sanded the floor."

"It is a funny text to-day, Alsey. '*Let all thy wants lie upon Me.*' Grannie and I had a talk about it before the doctor came."

"What did grannie say?"

"She said that the text is in the Old Testament, and that God the Holy Spirit pointed her to the verse when she was turning over the leaves, and that she has been led by it to lay our wants on the dear Lord Jesus. Old people, and little people like *us*, Alsey, have often real *wants*, she told me, and that it was our privilege to lay them upon Him. We had a good hunt in her Bible for the *wants* and the *needs*. She said she never knew before what a lot was said about it. When I repeated to-day's text she made me say the verse we learnt the other day:—'But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'"

"Blaze, I expect grannie doesn't think of her *own*

wants in thinking of *ours*. Shall we lay *her* wants on Jesus too, tell him what the doctor said—that she must have beef-tea, jelly, and other things, or she will never get better?"

"Yes," agreed the boy eagerly. "Grannie said, only just now, God likes to be asked for all we need. We will lay her wants on Him out of doors. She would hear us asking Him for things in here."

"I suppose that is the way to lay the wants on the Lord Jesus, just kneeling down and telling Him, and asking Him," said Alsey, a little doubtfully.

"Oh yes, I heard grannie laying your wants on Him in that way when I was sitting with her. She forgot I was by."

"What were my wants?" asked the little maid.

"I don't think I ought to tell, 'cause it was meant only for Him," said the boy. "But won't grannie be surprised, Alsey, when she sees the beef-tea and the jelly."

"Yes," returned Alsey. "What are beef-tea and jelly, I wonder?"

"I don't know. Something very nice, I expect."

"I hope the Lord Jesus will be pleased to send it by the angels, or drop it down on the moors, like he did the manna for the Israelites, for us to pick up," Alsey said, looking out of the window; "as grannie doesn't like to be beholden. Shall we go out now? I have done the table."

And out the children went into the sunshine, their faces full of earnestness and faith. Alsey had a very different feeling from what she had when she was looking for a clover leaf, as a key to unlock the hidden gold, to make her rich and great. She felt she was not doing wrong now, and that it was quite right to tell God what the doctor had said, and to lay their needs on Him. But her little heart grew very humble, as she helped her crippled brother along; for the thought of her foolishness was very fresh in her mind. Blaze was full of faith, and his great grey eyes were shining as he

gazed up at the cloudless sky. "Let us go up to the lark's nest; the ground is soft for kneeling there," he said, as they looked about for a place to pray in.

When they had reached the spot, they saw the young larks flitting about on the turf to try the strength of their feeble wings, and being watched the while and encouraged by the parent birds, which were hovering over them with all the pride imaginable. The children knelt on the grass, folding their hands reverently, and in a few simple words laid their dear old grandmother's wants on the Great Master. They knew He was with them, and that they were kneeling at His feet; for Tamsin had taught them that the Christ was everywhere present, and that His children may call upon Him at any time and in any place. It was a touching sight to see the orphans kneeling there—the moorland flowers all around them, and the sunlight touching their bare heads, bowed over their hands as they prayed. In a few minutes they rose up, and returned to the cottage full of confidence that the things for which they had asked would be sent.

That day, the next, and the next, those simple peasant children looked out in eager expectation for the beef-tea and the jelly. They went to the door many times in the course of the day to see if the things were coming, and once Blaze thought he saw a great white angel flying across the sky with what they expected under his outstretched wings, and he called Alsey to come. It was only a wonderful cloud, very like a human form with wings outspread, and bitter was the disappointment to their hopeful little hearts when its shape changed and floated away over the cottage. When the third day passed, and the things did not come, their hopes began to grow faint and their little faces sad. On the fourth day after they had laid "grannie's wants" on Him, they went out on the moors, and looked about to see if the Lord Jesus had left anything—they hardly knew what to expect—for them on the heath or amongst the stones, and as they

saw nothing, except the flowers and other moorland delights, they returned to the house dispirited and saddened.

"It can't be good for grannie to have her wants," said little Blaze, "else God would have been sure to send them. She ate a better breakfast this morning."

"It was the egg you gave her," said Alsey, unwilling to allow that there was any improvement in her grandmother's appetite.

As they entered the cottage her eyes fell on the pile of brooms and mats ready to be sold under the clock, and a thought flashed through her mind, and she cried joyfully.

"Why, Blaze, there are the brooms and mats; can't we take them to Miss Screech, and get money and buy the things to make our grannie well?"

The idea almost took Blaze's breath away.

"If we only could," he gasped.

"I am sure we could. We could load Roger, and you could ride on the brooms," cried Alsey, clapping her hands. "I wonder we never thought of taking the brooms to St Ives before. I expect that is the reason Jesus did not send the things, 'cause He would like to give *us* the pleasure of getting them for grannie ourselves. You see, we told Him she didn't like to be beholden. Grannie has often told us that God helps those who try to help themselves; so I expect He is going to help *us* to get grannie's wants."

"It is very kind of Him," said Blaze. "But who will stay and take care of grannie whilst we are away." That was a difficulty Alsey had never thought of, and her dark little head dropped. Then up it went with a jerk. "I see our way out of the croft," she cried. "Mary Ann is coming to wash the clothes to-morrow, and we'll ask grannie to give us a holiday. It will be a real holiday to go to St Ives. You have never been there, have you, Blaze?"

"No," he said.

"We ought to go, 'cause of the rent. The days are

galloping on, and rent-day will be here before we know where we are, and then if it isn't ready Mr Abner will turn us out neck and crop. If we sell all the brooms and mats—you must take yours too, Blaze—we shall be able to put some of the money away for Mr Abner. We won't say anything to grannie till Mary Ann comes."

The rent trouble was terrible to the little cripple, and that alone was enough to make him acquiesce in his sister's suggestions.

Miss Admonition's niece arrived at the cottage soon after dawn. Alsey had to get up to open the door to let her in, and she had not been in the cottage many minutes before the little maid told what she and Blaze were anxious to do, and asked her to get their grandmother to consent. Mary Ann was quite willing to do this, and declared it was a pity to let the mats and brooms lie idle when they might be turned into money. "And Tamsin will want all the money she can get," she said, looking at Alsey. "She is awfully weak, poor soul."

"I know she is," responded the child. "But please tell me what are beef-tea and jelly?"

"Beef-tea is beef stewed to nothing," returned Mary Ann quickly, "and jelly is a beautiful red and yellowly stuff, which, when turned out of the little castles and towers in which it is made, shivers and shakes like a dog after a cold bath. Mrs Lowe, the housekeeper at the Great House, makes some every day. What do you want to know about beef-tea and jelly for, eh?" she asked, seeing a mingled look of astonishment and despair on Alsey's face.

"We want to get some for grannie," she answered. "The doctor said she must have it, and that is the reason we want to go to St Ives to sell the brooms. Can we buy it, Mary Ann?"

"You can buy some of the materials for the jelly at the chemist's at St Ives, I think, and the beef you can get at the butcher's. If you like, I'll ask Mrs Lowe to put me in the way of making jelly, and then I'll show you."

"If you only will," cried Alsey, greatly relieved.

"Well, you go to the chemists, if your grandmother consents for you to go and sell the brooms, and ask him to give you the materials to make jelly, and to tell you what else to buy, and I'll ask the housekeeper to show me how to make it. She is a fine and kind soul. The gentry haven't been to see your grannie, I suppose."

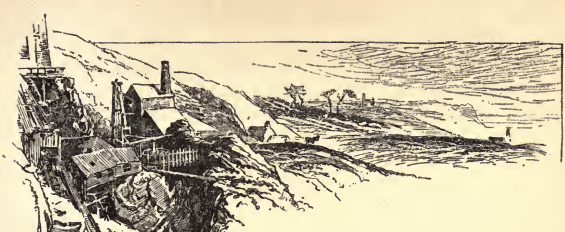
"No," returned the little maid.

"I wish you had been to that tea, Alsey. My dear life, 'twas the handsomest tea I ever sat down to. There was the best of everything, and the band played the liveliest tunes a body could wish to hear. The gentry were as happy as we were. How they laughed to be sure, and as for that Master Howard he was the life of the party. 'Twas a pity you, and grannie, and Blaze weren't there. They can't have taken a fancy to your ould grannie *somehow*."

Mary Ann went upstairs to Tamsin to get her permission for the children to go to St Ives. "It will do Blaze a world of good to go there," she said persuasively. "It will give him something to think about besides *you*. I am sure it can't be good for a weakly little cheeld like him to be always sitting up here. Besides, I am sure 'tis time Alsey began to take up your trade. I believe 'twill be many a long day before you will be able to walk to St Ives again. Alsey is a great maid for her years, and I advise you to let 'em go. She is big enough to take care of Blaze."

So the children were allowed to have their way, if they promised to be back before six o'clock.

Alsey soon got herself and Blaze ready. Mary Ann helped to load Roger, and, soon after nine o'clock, the children and the donkey were on their way to St Ives.



CHAPTER XII.

DISAPPOINTED.

THE way to St Ives revealed glimpses of the sea, which to-day as the children went along rippled and glistened under the July sky.

Blaze was interested in everything he saw, as he rode along on the top of the brooms and mats. A quaint little figure he looked in his snow-white smock and nankeen breeches; and his exquisite little face under a large soft felt hat, which was somewhat the worse for wear, having seen good service long before the small lad was born, was a sight to see. His delicate cheeks were even more rose-pink than they were on the day when he and grannie and his sister went to Bosigran Castle. Alsey was excited too, and talked eagerly to her little brother, pointing out everything she thought would interest him as they went along.

Soon the children reached the mining district, which was not very picturesque from an artistic point of view, but it was a busy and interesting scene notwithstanding, and the noise and bustle of mine life was pleasant—at least to Alsey and Blaze, who looked eagerly at the operations.

Roger was soon told to "gee up," and in a short time the mine, with its yawning shafts, its heaps of mineral, its noisy machines, in which mingled the mine maidens'

cheery laughter and enlivening songs, and the ugly engine-houses, were left behind, and the children did not pause again until they came to the little town of St Ives, which is built midway between the rocks, and commands a good view of its splendid bay.

Blaze had never been to a town that he could remember, and this first visit to St Ives was quite an event in his little life. He was very grave, as was becoming under the circumstances, but his flushed cheeks and the sparkle in his eyes showed how excited he was.

There was a glorious view spread out before them, and the lovely bay, its waters bluer than sapphires and chequered with woven shadows, lay dazzling under the great blue heavens.

"We are going down to the town now, Blaze," said Alsey. "Put your hat straight, and don't be frightened at the people and shops."

"I won't," returned the little fellow solemnly; "God will take care of His little Blaze."

And down the steep hillside they went, and soon came to a place called the Stennack, which is the entrance to that part of the town. The houses here looked very ancient; some of them were straw-thatched, and most of them stood apart as if they were afraid of each other, and revealed at their backs a brawling stream which rushed down the hill.

The donkey was in no hurry, and took his time going down the hill and through the narrow streets, which were "full of angularities," twists and turns, to the lower part of the town, giving Blaze plenty of opportunity to look about him, and to take in all that was to be seen.

The little town had a foreign appearance, especially the lower portion, with its curious-looking small-windowed houses, the front-doors of which are only to be got at by a tall flight of steps, some railed on the outer side to prevent the rash climber from a tumble into the street or court below.

The streets were rather quiet to-day, and not many people were about, except the women who were carrying their dinners to the different bakehouses, and a few noisy urchins, who eyed Blaze as he glanced down on them from the donkey; but the women looked tenderly at the slight little form, and said as they passed them that he had a face like an angel.

The little lad was generally very shy, but to-day, as he looked at the shops, the houses, and the people, he was quite taken out of himself, and his laugh rippled out on the air like a silver bell, so delighted was he with all he saw, especially the toy-shops. As they were passing a part of the town known as the Digey—a queer court-like place, with fish-cellars underneath and dwelling-rooms above—a woman rushed down some stone steps, and called to the children to stop, because she wanted a broom. Alsey was full of importance, and she made so much of selling that first broom, taking the penny with a grave "I thank you, ma'am," that amused and delighted the woman, who gave her another penny for her good manners.

She and Blaze were quite overcome with their wealth, and the former lifted her frock and dropped the two coppers into a capacious pocket. It was Tamsin's, by the way, and she had borrowed it, and tied it under her dress.

"We shall be able to get the jelly and the beef-tea for dear grannie now, sha'n't we, Blaze?" she cried, as they went on their way to the quay.

"Yes," said Blaze, his eyes shining, "she will let us come and sell brooms again. We sha'n't be grannie's burdens any longer, shall we?"

"No," returned the little maid. "Selling brooms is heaps better than searching for money-crocks."

Miss Screech's shop was reached at last. It was an odd-looking little house, the shop occupying the lower storey, the large long window of which was fitted with bottles of sweets, trays of ripe gooseberries, and other fruit; outside the window stood a mound of new potatoes,

while over the door, suspended from a crook, were several heath-brooms and a rush-mat.

Alsey rang the bell, and in a minute it was answered by a young girl, who asked what they wanted.

"I've brought grannie's brooms and mats, please," began Alsey eagerly, "and Blaze has brought his little pie-dish mats. We are Tamsin Rosewarne's grandchildren," she said, as the girl looked at them curiously.

"Are you?" she said. "Miss Screech isn't at home. She is gone to Lelant to a picnic."

"But you will take the brooms and mats, and give us the money, like you do to grannie, won't you?" said Alsey, looking at the young woman entreatingly.

"I am sorry I can't," replied the girl kindly, "as Miss Screech's orders were that I was not to take a bit of anything to *sell* until she returned. Besides, we have brooms which a woman brought us from Hayle only yesterday. She could not wait for Tamsin Rosewarne's any longer. So I advise you to take yours to another shop."

Tears filled Blaze's eyes, and Alsey burst out, as the girl disappeared: "we shall have to take the brooms home again, and we sha'n't be able to get grannie's wants, and she will die. Jesus *can't* have heard us, Blaze, or we can't have laid the wants on Him properly."

"I think we did, Alsey," said the boy, strangling a sob in his throat. "We did as grannie did—folded our hands together—so—and prayed."

"P'r'aps somebody else will buy our brooms," said the girl, turning the donkey round and moving slowly away from the shop.

The poor little souls were so upset by their brooms not being taken that they never once glanced at the busy scene on the quay and beach, nor heard the pleasant tap, tap of the caulking mallets that rang out on the clear air as the shipwrights repaired the vessels on the sandy shore below them. They passed the fish-cellars and the old church, standing close by the sea, unnoticed.

Alsey stopped at several small shops as they went up the town, but, alas! nobody seemed to be in want of brooms or mats that day; so they went up to the Stennack again, and as the little maid climbed the hill by Roger's side her eyes were blinded with tears. It was too dreadful to go back to their moorland cottage with almost an empty pocket—and grannie growing so weak, and nothing to make her better. It was no wonder she drooped her little head, and was too sad and disappointed even to speak. Blaze was silent too, but he was trying his hardest to keep back his tears. He could not understand why it was the Lord Jesus had not answered their prayer. It could not have been good for grannie to have those things, he said to himself. Perhaps He was going to make her well in some other way.

They had gained the summit of the hill, and were going slowly back to Zennor when Blaze saw a pony coming along the road at a quick trot, and a brown horse behind it. Alsey's eyes were on the ground and her tears dropping fast on the dusty road, so that she did not perceive the pony until its rider cried,—

"Why, it is Alsey Rosewarne surely?" and, looking up, the little maid saw that it was Howard Staversworth on his pony, Firefly.

"Yes, it is me, sir," she answered meekly, and dropping a curtsey.

"And is this fine fellow your donkey?" asked the young gentleman, coming closer, and touching Roger with his whip, which made that animal hee-haw so loudly that it caused the spirited little pony to arch his beautiful glossy neck and prance, to the terror of Blaze.

"Yes, sir," answered Alsey, backing the donkey out of the way of Firefly's hoofs, "and the boy on his back is my little brother Blaze." She had stopped crying and was wiping her eyes.

"I see it is," said the Hon. Howard, drawing near the donkey again and looking down on the tiny cripple. "Poor little fellow," he said, his voice full of pity. "I

say, Alsey," he cried, turning to the girl, "I have never seen you since the day you tried to run away from the thunder and lightning. I heard you were as wet as a shag. I suppose that old grandmother of yours gave you a nice licking when you got home. She cannot be nearly so nice as you said, or I am sure she would have allowed you and that small boy there to come to the tea. It was quite a disappointment to us not to have had you with us."

"Was it?" cried Alsey, looking bewildered. "We wanted to come awful——"

"Then, why didn't you, pray?" asked Howard sharply.

"'Cause you never asked us, sir," said Alsey simply, opening wide her hazel eyes, still wet with tears. "You asked everybody in the parish to the tea, except grannie, and Blaze, and me."

It was now Howard's turn to look surprised. "I do not understand you," he said. "We *did* invite you. My cousin, Lady Marjorie, wrote the notes of invitation herself, and mamma sent them. *Surely* you received the notes?"

"We didn't, sir."

"I cannot understand it," said Howard again. "I am certain my mother sent them."

"Is that the reason the great lady, the little maid, and the doll haven't been to see grannie and Blaze again?" asked Alsey.

"Yes," returned the young gentleman, smiling at the doll being included. "As you did not turn up at the little *fête*, or send to say that something had prevented you, we naturally felt hurt, and thought you did not want anything more to do with us. Mamma was quite charmed with your old grandmother, as I told you, and was anxious to see more of her. But where is she now? and why are you two little children so far from your home? And, Alsey, you have been crying. What is the matter?" The young voice was very kind and gentle, which went direct to Alsey's heart, and in a

few minutes she had told him of her grandmother's accident, of what the doctor said, of their laying her needs on the Lord Jesus, how they looked out for their wants every day, of their disappointment, and then of their sudden hope of getting what grannie must have to make her well by selling brooms.

"And we brought 'em to St Ives," she cried in conclusion, "and we have only sold *one;* for Miss Screech, the woman who takes grannie's brooms to sell, is gone to a picnic, and we don't think grannie will let us come to St Ives again by ourselves, and oh! we are afraid she will die."

"You poor little things," said Howard, when Alsey had finished her story, "I am *so* sorry for you. Poor grannie, how sad for her to have to lie in bed all day, and to be suffering such pain. I do want to help you, but I haven't a farthing left of my pocket-money or I would buy all your brooms and mats. Have you cried them," he asked, as a thought struck him.

"No," returned Alsey. "Blaze and me didn't think of that."

"There is my groom," he cried, pointing to Frost, who sat on his horse some little distance from the children, waiting for his young master. "I will give Firefly into his charge, and then we will go back to the town together and see if we cannot sell the mats and brooms. Won't it be grand if we succeed in selling every one? Cheer up, we will get grannie's wants *somehow.* If we can't get rid of our brooms, I'll ask our fat old cook to make her some jelly. She is a splendid hand at jellies. But, as you say your grannie does not care to be under an obligation to others, we must do our utmost to sell her brooms and get her the materials to make it."

"The doctor said grannie must have beef-tea as well as jelly," cried Alsey, looking less hopeless.

"What a jolly doctor he must be. Beef-tea and that sort of thing is so much better than senna-tea, which I used to be dosed with when I was a small child, although nurse says there is nothing to equal it."

"But you ar'n't very old now, are you, sir?" said Alsey.

"I wonder if that nice doctor is the man who physics mamma and prescribes for my little cousin's dolls?" said the boy, ignoring the child's question. "He does the dolls no end of good I know—cured Lady Maria of the earache. We'll find out where he lives. As he said that jelly and beef-tea are necessary to set your grandmother on her feet again, we will tell him that it is imperative for him to purchase some of the mats and brooms to enable her to get it."

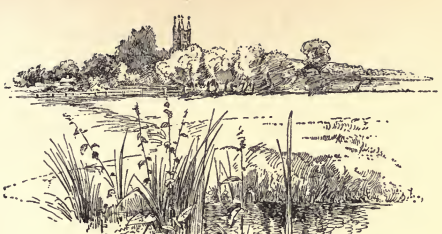
Alsey and Blaze looked at the bright boy with eyes of admiration, and their hearts were full of joy with the hope that grannie would have all she wanted to make her well after all.

"Frost," called Howard to his groom, "please look after Firefly. I am going into the town with these children to help them sell their brooms," and he sprang from his pony as he spoke.

"Master Howard!" gasped the servant, coming near and taking Firefly's bridle. "What will her ladyship say."

"Nothing, of course. Her ladyship will be here soon. Tell her what I am going to do."

Howard turned to the donkey, took some of the brooms from his back, tied them together with a string he pulled out of his pocket, and slung them across his shoulder, where they dangled against his velvet jacket. Then, taking one of the large mats in his hands, he told Alsey to turn Roger round, and soon they were on their way back to St Ives, leaving Frost, who had dismounted, standing by the horses in the road looking anything but pleased, and muttering to himself as he watched his young master walking briskly along by the donkey's side—"Fancy the son and heir of a lord selling brooms. Her ladyship will be aghast, and sha'n't I catch it. Ugh—the young jackanapes," and the look of disgust on the man's face was so funny, that if "the young jackanapes" had seen that look and heard the remark he would have laughed.



CHAPTER XIII.

BUY A BROOM.

THE Hon. Howard Staversworth and the little peasant children went quickly down the Stennack; the former was so absorbed in the thought of helping the little ones that he was utterly unconscious that many people were staring at him in amazement.

The young gentleman was by this time well known to the people of St Ives. Very seldom a day passed but that he was to be seen riding down the streets of the town on his Shetland pony. He had endeared himself to many there already—not only to the tradesmen, whose shops he often patronised, but to the poor people, and especially the fishermen.

"Alsey, what are the brooms each?" he whispered, as a woman elbowed her way through a crowd of women and children that had gathered around them and the donkey.

"A penny, sir; the mats are eightpence each, and Blaze's little pie-dish mats are twopence, or six for elevenpence."

"I'm not going to sell these nice brooms for a penny," cried the lad. "They are worth at least *fourpence*, and I do not intend to let them go for less."

"This heath-broom, ma'am," he said, turning to the woman, who he thought looked very respectable, and

that respectability ought to pay well, "is only fourpence."

"My dear," exclaimed the woman, staring at the lad, "it is too much—*a great deal too much.* I could not think of paying such a price for a heath-broom."

"You will see if you take the broom in your hand that it is well worth the money. It was manufactured by the aged grandmother of my little friends here," pointing to Alsey and Blaze. "I could not sell it for a farthing less. It ought to be a *shilling.* You are not obliged to buy it, but you will miss a grand opportunity of getting a bargain. We are not in the least afraid of selling our brooms," and turning away he gave Roger a dig with the handle of his whip to make him move on.

"I'll have the broom," she cried, laying her hand on the boy's shoulder to detain him.

"Here you are, then," said Howard, handing her the broom, with a bow. "I thought you would not care to lose a bargain," and to Alsey and Blaze's surprise she laid four coppers in his hand.

The streets were by this time full of bustle and noise; the children were out of school, the men were coming home from their work to their midday meal, and the women were fetching their dinners from the different bakehouses. Many of the latter gathered around the donkey with sheets of pasties, pies, smoking roasts, and other appetising dishes in their hands, which made Alsey and even Blaze feel hungry. They had forgotten to bring anything with them to eat, and were now conscious for the first time that they were in need of dinner.

"I'll have a broom, if you please," cried another woman, who was holding a baked plum-pudding in her hand.

"At the same price?" cried Howard quickly.

"If I *must*, sir," returned the woman. "But I never heard tell of such a price for an old broom."

"There is no 'must' about it, my good woman.

Besides, the brooms are not old, they are perfectly new. I suppose you know that new brooms sweep clean?"

"One would imagine, sir, that you were born to the trade," she cried, taking the broom, amidst a roar of laughter from the bystanders.

"I daresay I was," rejoined the lad, pocketing the coppers with a business-like air.

"I say, Alsey," he cried, as they moved on down the street, "I shall be a broom-seller when I grow up. I have an idea, from our great success now, that it will be much better than being a miner or a tinker."

"But you will have to learn to make brooms first, sir," said Alsey, lifting her face to his. "Grannie will be pleased to teach you for *nothing* when she gets better."

"How kind of her!" laughed the boy.

They turned up into Shute Street, and again Howard's voice was heard crying the brooms, which caused many people to turn their heads and look.

"Strike up, Blaze," said the young gentleman, and the cripple, being thus commanded and encouraged by a nod and smile from Alsey, cried, "buy a broom," too, and his little voice rippled out sweet and clear.

"My voice is like a corncrake's beside yours," cried Howard, stopping short and gazing at the child. "Can you sing?"

"He can sing beautifully," said Alsey, answering for him; "better than the birds, grannie says."

"We will all three cry 'Buy a broom' together, and see if we cannot bring the folk out of their houses to buy of us. Now, then, pitch the key—G sharp," and three young voices rang through the street. Very sweetly it sounded, and soon brought people to their windows and doors, and out into the street. Once more they were surrounded, and many suddenly discovering that they were in want of heath-brooms, pressed near to buy, and only three or four demurred at the price.

"Hullo! what is the matter here?" cried a gruff voice. "Any one hurt?" and Alsey glancing round saw the doctor who attended her grandmother looking over the shoulder of an old woman.

"There is nobody bad *here*, sir," replied the little maid. "*We are selling brooms to get grannie's wants.*"

"Whatever do you mean, child?——Good gracious! Master Howard, you here, and selling brooms!" exclaimed the astonished doctor, catching sight of the broom-laden boy emerging from behind the donkey.

"Yes, Dr Gerrans, and splendid brooms they are—*worth buying*, and the mats too. They were made by one who knows her art well from long practice. We were going to find out where you lived to ask you to buy some. You see, doctor, you prescribe such expensive medicines that poor people like us," throwing a glance at Alsey and Blaze, "cannot possibly get them unless we put our shoulder to the wheel—and *hardly then*. As the little girl told you, we are doing our best to get her old grandmother what you ordered. So, do you not think that it is only *fair* that you should help us to get it? We have been most successful in disposing of our brooms, but the rush-mats and Blaze's pie-mats don't sell quite so well. You will purchase one of our large mats, won't you, sir? It is *only* two shillings."

"Eightpence, sir," corrected Alsey in a loud whisper, which brought a broad smile to many faces. "That is what grannie charges, and sixpence a piece for the small ones."

"*Grannie* can charge what she likes," cried Howard, "but I cannot allow this big fellow to go for a farthing less than two shillings. It ought to be five," he said, lifting his handsome face to the doctor's. "You will have it, sir, will you not?"

"I will, Master Howard; and I may as well have a couple as one whilst I am about it," returned the doctor, laughing.

"And a couple of brooms, too, sir, to keep the mats company," cried the daring young lad.

"If you like. You will make the fortunes of these little ones, sir—eh, Blaze?" he said, drawing near the donkey, and patting the small cripple's thin little cheek.

Blaze nodded.

"Master Honourable shall sell more of grannie's mats and brooms another day," cried Alsey, with an absurd look and tone of condescension.

"How kind of you?" laughed Howard, giving the doctor his mats and brooms. "Four shillings the mats and eightpence the brooms. Four and eightpence, sir."

Dr Gerrans opened his purse and laid a half sovereign in Howard's hand with the words, "I do not want the change, sir," which made the boy's eyes sparkle, and looking at him he said gratefully—

"You are a brick, doctor, and when I am ill you shall doctor me; only, when I cannot have the wherewithal to make me strong, please do not prescribe the *impossible*."

As Dr Gerrans went off laughing and dangling the mats and brooms as if he scarcely knew what to do with them, a carriage came slowly down the street.

The happy and excited children did not hear the wheels, nor the whispering voices around them.

"There is the Falcon's Crag carriage coming, and Lady Staversworth and her little niece in it."

The coachman was the first to see Howard, with the brooms slung across his shoulders, offering the mats for sale. Being well-trained, like his horses, he never moved a muscle nor winked an eye, but, as he afterwards told his fellow-servants, he "was nearly choked in his innards with laughing to see our young master with the people gaping around him like so many hoisters."

Just then the children began to cry "Buy a broom" lustily again, and Howard's voice, being stronger and

shriller and less musical than Blaze's and Alsey's, was heard above theirs, which caused the occupants of the carriage to start, and Lady Staversworth, turning her head, caught sight of her young son with one hand on the donkey and the other holding a broom aloft. She was too surprised to speak, and, to confess the truth, felt somewhat mortified.

"Is that not Howard's voice, Aunt Caroline?" asked a soft little voice at her side, and little Marjorie peeped over the door of the carriage to see. "It *is* Howard, auntie, and there he is in a crowd of people, and oh, he is crying brooms like the children sometimes do in London," and the child turned a pair of amazed eyes on her aunt. "What has he done with Firefly, and where is Frost?"

"I do not know, darling."

The carriage was passing the donkey and the children as Lady Staversworth spoke, and Blaze, lifting his soft eyes, saw little Lady Marjorie peeping over the carriage door.

"Look, auntie, there is little Saint Blaze on a donkey," she cried.

"I see it is," she returned. 'Stop, Wilson."

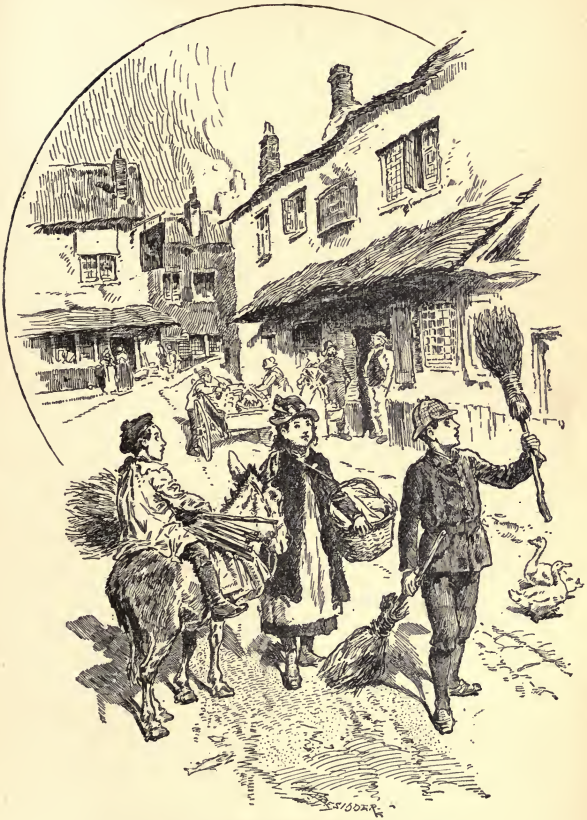
"Why, mother, is it you?" cried Howard, as the coachman pulled up his horses. "I did not hear the carriage. I wonder Wilson did not run over us, donkey, brooms, and all!" and the people making way for him, he sprang on the steps of the carriage, with a mat in his hand, his face eager and his eyes dancing.

"Please do not scold, mamma," he began, noticing a cloud on his mother's brow.

"What are you doing here, my son?" she said gravely.

"Don't you see I have turned *broom-seller?* Did not Frost tell you?"

"I have not seen Frost. I am surprised, very surprised at seeing you here, Howard, with brooms over your shoulders, and crying them in the streets like any beggar's child. Broom-selling is not *quite* the occupation for a nobleman's son, is it, Howard?"



"JUST THEN THE CHILDREN BEGAN TO CRY—'BUY A BROOM.'" [*p.* 105.

"It depends on circumstances, mother," cried the boy, rather crestfallen. "But, dearest mamma, you must not be vexed. You would be selling brooms too, or trying to, if you had met Alsey and little Saint Blaze—as you and Marjorie call him—as I did at the top of the hill, breaking their hearts and crying their eyes out, because they could not sell them. Their old grandmother has broken her leg, mother."

"Has she, indeed," said the gentle little mother, forgetting for the moment to look severe. "I am *so* sorry."

"I knew you would be," cried the lad, seeing his advantage and taking it. "Your heart is always full of sympathy for those who suffer. I have heard papa say so." And leaning over the carriage door, he said in a low voice, which was full of earnestness: "Oh, mother! I gathered from what the poor little things told me, that they are exceedingly poor. They came all the way from Zennor to St Ives to sell their brooms, to get their old grandmother some nourishing food, beef-tea and jellies, which kind, stupid Dr Gerrans ordered to get up her strength (she is dreadfully weak, poor old thing, *sinking away*, Alsey says), and, mother, darling, they only sold *one*, and were returning home heartsick, when Frost and I met them. It was pitiful to see Saint Blaze's little face. I could not stand it, you know, and I thought I would turn broom-seller to help them. You are often telling me what claims poor people have on rich people, and that we must never lose an opportunity of helping them when we can do them good. I would have bought all their goods if I had had any money. So how was it possible for me to help them except by coming with them into the town and crying brooms? And mother, I feel somehow that it was God who put it into my heart to help those little things." So softly and quickly did he speak that only his mother and cousin heard him. "I am not quite the naughty boy you think me," he continued; "I *do* want to love and serve

God like you do, and I think the best way to please Him is to love and care for His poor. Say, darling mamma, that you are not vexed at my helping those poor little children," and he looked at his mother with such pleading eyes, that even if she did not altogether approve of this way of helping the poor, she could not reprove him further. So she only said, "Dear boy, you must consult your mother sometimes in a matter like this," and she laid her hands on the brooms. "I am sure you meant to be very kind."

"Of course I did, mamma. And it is such fun selling brooms. I would rather be a broom-seller when I grow up than anything else. You know what a great ambition I used to have to emulate dear old grandpapa in the tinkering line. Mother, we have sold more than half our brooms and some of the mats. See what a lot of money we have," and he took out of his pocket a handful of coppers and silver, and the half sovereign showing its golden front on top of a penny.

"Surely, Howard, you have never earned all that money by selling brooms and mats?"

"Indeed we have. Now, mother, you must be our next customer, please. The brooms are fourpence a piece, and the mats two shillings."

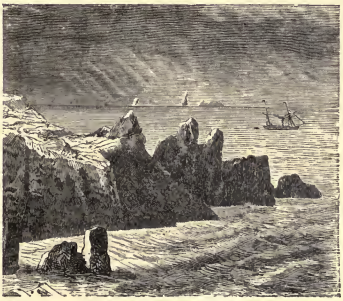
"But what am I to do with mats and brooms, dear boy?"

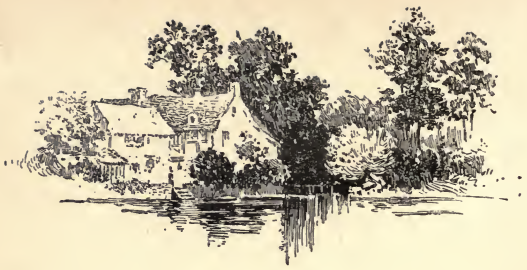
"The grooms can sweep with the brooms, and Wilson can wipe his feet on the mats. You shall take the whole lot, mother dear, and give us an order for as many more as you like. Marjorie shall give little Saint Blaze an order for a set of mats for her dolls' kitchen and hall."

"There is more people come to buy brooms of *you*, please, Master Honourable," cried Alsey, coming to the carriage.

"I must attend to our customers," cried the boy, jumping off the step. "You won't buy of us, mother?"

"I will take all you have left," cried Lady Staversworth hurriedly, for the carriage was being surrounded by a gaping crowd, and she felt quite disconcerted. "We are going to Porthminster to luncheon," she replied, as Howard waited for an answer. "Bring little Saint Blaze and the girl with you. I am anxious to learn particulars about their grandmother. Drive on, Wilson."





CHAPTER XIV.

LOVING MINISTRY.

HALF-AN-HOUR later, Howard, Alsey, and Blaze found themselves on Porthminster's tawny sands, where they saw Lady Staversworth sitting watching the waves, while her little niece was paddling in one of the many pools.

Porthminster is a charming spot, and its great cliffs, shell-strewn sands, and limpid waters make it a place of delight to children. Little Marjorie was enjoying herself in the water, as only a child can, when her cousin and the little Rosewarnes came on the scene.

"Little Saint Blaze is awfully tired, mother," said Howard, as he drew near. "I thought he would have fainted once. Shall I sit him on the rugs and let him rest awhile, before he goes back to Zennor?"

"Yes, do; and give him and his sister some chicken and ham. Little Saint Blaze is more saint-like than ever, I think. He must not talk. The little girl is a bright, strong-looking child. She will tell me about her grandmother by-and-by perhaps."

Whilst Howard was looking after Blaze, and filling his plate with good things, Lady Staversworth asked Alsey to tell her about her grandmother, which the little maid was quite willing to do; and, not being shy,

she told in her simple graphic style all she had said to Howard when he met them at the top of the hill.

The lady was greatly touched, and blamed herself for not going to see Tamsin as she had promised. Tears filled her eyes when the little girl spoke of how they went up to the lark's nest to lay grannie's wants on the dear Lord Jesus, and how sad they felt when the wants did not come. "But grannie will get them now," she cried joyfully. "Blaze and I haven't wanted for anything; it was only the jelly and the beef-tea that grannie wanted to make her well. God has been ever so good to us, grannie says."

"I am sure He has," said the lady gently. "I want you to entrust me with your broom money. I shall be able to make it go much farther than you would, I think. My son and I will buy material for the beef-tea and the jelly to-day, and to-morrow we will bring it to your grandmother."

"Wasn't it dreadful that Tamsin and the poor children did not get the notes of invitation?" said Howard, sitting down by his mother.

"Yes, Alsey has been telling me about it. The poor old lady must have thought us very unkind. I am sorry, dear," she said, looking at Alsey.

"By whom did you send the notes?" asked the boy.

"Frost."

"Where is he? Ah! there he is coming. I shall go and ask him what he did with the notes," and Howard ran off.

"Mother," he said, returning in a few minutes, "Frost did not deliver the notes himself he tells me. He met a farmer called Sweet, who was going that way, and he asked him to pass them in to Tamsin Rosewarne, and I suppose he couldn't have done so. Frost is quite upset about it. He would not have had it happen for worlds, he says."

"I am much displeased with Frost," said Lady Staversworth, getting up. "I told him that he was to

deliver the notes himself. If I cannot depend on my servants, what am I to do?"

"Look over it this once, mother," pleaded Howard. "He will be more careful next time. He said the old man looked trustworthy."

"That does not excuse his fault. He did those little ones out of a treat, and was, perhaps, the indirect cause of the poor old woman's accident."

"She might have broken her leg going back from Pendour as well as from Bosigran Castle," said the boy. "He'll be blubbering like a baby if you don't overlook it."

"I suppose I must this once, Howard. But I must tell him that my orders are not to be disobeyed again."

Alsey and Blaze were very anxious to get back to their grandmother, and as soon as they had eaten their chicken they started on their homeward way.

Lady Staversworth, in her kind thoughtfulness for Blaze, had doubled up a carriage rug on the donkey's back for him to ride on. The suffering little face touched her deeply, and she saw how much the animal's unsteady pace hurt him.

They reached their cottage soon after six o'clock, and found Mary Ann looking out for them.

"I am glad you've come," she cried. "Tamsin has been in a fidget for an hour or more. She was beginning to fear you were killed. She hasn't been left alone a minute hardly. My aunt has been here, and so has Mr Abner Sweet."

"Mr Abner always comes when one of us is out," said Alsey. "One would think a little bird flies and tells him."

"The old rascal came to give your poor old grandmother notice to leave her cottage. 'Felt sure,' he said, 'she will never be nothing again, and therefore won't be able to pay the rent. Poor men must live,' he declared. I gave him a bit of my mind that he won't forget in a hurry. Tamsin was in a terrible stew about having notice given her at first, but she is as

quiet as a lamb now. Cast that care 'pon her dear Lord, she told me. What it is to have faith!" and Mary Ann lifted her face to the sky as if she could solve the mystery there. It was a mystery indeed to her, that an old woman, poor and suffering, and in utter dependence on others (on God, Tamsin would have said), could be as trustful as a little child.

"We've got some of the rent," said Alsey, when she had dismounted, opening her brown hand. "We've sold all we took to St Ives. Master Honourable sold most of 'em for us, and the great lady bought all Blaze's dish mats, and gave him this golden shilling. We've got a lot more, but the lady has it to get grannie's wants."

"A golden shilling, you goosey. *'Tis a sovereign,*" exclaimed Mary Ann. "Tell me more about it."

"I can't stop," cried the child. "I must go up to grannie. Lift Blaze down, please;" and she flew into the cottage and up the stairs, followed in a few minutes by Mary Ann and Blaze.

What a wonderful story grannie had to listen to. She laughed heartily one minute, and had to wipe her eyes the next.

"The wants are *really* coming, grannie," said Blaze, resting his lovely little head on the pillow beside the old woman. "You'll soon be strong now. Alsey and I were a *tiny* bit afraid that the Lord Jesus had forgotten to send them. He has got so many people's prayers to hear and wants to tend to. And I remember what you told us, that God's time is always the best time, His way always the best way, although we may have to wait a long while for what we have asked. I do love Him for being so kind to us little orphans," he whispered, "and for letting us help you to bear your burdens. We *really* are, ar'n't we, grannie?"

"Yes, indeed," cried Tamsin. "Fancy two little things like you and Alsey helping to carry an old woman's burdens! How good the Lord is, my pretties," she said, raising her old hand—no longer hard and brown, but

soft and white—and patting each little head that lay so close to her (Alsey was resting her head on the bed too). "We can't thank Him as we ought for His goodness. He is crowning us with crowns of loving-kindness and tender mercies! I feel as if I should like to sing to Him—to pour out a grateful heart in a song of praise."

"I should like to, too," said Blaze.

"So should I, grannie," cried Alsey.

"We will then, dears. We'll sing the glorious 'We praise Thee.' We have grateful hearts to lay before Him, if we have not crowns. It seems months ago since I was in our dear old church, singing with His people."

"It will be like having church in your little chamber," said Blaze.

Mary Ann, whose presence they had for the time forgotten, said she should never forget how the first lines of the grand old *Te Deum*—"We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father Everlasting"—rang out, nor the exalted look of faith and triumph on the old woman's face as she sang, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father." Her feeble old voice was almost drowned by Blaze's ringing tones. The children stood by the side of the bed, hand in hand, and the little cripple, Mary Ann declared, looked like an angel, and sang like one. She said she felt quite awed, and believed that the room was full of angels as it was full of praise, and she "could not have moved for the life of me until their voices died away."

As soon as they had finished the *Te Deum*, Blaze went to bed: he was completely worn out with the wonderful day. His heart was full of happiness, and he slept heavily all that night.

"I shall make it my business to go and see Mr Sweet to-morrow," said Mary Ann, when she had said "good-bye" to Tamsin, "and I'll tell him he needn't fret his lean old heart to nothing about the rent, for Tamsin

has got it ready for him, and if he turns her out the people of Zennor will pull his house down about his ears."

The following afternoon Alsey and Blaze were on the tiptoe of expectation. They were not kept waiting long. Soon after two they caught sight of Lady Staversworth's carriage, with Wilson on the box-seat, and Howard sitting beside him. Then they saw the kind, smiling faces of the lady and her small niece.

Howard sprang down to help his mother and cousin out, and soon they were in the cottage.

"Mamma has 'grannie's wants,'" whispered the lad. "I say, Alsey, I wish I were grannie. Cook told mother that the jelly is the *best* she ever made. She put all the strengthening stuff she could into it!"

"We will go up and see your grandmother if we may," said Lady Staversworth, holding a basket in her hand with great care.

Tamsin received her visitors with smiles, and the "wants" with gratitude.

"I didn't know, ma'am, that I wanted anything; I thought my dear Lord had already sent all I needed. But I s'pose He knew how weak I feel sometimes lying here in the bed," she said, as she watched the lady taking out of the basket the things she had brought. "I must confess I am nothing but a body of weakness."

Alsey and Blaze looked on with wondering eyes, and Howard and his little cousin stood beside them, enjoying their delight. Alsey did not quite like the appearance of the beef-tea, which was in a large jar, but the jelly more than came up to her expectation and Mary Ann's graphic description of it. If it did not "shiver and shake like a dog after a cold bath," it trembled a little as it was being taken out of the basket, and looked, the child thought, much too pretty to be eaten, but she was certain it would act on her grandmother like a charm!

There were several tempting things in the basket

besides the "wants," and Lady Staversworth laid them out on the table which Alsey had drawn to the side of the bed for that purpose.

"You see, Tamsin, I have taken the liberty to add a chicken and a few peaches to the jelly and beef-tea which your grandchildren so lovingly laboured to get you. I am often laid aside myself, and know how refreshing it is to have some cool fruit," said her ladyship, with delicate tact. "I am sure you will not refuse to take it from me, or rather from the Lord, whose servant I am, and your servant for His sake. I am only grieved that I did not hear of your sad affliction before, that I might have had—if only in some small way—the privilege of ministering to you in your need. You know that by love we are to serve one another. You will give me that privilege; will you not, Tamsin?"

"My dear," began Tamsin, her eyes filling with glad tears, "how good you are to me."

"I wish to be," returned the lady simply. "But you must have some beef-tea at once," she said, noticing how white and tired the poor old woman looked, very different from what she was when she last saw her. "I have brought a saucepan with me, which must only be used for warming the beef-tea. I noticed when I came into the cottage that there was a nice fire on the hearth. I will go down and warm some of the tea for you."

"With your own hands, ma'am? You will soil 'em," cried Tamsin in distress.

"Hands were made to be useful," said her ladyship smiling. "Christ's holy hands were ever ministering to the need of His fellow-men; and shall the servant be ashamed to do what He did, and would do still if He were here? Besides, I want to teach Alsey how to warm beef-tea. You must have it little and often, Tamsin."

"I don't see why mother objected to my helping the poor children to sell brooms if she does not mind warming up an old woman's beef-tea," said Howard to

himself. "There must be a difference, I suppose, but I fail to see it. I expect she thought it was just for the fun of doing it."

"Is that the dear lad you were anxious about when the thunderstorm came on?" asked Tamsin, looking at Howard.

"Yes," Lady Staversworth answered, getting up to go downstairs. "I cannot tell you how your words comforted me that day," she said, as the lad went to the window where Lady Marjorie was showing Alsey her doll. "He loves my boy more than I can ever do; and now, when I give him into His keeping, I just leave him in simple trust under the Overshadowing Wings."

Tamsin found the beef-tea very good, and Alsey was astonished to see how cleverly the lady fed her. The child had an idea that gentlefolks could do nothing but ride in carriages, live in fine houses, and sit with their hands folded. But she was learning that they could be very useful, and that Lady Staversworth was nearly as clever as her old grandmother.

"I shall come to see you every day when the weather will allow, until I go back to London," said her ladyship as she was leaving. "I have told Alsey how to warm your beef-tea. We must *all* do our best to take care of you, now you are an invalid; eh, Blaze?" she said, looking down on the little cripple. "The broom money will go a long way with *careful management.* Good-bye!"

"I have brought a small present for you," said little Lady Marjorie handing a parcel to Blaze, as she got up to go. "It is a picture-book. I bought it at a dear little shop in Clarence Street, Penzance, when I was there with Aunt Caroline. She thought you might like to have it."

"The little lady didn't give me a book," cried Alsey jealously, when the visitors had left.

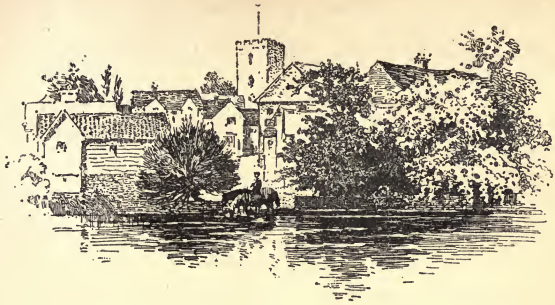
"It was for both of us I am sure," returned the little fellow, quite willing to share his gift.

Lady Staversworth kept her word, and never a day

passed, except when it happened to be raining heavily, that did not bring her to the moorland cottage. Sometimes she was alone, and sometimes she was accompanied by her son and niece. She never came without bringing some little dainty to the invalid; and every day she sent a dinner which was enough for three. Tamsin's other friends continued to be kind too, so she and the children were far better off than they were before her accident. The old woman improved wonderfully, and declared she was getting quite fat with good living.

And Mary Ann jokingly told her that she not only praised her kitchen, but that she would soon be fatter than Miss Admonition if she continued to pad her old bones with so much flesh. "Then Tamsin, my dear," she cried, with a twinkle in her eye, "if your poor leg don't get any stronger and won't let 'ee walk to St Ives with your brooms, I shall advise my aunt to set up a caravan and take you into partnership and go the round of the country. Mr Abner Sweet suggested her doing this some months ago, I believe. I am sure and certain that the *two* of you exhibited together would be such a draw that you would make your fortunes in no time, and die as rich as Jews!"

The old woman could not help smiling at Mary Ann's banter, but said she would rather not be as stout as Miss Admonition.



CHAPTER XV.

UNSELFISHNESS.

THE days flew quickly by and it was the middle of September. Lady Staversworth was still at the Falcon's Crag; but she told Tamsin that she was afraid she would soon have to go back to her home, which was a great grief to the old woman. She had grown to love the "sweet lady," as she called her, with all the affection of her strong old heart. And no wonder! for Lady Staversworth had been a real friend to her, not only in helping to supply her wants, but in many other ways—in reading to her, sitting with her when she was lonely, and getting her to confide in her about many things, and drawing her to speak more fully of her life in Christ.

That unlearned woman—ignorant in things pertaining to the world—was Lady Staversworth's teacher, and she never forgot the lessons she learnt in Tamsin Rosewarne's little chamber. And young Blaze was an unconscious teacher, too, in his beautiful little way, to Howard Staversworth. Alsey amused him hugely, but Blaze, with his sweet patience and simple faith, drew him—unknown to himself, at first—closer to the Saviour, until he not only longed to love Him more, but to give to Him his bright young life. He was

learning to be very gentle and humble, and doing good purely for the Great Master's sake.

Tamsin, who was now able to come downstairs, loved to sit by the window and look out over the moors, which were putting on their autumnal tints. She was not idle, for Lady Staversworth had given her plenty of work for her needles, and promised that when it was finished she would give her orders for more. She found also that Tamsin could make pretty little baskets of plaited rushes and reeds, finished in coloured worsteds in much the same way as Blaze's little mats; and she said she was certain she would be able to get an order for some when she got back to town. She also said that it would be a good thing if Tamsin could teach the little cripple to make them too, as they would command a better sale than his pie-dish mats.

The old woman took the hint, and soon Blaze began to make baskets, and the two were busy all day long, thankful to have work that would bring them money. Alsey, dear little maid, was also busy. She did the work of the cottage still, and made Tamsin's heart glad by her womanly little ways and thoughtfulness. Alsey had not searched for God's gold in vain, nor had she asked for His grace without obtaining it, for the little child was growing more gentle and lovable every day—at least, her grandmother thought so; and even little Blaze was not slow in noticing a difference in his restless little sister. He said one day to the old woman, as she sat in her arm-chair knitting, with her still weak leg resting on a stool, that he was sure the dear Lord Jesus had given Alsey a lot of His gold, "for," said he, "she is more like you, grannie, as she wanted and prayed to be."

One afternoon, about a fortnight before Lady Staversworth returned to London, she, her son, little Marjorie, and her governess were walking up from Bosphrennis, a village some little distance from Churchtown, to see the famous bee-hive hut, or crellas as the Cornish people call it, dear to the heart of antiquaries, and believed by

them to be one of the dwelling-houses of the ancient Britons. They had almost reached the enclosure, where the crellas stood, which was built of solid blocks of granite much overgrown with grass and brambles, when Howard said abruptly—

"Mother, I met Dr Gerrans coming out of a house in Ayr Lane yesterday, when I was at St Ives. He told me that he was afraid Tamsin will never be able to walk far again."

"I am very sorry to hear that, my son. It will be a sad trouble to the poor old lady," returned Lady Staversworth. "She was hoping soon to walk a short distance on the moors. She wanted to try last week, but the doctor would not allow her."

"He knew she couldn't, mother; that was the reason. I cannot get dear old Tamsin out of my mind. I am afraid that, after all, the independent old soul will have to go to the workhouse, which I am sure would break her heart. I have heard a great deal about her pluck and goodness from that Miss Kernick. She has been a wonderful old woman, from what she said. It would be a shame to let her and those nice children go to the House, as they call it. I do wish we could help Tamsin to help herself, as she has hitherto done."

"I do not see how we can, Howard, except getting her orders for knitting and baskets among our friends, and that I am afraid would only stave off the evil day for a time."

"I wish I was of age, mother," cried the boy impulsively; "the dear old lady and poor little Blaze should not want for anything then, if I could help it."

"This is the world-famed bee-hive hut, I suppose," said Miss Thonger, who, with her pupil, was walking on in advance, and entering the croft.

"I suppose it must be," returned Lady Staversworth.

"If we had thought of bringing Alsey Rosewarne with us, doubtless she would have been able to tell us some tales about it," said Howard, following his mother to the crellas, and inspecting its exterior.

After they had examined the interior of the hut they came out, and Lady Staversworth sat down at the entrance to one of the chambers to rest, while Howard stood leaning against the wall, looking grave and pre-occupied.

"Mother," he said at last, reddening as he spoke, "it is my birthday the last of this month, and——"

"And you are to have your long-looked for gun—eh, my boy?" said his mother, smiling. "What a great fellow you are getting, Howard! Really, you have grown inches since we came to Zennor," and she glanced up at the slight figure with all a mother's pride. "You will soon make your little mother look smaller than ever," she said playfully. "I shall expect you to present me with your first brace of partridges."

His eyes sparkled for a moment, and then after an upward glance at the soft grey sky—it was rather gloomy and misty to-day—he said quietly—

"Suppose I were to postpone that pleasure, mamma, do you think papa would mind giving me the money instead of the gun?"

"Howard!" exclaimed Lady Staversworth astonished, "I thought it had been your dream for the last eighteen months to have this gun."

"So it has, mother, but I cannot help thinking of old Tamsin's helplessness, and of all that would happen to her and the poor children if some one does not help her. If you and father do not object, I should like to get her a donkey-cart and harness out of the money the gun would cost. I believe I should not enjoy shooting one bit if that dear old woman were to go to the Union. Papa has not bought the gun, has he?"

His mother did not answer for some moments. Her boy's unselfishness made her almost too glad for speech. She knew it must have cost him no small struggle to relinquish what he had been looking forward to for many months, and longing, as she well knew, for his fourteenth birthday to come, which would make him the possessor of a gun. He had talked to her about it so

often that it was no wonder she was so surprised and touched.

"Father has not bought the gun, has he?" asked the boy again, fearing from her silence that it was already purchased.

"I am certain he has not, Howard," she said at length, "because I heard him say that he intended getting it for you immediately on his return to England. I am equally sure he would be quite willing to give you the money in place of the gun for such a good purpose as you name. God bless you! my son, and grant that your heart may never be less kind for His poor than it is now, when, if you are spared, you will have it in your power to help them a great deal."

"It would be very odd, mother, if a boy who has almost everything he can desire could not give up something for *His* sake," said Howard in a low voice. "You know how grateful Tamsin and Blaze are for the *smallest* thing. They have often made me feel ashamed when I have been in their poor little cottage. We are so given to grumbling in spite of all we have to make us happy. I wish we could get the dear old lady the cart before we go home," he added, after a somewhat long silence. "There would not be time, I suppose, to get an answer from father before we leave Zennor?"

No; but I will advance the money to get the cart if you like," said Lady Staversworth smiling.

"You darling!" cried the lad, stooping down and kissing her. "You are just the sort of mother to help boys to be good and unselfish. I will see about the cart at once. It must be *a good one*. I should like one with springs, and a comfortable, cushioned seat, with plenty of space behind for the things Tamsin makes to sell. Shall we go to Penzance from here in search of one?"

"Yes; there is nothing like striking the iron while it is hot—is there? We must hurry on after Miss Thonger and Marjorie now."

"I cannot pretend to see any beauty in these old

blocks of granite which Miss Thonger glories in, except *that*," said the boy, pointing to a mass of brambles, lovely with their leaves and berries, which crowned the walls of the crellas and the lintel-stone of the door. "I expect she is rejoicing in the cromlech by this time. Marjorie will be able to give an able lecture on archæology to her dolls soon, if she takes in one-quarter of what Miss Thonger tells her."

"There they are!" cried Lady Staversworth. "How much better Marjorie is looking; her father will scarcely know her. She is quite strong to what she was before we came to Zennor."

"And so are you, mother. We must come to Cornwall again next year, if father is willing. By the way, will the gun money be enough to buy the cart?"

"You will be able to get the cart and harness too for less than half the money a gun would cost," his mother answered.

"Then what shall I do with the rest of the money? I should like to spend most of it on dear old Tamsin and the children. I suppose I can do what I like with it?"

"You may, certainly, *provided* it is for a good purpose," Lady Staversworth answered.

"Well, really, I do not know what they want, except the cart; and although I am certain they are very poor, even when they consider themselves quite rich, I should not like to ask them to accept money from me."

"And I should not like you to offer it, Howard," returned his mother quickly; "but there is a way you may help them still, if you wish. Perhaps you have heard me say how much I should like Saint Blaze to go to London for medical advice and treatment. I have been thinking a great deal about it lately, and planning how it could be managed. He cannot, of course, go to London, unless some one goes with him; and I think his grandmother would be the most competent person to take him. Well, my boy, if the old

lady will give her consent to his going, and is willing to undertake such a long journey, which I hope she will, if she recovers the use of her leg somewhat—for I ventured to speak to her on the subject again yesterday, and said what a blessing she might be to the child—it would cost a good sum to take them to London and pay their board and lodging while they remained there. This very likely would be several months. So, if you would like to help them in this way as well, you can do so. Your father and I have constant calls on our purse. But, still, I think I should be able to manage it if Tamsin can be persuaded, and you can spend the rest of the money on something for yourself."

"No, no, mother! I would rather help in getting dear little Blaze well," said the boy eagerly. "Thank you for giving me the opportunity. Won't it be grand if Blaze can walk without his crutches. Dear little chap, he would look forward to being a man then, and work for his grandmother."

"Tamsin is old already, Howard, and it is not likely she will be alive when he is old enough to work for her. Still, it is possible; people in Cornwall often live to a great age."

"Mother, if Tamsin be willing to take Blaze to London, what about Alsey?"

"I scarcely know; I suppose her grandmother would not feel happy to leave her behind. In that case she would have to go as well. As soon as we get back to town I will see Dr Dudley, the head of the medical staff at the Middlesex Hospital, whom I know very well, and tell him about little Blaze. He is a very kind man, and a specialist for hip-joint disease. He has, I hear, made some wonderful cures. Mrs Lowe has a sister living in a humble street near the hospital, and lets rooms. So, if they go to London and Dr Dudley thinks it advisable for the boy to go into the hospital, she can lodge with her, and go and see him daily."

"I feel quite excited about it, mother," said Howard,

dancing a Highland jig on the turf. "Fancy Tamsin and Blaze in London-Churchtown, as they call it. It is *too* delightful. We must take the old lady and Alsey—Alsey must not be left behind, mother—to see some of the sights."

They went from Bosphrennis to Penzance, and found, on making inquiries, that a donkey-cart was to be had in Queen Street, so thither they wended their way. The cart, Lady Staversworth said, was the very thing for Tamsin; it was strong, roomy, had easy springs, and a good seat; and Howard at once decided to purchase it. That being settled, they went to the next street, where there was a saddler's shop, and ordered a set of brass-mounted harness, and then they drove back to the Falcon's Crag, well pleased with their purchases; and Howard's young heart was full of boyish delight at the thought of Tamsin's pleasure when he took her the cart.

During the following week, Lady Staversworth and her son and niece made several excursions to the many places of interest in Zennor and neighbourhood; and on one occasion, as they were returning to Pendour, they met Alsey carrying a basket of whortleberries.

"What are you going to do with all those berries, and where did you gather them?" asked Howard.

"On Carn Galva, sir; and they are for grannie's birthday," returned the child. "She likes fruit cakes, and I am going to ask Miss Admonition to make her one. 'Tis to be a *surprise cake.* You won't tell grannie, will you, sir?"

"I won't, certainly," the lad answered. "But tell me, when is the birthday?" he asked eagerly. "I want to know *particularly.*"

"The day after to-morrow, Master Howard."

"That will be Thursday. Well, I hope she will have a happy birthday, and find the whortleberry cake delicious. By the way, will you kindly lend me your donkey on Thursday morning? I will take every care of him."

"Grannie will be delighted to lend him to you, sir," returned the little maid; and as she went on her way she wondered what a young gentleman could want with Roger when he had such a lovely pony of his own.

"I am seventy-two to-day," said Tamsin, looking at her two little grandchildren the Thursday after Alsey had met the Staversworths. "How old I am getting!"

"So Miss Admonition said yesterday when I went to Churchtown with——oh! I don't want to say what I went there for; 'tis a secret."

"Then don't tell me, dear."

"She said you bore your age wonderfully, considering your hard life. I almost forgot to tell you, grannie, that Master Honourable—Howard, I mean—came this morning to borrow our donkey. He asked me on Tuesday if we would lend him. He didn't say what he wanted him for, only *particular*. I don't think Roger liked going, 'cause he kicked when he went off by the side of the pony."

"Grannie, do you think you could go for a little mite of walk on the moors?" asked Blaze wistfully.

"My leg is very weak still," returned the old woman with a heavy sigh. "It was as much as I could do to walk across the kitchen yesterday; I am beginning to fear that I shall never be able to walk to St Ives again. I don't know what we shall do if I can't."

"Still trust Him, grannie," whispered the boy.

"Never mind," cried Alsey, not hearing her brother's whisper. "Blaze and I will go instead. You will be able to trust us."

"Yes, cheeld; but winter will soon be here, and I sha'n't be able to let you go then."

"But we want food to eat, winter-time as well as summer-time," persisted Alsey. "And what shall we do if we can't take our brooms? The gentlefolks are going back to their home soon now, Master Howard told me; and Mary Ann said they will forget all about us when they are gone, and that we shall then have to get on the best way we can."

"Mary Ann doesn't know anything about the sweet lady and the dear children if she thinks they can forget so soon," cried Tamsin with much spirit. "They *won't* forget us; but we can't expect them to help us any more, they have helped us so much already."

"Mary Ann or her aunt—I forget which—told Master Howard that she was afraid we should have to go to the House after all."

"I don't think God will let us go there, my pretties! and if He does, we shall know that it is the best thing for us—perhaps to give us a higher place in Heaven. But we will trust His love still, as Blaze said, although the sky is growing very dark again and winter-time is drawing near."

"The sparrows and the robins have their winter-time, grannie, and God feeds them the same as in the summer-time, doesn't He?"

"He does, my little comforter, and He will not fail to feed us also."

About three o'clock that afternoon, Lady Staversworth came to see Tamsin, as she usually did some part of the day.

"It is your birthday to-day, I hear, Tamsin," she said, "and that you have reached the ripe age of seventy-two. I am come to wish you *many* happy returns of the day."

"How kind of you, ma'am! I was just thinking what a number of years I have lived, and every year has been a year of mercy. Truly, I can say 'God hath led me all my life long unto this day.' And now I love to think how near I am to the time when I shall see my Lord; and, but for my darlings, who need my care still, I should be glad to go home to my Master to-day. Ah, lady, dear! my heart almost breaks its strings sometimes with longing to see His beautiful face."

"Master Howard and the little ladyship are coming," cried Alsey, who was standing at the door, looking out. "And oh! grannie, they've got our Roger put into the shafts of an elegant little cart with a seat to it. It is

better than Mr Abner's. I wonder where they got it from?" she said to Blaze, who had hobbled to the door.

"Alsey," said Lady Staversworth, calling to the girl, "I want you to carry your grandmother's chair outside the cottage. I am anxious to hear what she thinks of Roger in harness."

Very carefully and tenderly the kind lady assisted Tamsin across the sanded room and out into the sunshine, where was put a wooden elbow-chair; and then, when she was comfortably settled, her ladyship wrapped a warm woollen shawl around her. "A small birthday gift from me, Tamsin, which please accept with my good wishes," she said.

"For me?" cried the old woman. "How can I thank you, and for all your kindnesses. 'Tis a beautiful shawl sure 'nough," she said, fingering it, "and good 'nough for you to wear, ma'am;" and she lifted her grateful old eyes to the donor's face.

Tamsin was so overcome with her shawl that she did not notice the donkey-cart, in which were seated Howard with an eager face and little Marjorie all smiles, and both waiting impatiently for the old woman to look at the cart and Roger.

"My boy want's you to give your attention to your donkey for a moment, Tamsin," said Lady Staversworth.

"I ask your pardon, ma'am, my Lady, but I was that overcome with this lovely shawl that I didn't—my dear life!" she ejaculated, breaking off her sentence, "that donkey isn't our Roger, is he?"

"Indeed he is, Tamsin," cried the delighted Howard.

"Well, I shouldn't have known him—and what a beautiful cart!"

"Grannie!" shrieked Alsey, who had been walking quietly round the vehicle, "your name is written in the cart in great big letters,—T-A-M-S-I-N, Tamsin," spelling out the name slowly and distinctly,—"R-O-S-E-W-A-R-N-E, Rosewarne. There now."

"Alsey has let the cat out of the bag," said Lady

Staversworth, glancing at the old woman, who was looking bewildered. "It is my son's birthday present to you, Tamsin. Do you understand?"

"For me, my Lady? Did 'ee say that lovely cart was for me? It can't be."

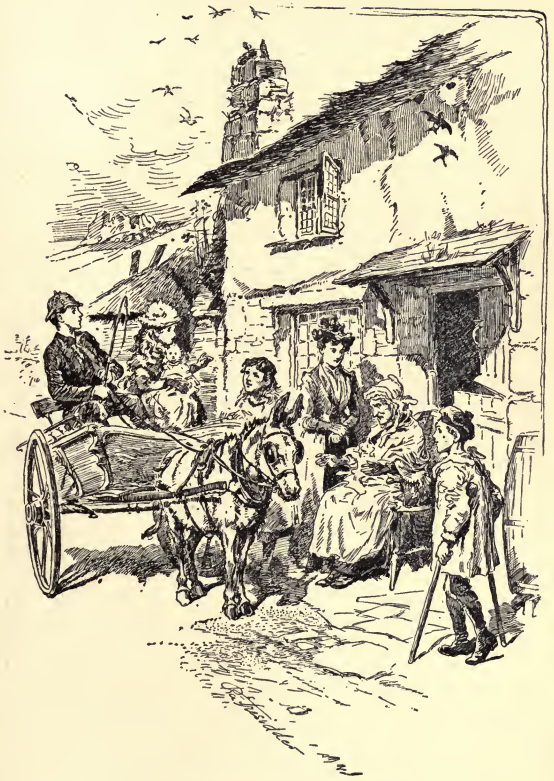
"It is," cried Howard, springing out of the cart and bringing it closer to the door. "I am awfully glad you like it."

"Grannie!" burst out Alsey again, "'tis ever so much more wonderful than the money-crocks, and the small people. *This is all real and true*, and they wer'n't. Oh, grannie, grannie, we shall *all* be able to ride to St Ives—brooms and all!" and the little maid danced before Roger in the wildest excitement, while Lady Staversworth and her son and niece watched her with great enjoyment. When the child's excitement had somewhat subsided, they turned to Tamsin, whom they found quietly weeping for pure thankfulness, and Blaze standing beside her with a look of joy in his face which they never forgot.

"It is the dear Lord who sent the cart, grannie. It was just like Him to think of sending it to you, dear," they heard him say in his sweet low voice.

"Yes," answered the old woman, tears running down her withered cheeks. "It is a gift from my gracious Lord. He put it into the heart of a dear little Christian lad, who must have been very anxious to do His pleasure to get it for us. May He bless you indeed for this, my dear!" she said, glancing up at Howard, who was looking shy, and anxious to escape. "'He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack,' and 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto *one* of *the least* of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto *Me*,'" and she looked from mother to son. "Oh, my dears! I shall never forget to ask Him who wrote those gracious words to *bless* you. *He will*—I *know* He will; and it is written, 'The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich and addeth no sorrow with it.'"

"Now, Tamsin, we are anxious for you to try the cart," said Lady Staversworth. "It is very low, and



"'DID 'EE SAY THAT LOVELY CART WAS FOR ME?'"

with a stool and Howard's and my help, you will be able to get into it nicely. Get your grandmother's bonnet and Blaze's hat," she said, turning to Alsey, "and we will take them for a little drive."

In a short time Tamsin was sitting on the cushioned seat, with Blaze beside her, and both looking "as happy as happy," Alsey said, as they drove from the cottage, over the fragrant moors. Roger, who had apparently recognised his old mistress' voice—Alsey and Blaze put it down to his being promoted to brass harness—held up his head quite proudly, and stepped out bravely as if he were young, instead of being, like his mistress, well on in years.

Tamsin and the small cripple found the cart very comfortable, and, the springs being good, there was very little jolting; as they went along they discovered new beauties in it every minute. As for the harness, the brass part of which shone like gold in the sunshine, it was in their opinion almost good enough for the Queen, who, they fancied, could not possibly desire anything better than their elegant cart!

When they returned to the cottage they saw that someone had been there, for the table was put in the middle of the room, and spread as if for a feast. In the centre stood a frosted cake, encircled in wild flowers. It was not surprising that the little maid's eyes opened wide with wonder, and that she exclaimed, "Why, grannie, the small people have been here whilst we were out, and have forgotten to take their lovely eatables with them."

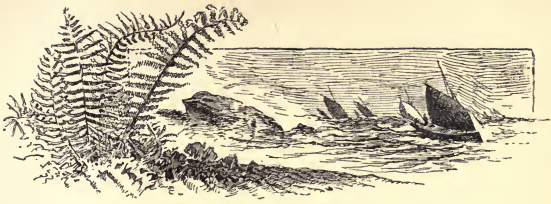
"The small people, are Lady Marjorie and Master Howard," said Lady Staversworth laughing. "Her little ladyship was not going to be outdone in the way of a birthday present, and so she planned this little feast. The cake and sweets are from her, and she and Miss Thonger set the table. And now we must leave you, and hope you will enjoy the birthday feast."

And enjoy it they did, and, in the gladness of their

hearts, they wished that the whole parish was present to enjoy it with them. As it was, Tamsin reserved a large portion of the birthday-cake for those of her friends who had been kind to her during her illness. Mr and Mrs Nancollas came in for a large slice, as also did Miss Kernick and her niece Mary Ann.

Blaze suggested that Roger the donkey should also be regaled with a piece of the cake; and as the old woman held that the beasts of burden ought, when possible, to share our pleasures as they do our labours, she gave a glad consent. So, after they had finished their feast, the children went up to Roger's stable with a tiny piece of cake and a plateful of broken food, and were greeted with a loud bray of welcome, which set the moorland birds chirping.

We must not forget to add that Alsey, in the great excitement of her grandmother's presents, forgot the one *she* had prepared for her. But the whortleberry-cake, or pie, was remembered the following day, brought out and presented, and both it and the little girl's thoughtfulness were thoroughly appreciated by the old grandmother.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE DONKEY-CART PROVES A BLESSING.

LADY STAVERSWORTH and her party returned to London three days after Tamsin's birthday, and she and Howard left many grateful hearts behind them in the wild "semi-mountainous parish" of Zennor-by-the-Sea.

Our friend Tamsin and her grandchildren were the last to whom they paid a farewell visit, and it nearly broke the old woman's heart to say "good-bye." Alsey wept bitter tears, and Blaze's tender little face showed how grieved he was at having to part from the kind lady, her son, and little Lady Marjorie. Alsey, however, was consoled by a lovely wax doll which her little ladyship gave her as a parting present, but no gift could comfort old Tamsin and the crippled boy. Ere Lady Staversworth left the cottage, she made the old woman promise that, if she were well enough to travel the following spring, she would bring Blaze to London to see what could be done for him. "I shall be in town about March for the season, so that you would be amongst friends. You *will* bring him to London, won't you, if God gives you strength to do so?"

"I will, my lady," returned the old woman earnestly. "The good Lord always travelled with His servants in the Bible days, and I believe He will do so still. I do want my little grandson to get better. He is better

already; the abscesses haven't formed lately in his poor little hip."

"Well, we will hope good things for little Saint Blaze. You must not trouble about expenses. God will send them to you, if it be His will for you to go."

"Sha'n't I go too, lady?" cried Alsey, hugging her doll. "I couldn't live here without grannie and Blaze, and they would fret to leave me behind."

"We shall see, dear," Lady Staversworth answered, seeing a wistful look in the grandmother's eyes. "I don't see how grannie could do without her helpful little granddaughter even in London," she added, with a smile. "Now, dear old Tamsin, once more good-bye and God bless you! Cheer up; we shall hope to see each other again when the spring-time comes."

"Yes, Tamsin, cheer up," cried Howard, for her emotion was so intense that she could scarcely speak. "I shall hope to have the pleasure of showing you some of the sights of London, if your leg will let you walk a little. You and Alsey will be able to take the shine out of Miss Admonition Kernick There are things in London which I am sure Alsey will think far more marvellous than the Cornish fairies. You will be quite a traveller in your old age. Don't cry, Alsey," he said to the little girl, "I am going home to see *my* grandmother—for I have a dear old grannie as well as you—the widow of the Lord Tinker of whom I told you. She is a dear old lady, and will be delighted to make your grandmother's acquaintance. Now, dry your eyes and think of all the nice things in store for you, and of how wonderful it will be if little Saint Blaze can walk without crutches. He will grow quite perky after a while, I am afraid. I am very sorry to leave you all. Well, *good-bye*," and the boy rushed out of the cottage, his mother and cousin following him.

The Sunday after they left the Cornish land, Tamsin rode to church in state, and the children's hearts

swelled with pride as they pulled up at the steps leading to the churchyard. A number of people crowded round the pretty donkey-cart as Tamsin alighted, and congratulated her on her recovery and grand turn-out.

"Why, Tamsin, my dear," cried Miss Admonition, waddling up with a big prayer-book tucked under her arm, "'twas a good thing you broke your poor old leg; you have been in for all the good things lately, and you rode past my house like a duchess. You will be so grand soon that we sha'n't know you!"

Tamsin only smiled. She, dear old soul, was too happy at the thought of worshipping her Lord in His house again to take much notice of her talkative neighbour's remark. Her heart was running over with joy at all God's loving-kindness, and it was of Him and not of herself that she spoke to those who pressed around to shake her by the hand. Someone kindly led away her donkey to be stabled. As the old woman was about to mount the churchyard steps, Mr Noy, the vicar, came out of the vicarage—a comfortable stone-fronted house standing in a walled garden, whose trees were the only ones visible. He was a tall man, with a kind but rugged face, and dark, deep-set eyes, which softened with a woman's tenderness as they fell on Tamsin and her orphaned grandchildren. He had been away for his health, and left Zennor only the day before the old lady broke her leg. He was a clergyman much beloved by his parishioners, and Tamsin had missed him sorely. He hastened to greet her.

"I only returned yesterday, Tamsin," he said, when he had helped her up the steps. "I cannot tell you how grieved I am to hear of your accident from our friend Miss Kernick, but thankful to find that God raised up friends for you. The clergyman who did duty for me whilst I was away did not mention your accident."

"I don't suppose he knew of it, sir, but the Good Shepherd did, and He has cared for me and His dear

little lambs," looking down on Alsey and Blaze, who were standing beside her, "oh, *so* tenderly. We've wanted for nothing, sir. Our Father has fulfilled His promises to us again and again."

"I have heard all about it from Miss Admonition Kernick," said the vicar, "and most thankful I feel that you were not neglected when your affliction became known. I should never have forgiven myself for going away if you had been. I believe you have a lasting friend in Lady Staversworth," he added kindly. "She spoke in the highest terms of you before I left for my holiday, and on my return I found a note in which she kindly asked me to let her know if you want anything more, and to write from time to time to tell her how you and your grandchildren are getting on."

"How kind of my dear lady!" ejaculated the old woman. "God's mercies are more and more."

"They *really* are, Tamsin," responded the clergyman heartily. "There! the bells are chiming, and I must leave you. I shall come and see you one day in the week and have a long chat."

"The dear parson does not look much better for his change," said Tamsin to herself as Mr Noy went into the church. "I hope he will be spared, for he is one of the best clergymen that ever lived!"

The church was very old and quaint, and dedicated to a woman saint named Senara, who long ago came to this wild parish by the Cornish sea with the glorious message of God's redeeming love to souls. And that rough little building was the dearest, holiest place in all the world to Tamsin. She had been brought there when a babe in arms to be baptised, and from the time she could talk she had attended the old church, with her parents, to worship and to pray. And within its sacred walls, when a maiden of sixteen, she had received the message of love and peace into her young heart; and there, a year later, after her confirmation, she knelt at the Lord's table and received the blessed memorials of His dying love. There, too, she had been

wed to the husband of her choice; and within the shadow of its granite tower she hoped, when her time came to die, to be laid beside him and two of her children, who sleep there until the resurrection morn. So it was not surprising that the little church, sheltered by the great hills, should be so beloved, and that it was a home indeed to her—a place above all places on earth.

It rejoiced her heart to-day that her Blaze was with her. He had never been able to go to church before, except in her arms or on Roger's back. Hence she could the more appreciate Howard Staversworth's unselfishness. There was no heart more thankful than Tamsin Rosewarne's in that little house of prayer, and no one joined more heartily in the service than she and her grandchildren.

A fortnight after Lady Staversworth left Zennor, Tamsin was able to go to St Ives. The moors and hills by this time had lost their summer beauty, and were now a study in browns; and what with the russets of the faded heather, the amber and golden brown of the bracken, the exquisite red-browns of the brambles, and the golden gleam of the *Ulex nanus* (Dwarf Furze), "afire with God," on the hillocks, which shone like torches against the grey of the granite boulders—they were nearly as beautiful as in the spring and summer. At least, Tamsin thought so as she looked at them when she and the children drove along with their brooms; and the blue mists that softly veiled the great hills and filled the spaces behind them only added a charm to the scene. But the moors were silent enough now, and their hush was only broken by the weird cry of a sea-gull flying landward in search of food, and autumn's red-vested song-bird singing so deliciously from a thorn.

Before Christmas came, and with it the sweet memories of God's great Christmas Gift—the Babe of Bethlehem—the old woman fully recovered her strength; her leg was still feeble, however, and would not allow

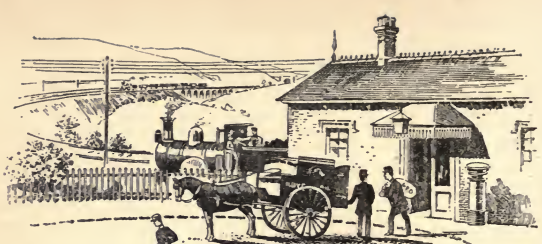
of her walking more than a few yards from the house. But for the donkey-cart, and the kindness of the vicar and Farmer Nancollas, who went himself to the marshes and cut her a quantity of rushes that she required for her work, and sent her a cart-load of bog-turf and furze for her winter fires, it would have been hard to say how she and her grandchildren would have fared through the winter, which turned out to be a very severe one. But now that she could ride, the weather did not matter so much, and twice every week, when the moors were not deep in snow, she was able to drive to market with her handiwork.

Lady Staversworth did not forget her old friend, she often wrote to her; and on Christmas-Eve there arrived a box addressed in her handwriting, over which Alsey almost lost her wits, for it was full of *bon-bons* and toys from little Lady Marjorie, a musical instrument for Blaze from the Honourable Howard, and stuff for a gown for Tamsin from his mother. There were also a frock and boots for Alsey from the same kind lady. Never was there such a wonderful Christmas, Alsey and Blaze said. Mr Nancollas also thought of them, and sent them a goose for their Christmas dinner, which made the little maid remark, "I am sure it is not a gander, grannie; for it is almost as plump as Miss Admonition. Mr Nancollas must have got ever so much of Jesus' gold in his heart, or he would never have given us such a beautiful fat goose."

"Ah, my little Alsey, Jesus is filling many hearts with His wonderful love," said the old grandmother; "and I think from many signs I have seen in you these last few months that you have His love in your heart too."

"I have asked Him every day to give me His love since the thunder and lightning frightened me when I was looking for the four-leaved clover, and I believe He has," responded Alsey softly. "I would rather have the gold of His love than all the money and fine things in the world."

"It rejoices my heart to hear you say so," cried Tamsin, folding her arms about the child, and looking gladly into the bright, earnest little face. "I have constantly prayed that God the Holy Ghost would lead you to seek the unspeakable riches of Christ, and I do thank Him for answering my prayers. As I have often told Blaze and you, there is nothing that can really satisfy us but the beautiful abiding love of God, which even the poorest and smallest child may have if he will only seek it by prayer. This you and your little brother have done. God bless you, my darling, and may you continue to seek the riches of His love! For there is no end to it, dear, and the more you have the more you will want, and not only for yourself, but for others too."



CHAPTER XVII.

IN LONDON.

EARLY in March Tamsin asked Mr Noy if he would kindly write to Lady Staversworth and tell her that her leg was much better, and that she was now strong and well enough to take Blaze to London; so that if her ladyship were still in the same mind about their coming, she was willing to bring him. The vicar wrote at once, and in a week or two received a reply, telling him she had seen Dr Dudley, the head of the staff at Middlesex Hospital, and that he thought the sooner the boy was brought to him the better. She enclosed a cheque for their journey, and asked him to acquaint her of the day and hour they intended to leave.

Tamsin took several days to arrange her little affairs. Roger and the cart were consigned to the care of Mr and Mrs Nancollas; and the cottage, goat, and fowls were put into Mary Ann's charge. Poor old soul! the thought of going to London was really awful, but she had made up her mind to sacrifice herself for the little lad's sake, and she tried to keep her fears under control.

The day before they were to start she drove to Churchtown, to say "good-bye" to the few friends she had there, "for," she said pathetically, "the good Lord only knows if I shall be spared to come back again;" and when she said farewell to Miss Admonition, she could not keep

back her tears. She gave her blessing as if she were going to the land beyond the sunset, instead of only to London, which so upset the spinster that she flung her plump arms around her neck and sobbed like a child.

Tamsin also drove to say "good-bye" to Mrs Nancollas, and she and her husband cheered her up, and reminded her that "God was better than all her fears." Little Blaze told her, too, that he felt sure the dear Lord Jesus would go with them every step of the way, so that they need not be afraid of anything if *He* was with them.

It seemed so strange to those that knew Tamsin and her strong faith in most things, that she should be as timorous as a child in this respect, but so it was; and she cried, "Lord, I am a little child; undertake for me and help me."

As she left Bosmergy, she felt she must also say farewell to Mr Sweet, "for," said she to herself, "I should not like him to think that I have any ill-feeling toward him for wanting to turn me and my little dears out of our little home when he thought I could not pay my rent." So she turned her steps towards Trebergas. When she reached the farm she knocked at the door several times, and as no one answered she walked in. There was nobody in the kitchen, and she went up the passage and peeped into the parlour, and there saw Mr Sweet sitting at a round table with small heaps of sovereigns before him, which he was counting, tenderly fingering each coin as he dropped it into a large bag between his knees. So absorbed was he that he had not heard Tamsin's footsteps, and she stood in the doorway unnoticed, gazing at him and the gold in amazement. As her eyes wandered from pile to pile she was astonished to see, not only so much gold, but the small money-bag she had lost, and which she recognised by a small patch on it.

"So it was Mr Abner who stole the poor widow's mite," she said in a low, stern voice. "I could *never* have believed it." She was hardly conscious that she

spoke aloud, until she saw the old miser lift a pair of startled eyes, and heard him cry out—

"Is it *you*, Tamsin Rosewarne?"

"It is, Mr Abner," returned the old woman quietly, pitying the look of terror on his lean, parchment-like face. "My little orphaned grandchildren and I are going on a long journey, and God only knows what will happen to us on the way, or whether we shall ever come back again, and I thought I should like to wish you well before I go, and I do, in spite of what I see there on the table," pointing to her bag. "There was no need to rob a poor old woman of her little all, when you have more gold than I could count. May God forgive you, and make you repent before it is too late."

"I never robbed you, Tamsin," cried the old man, trembling visibly; "I found the bag on the moors empty. I did not know to whom it belonged or I would have returned it."

"But my Alsey told you, I think, sir, that I had lost my bag of money," said Tamsin in the same quiet voice. "God knows how you came by it, and, *if* you took it from me, may He forgive you as freely as I do. Mr Nancollas will pay you my rent each quarter till I come back. Good-bye, Mr Abner," she said.

As she turned to go, he said in a shaky, pleading tone, "you won't tell anybody what you saw me doing, will you, Tamsin? I told my housekeeper to bar the door."

"Other folks' business don't concern me, sir. And if you are doing what your conscience condemns you for doing, why, there is One watching you whom no barred doors can keep out, and before whose Judgment Seat you will appear *some day*."

The vicar took Tamsin and the children to Penzance Station, and saw them safely into the train. The former had brought all her little valuables with her (she hadn't many, poor soul!), which she would not trust out of her hands, even to the obliging guard, into whose care Mr Noy had given her.

"You must cheer up, Tamsin. We shall hope great things for Blaze, and shall expect to see him when he comes home—not the white snowdrop he now is, but as red as a rose, and strong as Roger."

"I am half afraid 'tis tempting Providence, sir, now I've started 'pon the journey," cried the poor old woman. "We can't expect Him to take care of us if we wilfully put ourselves into danger."

"The Lord be with you, Tamsin, and do not fear. It is all right," began the vicar—but there was no time for more, the train rushed out of the station, and he watched it out of sight.

The old lady composed herself after awhile and looked at her fellow-travellers, of whom there were several, and most of them gazed at her and the children inquisitively. They were as quaint a trio as ever set out on a journey. The face of the old woman was framed in a coal-shoot and white-bordered cap, and she wore a short black gown, which revealed worsted stockings and hobnail shoes, and her ungloved horny hands rested on a very large gingham umbrella. Alsey had on a black satin bonnet in which Tamsin had fitted a cap-border, and a big shawl was crossed on her bosom and tied behind. Blaze was dressed in his breeches and smock, the smock showing from under his unbuttoned coat, which was cut and made by his grandmother for his journey, and was not in the least degree fashionable, although it might have been when she was a girl. But the grand face of the old woman, the exquisite face of the little cripple, his beautiful hair and great grey eyes, and the pair of tiny crutches by his side, and Alsey's unruly locks peeping defiantly from under her bonnet border, her eager face and excited manner, more than made up for any eccentricity in their attire. They were most interested in everything; and their exclamations of wonder, and their remarks in the broadest dialect, were very funny.

At Paddington they were met by Lady Staversworth's housekeeper, and she bundled them into a cab—treasures

and all—and they were soon off to Goodge Street, where, in a comfortable little house occupied by her sister, they found a good supper awaiting them.

The next day, when they awoke and looked out of the window, and saw stalls of all sorts set out on either side of the road (stalls were allowed in this street), at which were sold meat, vegetables, fish, fruit, crockery, and, in short, everything, they naturally thought it was a fair and feast time. They were amazed at the people constantly passing through the busy thoroughfare. "And to think, we don't know *anybody*, and can't ask them in to give them a dish of tea, poor dears!" said Tamsin, with a sigh. "And some of the poor souls do look so sad and tired."

Lady Staversworth and her son came in the afternoon, and the old woman wept for joy at seeing her dear lady again, "and no longer felt a stranger in His great world of a parish," as she expressed it; it was a relief to tell her her experiences on the journey.

On the Wednesday after Tamsin and the children's arrival in London, Lady Staversworth brought the great doctor to see Blaze, who, after carefully examining him, took rather a hopeful view of his case. He did not say positively he could cure the little fellow, but promised to do his utmost for him, if he came into the hospital. So it was decided that Blaze should go into the hospital the next day, and a great trouble it was to him to be separated from his grandmother and sister. It almost broke his heart at first to be left among strangers, but knowing it was for his good he kept back his tears, and would not allow one to drop until Tamsin had gone, and then it was more than all the sisters and nurses could do to comfort him, until one gentle-faced nurse, with a low, sweet voice, whispered into his ear, "Jesus, the Good Shepherd, wants His little lamb to stay here awhile, and it hurts His loving heart to see His dear, wee one so sad," and then he put his hands together, and asked Him not to let him mind very much.

After a time he dried his eyes, and began to look about him. He was surprised to see other little children in small white beds on either side of the long ward, and those who were not too ill and suffering smiled at the new-comer. The children's ward was very bright, and the walls were hung with beautiful pictures, illustrating Bible stories. These interested him greatly, and for a time he forgot his loneliness.

Blaze had to be in bed all day long now, and by-and-by great weights were attached to his leg, which Tamsin thought very cruel, but he was quite at home by this time, and very cheerful, and was his bonny patient little self again. And, when all his shyness wore off, he was as merry as any child there, singing his little songs and hymns, and playing his whistle and the little musical instrument he had brought with him, to his fellow-sufferers. All the nurses were charmed with him, and he soon became the pet of the ward, his grandmother saying he was in great danger of being spoilt. Lady Staversworth still prefixed *saint* to his Christian name, and the people in the hospital, hearing her call him little Saint Blaze, called him little Saint Blaze too, and said it was his, by the right of his gentleness, meekness, and patience under suffering.

Certainly he looked saintly enough, dear little man, in his small cot, his lovely face as pure as a lily, set off by the heavy masses of bright hair, which his own special attendant, Nurse Locke, loved to brush. All the nurses liked to hear him talk, and often drew him out, and so did the doctors, not only to have the benefit of his quaint little sayings but his peculiar *patois*, which he, his grandmother, and Alsey spoke, and which, if we had ventured to write it, very few out of Cornwall would have understood. They enjoyed listening to his singing too, and one of the nurses called him the Cornish nightingale, forgetting that the simile was not quite appropriate, as the sweet songster of night never condescends to visit our Cornish land. The chaplain of the hospital,

who heard his lovely young voice one evening singing—

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,"

said "that if God spared him he would be able to earn his living anywhere."

So small Blaze was unconsciously serving the King of Glory in the great London hospital, and more than one was brought to realize the beauty of religion which was manifested in this tender little child. "I would give all I possess to be like that happy little soul," one of the medical staff remarked to Nurse Locke, one day after they had been dressing his hip. "He makes me feel that religion, which so many preach and so few practise, is really something after all."

"Religion is the dear child's very life," replied the sweet-voiced nurse, "and it runs through his whole nature like a golden thread, and flows from his loving little heart as naturally as music bursts from the throats of the song-birds. I do not believe he has a thought apart from Christ, whom he loves and serves, and he sees Him in everything he says, and that everything comes from Him, even the love and petting which all of us shower on him so lavishly. He is the loveliest, happiest little fellow I have ever been privileged to nurse."

Howard Staversworth took every opportunity of coming to the hospital where Blaze lay so patiently and so bravely bearing his little cross, and there he would sit by his small friend's side. They talked together about many things—of God and His love especially, of Zennor, and the people there; and sometimes Howard, boy-like, spoke of what he should do when he was a man. The young aristocrat's greatest ambition was to comfort and help the sick and suffering—which he did not seem to know he was already doing—and help the poor, and build nice cottages for them. But the dear little rustic had no ambition, except in wanting to be *very good*, and help his grandmother and Alsey when

he grew to a man. "I sha'n't be grannie's burden any longer then, shall I, Master Howard?" he asked anxiously, looking up into the lad's face.

"No, indeed, you won't," Howard made answer, "and I cannot see that you are now. You are 'Grannie Rosewarne's bundle of charms,' Miss Admonition Kernick told me a few days before we left Zennor, and would not be without you for all London and its treasures—eh, little Saint Blaze?"

"I don't believe she would," returned the child. "'Twill be so nice to get well, and bear every burden grannie has. Poor Roger must be *longing* to see us by this time. I hope he doesn't feel *very* lonely. Grannie, Alsey, and I have been thinking a lot about him, and the goat too. I am glad we didn't try to bring them to London; they would have been awfully frightened at all the noises and the people."

"Indeed, they would," laughed the boy. "They are far better off in dear old Zennor."

"Roger is in Morvah with Mr Nancollas, sir. Nan is at Zennor," and the small boy heaved a heavy sigh.

"You like Zennor better than London, don't you, Blaze?"

"Yes," allowed the boy. "The birds hardly ever sing here, grannie says, and there are no flowers growing, no hills and moors,—nothing but houses, shops, people, and carriages. We love *home* best, but God wants us to stay here for me to get better, and *He is here*, and He is better than the birds, and the flowers, and everything, isn't He, Master Howard?"

"Indeed He is, dear little Saint Blaze."

"I like to think that God is here with me, and that I can pray to Him here as well as at home."

How Blaze looked forward to seeing that dear old grandmother of his each day, and oh! how he poured out his little heart to her, and told her of the new friends he had made, of the children in the ward, and how kind everybody was to him, and about everything.

Blaze's fellow-sufferers looked forward to the coming of the old woman each day almost as eagerly as Blaze himself. They were dear children, most of them, and their little histories, which they confided to the Cornish lad, who, in his turn, confided them to Tamsin, were very, very sad, and even distressing. Grannie's heart ached for them, and she longed to take them back with her to her moorland home. Her heart was very big, if her means were small.

Alsey did not like going to the hospital, and would never have gone willingly, but to see her brother. Yet she never wearied of looking at the great shops, and the carriages, and watching the people that crowded the streets. The woman with whom they lodged had taken quite a fancy to the little Cornish maid, and often took her out to see the shops and parks. Tamsin was nervous, and, besides, her leg would never let her walk farther than the hospital, and she would have seen very little, indeed, of the great city, but for Lady Staversworth, who, in spite of her many engagements, found time to take her old friend to see some of the sights of London, that generally charm simple-minded country people.

One morning, about a month after Tamsin had come to London, Lady Staversworth, her son, and little Marjorie, arrived at Goodge Street, to take her and Alsey to the Zoological Gardens. The old woman and her granddaughter were perfectly delighted with all they saw, and would have gone again and again, and never tired of looking at the beasts, the birds, and the reptiles; they talked of it for years after their return to Zennor. And one afternoon they were taken to see Madam Tussaud's waxworks, which Tamsin thought were the most wonderful things she had ever seen. Alsey could scarcely tear herself away from the Sleeping Beauty, and her grannie amused Howard greatly by curtseying to some of the grand gentlemen and dames, which she thought were really alive! And when she stepped accidentally on the

toes of an old lady, taking snuff, standing out in the room, and cried in a distressed voice, "I humbly ask your pardon, ma'am, I didn't mean to do it; I hope you don't suffer from corny toes, like I do, my dear," the lad could not restrain his laughter, although he afterwards asked her to excuse his rudeness. She would not be convinced, however, that the snuff-taking dame was only made of wax, and not a living soul like herself.

Another day Lady Staversworth took them to Parliament Street, to see the Queen drive by in state, and afterwards drove them to her town-house in Palace Gate, where they had a good tea in Mrs Lowe's room. The Dowager Lady, hearing that the old Cornishwoman and her granddaughter were in the house, expressed a desire to see them; she had heard a great deal about them from her daughter-in-law and grandson. So, after they had finished their tea, they were ushered into the great drawing-room, where, from the depths of an arm-chair, a tiny old lady, with hair as snowy as Tamsin's, rose to receive them, and Howard, who was standing by her side, introduced them to her.

The old Dowager was graciousness itself; she was evidently pleased with Tamsin, and looked with a great deal of pleasure at her fine old face. She made her sit by her side and talk to her, and soon they were chatting together as if they had known each other all their lives. Tamsin, in her turn, was charmed with the pretty old lady, and said she was as sweet as a bed of thyme, and wondered at her graciousness, afterwards saying that, in her opinion, religion could blossom and ripen as much in a mansion as in a cottage, when the hearts of those who lived in them were given to God.

Eighteen months came and went, and Tamsin and her grandchildren were still in London. The old woman and Alsey were busy as the days were long. The former had told Lady Staversworth that she would rather pay for their board if she would allow her, as she

did not like to burden her great kindness more than she could help, and so, to humour her, and because her sturdy independence pleased her, she and the old Dowager worked their utmost to obtain orders for knitting, and other work, that she and Alsey could do. And as the woman with whom they lodged put a low price on her rooms, and charged as little as possible for their board, knowing that Lady Staversworth would make it up to her after the lodgers left her, Tamsin was able to pay for more than half their keep, and was, in consequence, all the happier and contented. Blaze was really better, and would eventually, the doctors said, be able to walk without his crutches, which made his grandmother's heart very thankful indeed.

Another Christmas went by, and March came before Blaze was pronounced well enough to leave the hospital, and there was a general wailing when the day came for their return to Cornwall, and Nurse Locke said she would have to go to Zennor in the summer to see him. Through God's blessing and the wonderful skill of Dr Dudley, the little lad was almost cured, and the doctors said that in a few weeks he would go without his "wooden legs," as they playfully called the crutches.

Blaze was sorry to leave his dear friends, and so was his grandmother, who hoped they would *all* come to Zennor and see them *soon*. But when they were in the train their hearts leaped up within them at the thought of going back to their home. They were met at Penzance by Mr Nancollas, who drove there to fetch them in Tamsin's little cart. They were delighted to see the kind farmer, and they shed tears at seeing their dear donkey again; and as for Alsey, she flung her arms about his neck and kissed him! They believed Roger knew them; anyway, he brayed more than once on the way back to Zennor.

How sweet the air smelt after their stay in London. They declared that the moors never looked so lovely before, and that flowers *were* flowers in Cornwall!

They found Miss Admonition Kernick and her niece at their cottage to receive them, a fire burning on the hearth, and new-laid eggs ready to be popped into the saucepan to be boiled for their dinner. It was nice to go away to have such a welcome home, Tamsin said. In truth, Miss Admonition could not make enough of them, and declared that Alsey had grown quite a big, strapping maid, while grannie had by her looks put back her number of years by six at least. And as for dear little Blaze, he was not a bit like the same child; he was sweeter and handsomer than before he went away. How eager the spinster and Mary Ann were to hear about London, and when Tamsin did her best to satisfy their curiosity, they listened open-mouthed, and said that it was almost past believing. When she mentioned having seen Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, riding in a carriage, in a great street decorated with flags and flowers, and lined with soldiers and people, that her coachman, footmen, postillions and outriders were dressed in scarlet and gold, white silk stockings, cocked and pinched hats, and that the dear Queen smiled and bowed to her—Tamsin Rosewarne—as she was driving past, Miss Admonition laughed long and boisterously.

"She smiled at me, too, when grannie and I made our curtsey," chimed in Alsey. "But I was disappointed when I saw her, *cause she was only a lady after all*, and she had a bonnet on her head—not a crown—and the bonnet wasn't so smart as your Sunday best, Miss Admonition. Grannie thought that perhaps she had on her crown under her bonnet. We did so wish she would take off her bonnet, just for a minute, for us to see her crown, didn't we, grannie?"

"We did," the old woman answered. "We did like the dear Queen's face," she said, turning to the spinster, "'twas as sweet as honeysuckles, and I'm all the better for having looked upon it. There was a lovely lady sitting beside her in the carriage—the loveliest lady I ever saw. Lady Staversworth, who took us to the

beautiful street, told me she was our Duchess of Cornwall, and will be our Queen one day, if God spares her! 'Tis nice to have seen some of the royalties we pray for in church every Sunday; and now I've been privileged to see them, I shall pray for them more heartily than ever. Oh, Miss Admonition, London Churchtown is a fine and big place, sure 'nough, miles and miles of streets, churches, houses, and shops without number. There is a fair held every day almost, on the Sabbath too, I am afraid. The shops are that big, your shop and all the shops in St Ives could be put into one of them, and still room for one or two of the Penzance ones!"

This was rather more than the spinster could understand, and she shook her head in unbelief, and said solemnly—

"I never knew before, Tamsin Rosewarne, that you were a story-teller. I must say I am ashamed of you. You have been mixing with the world, and your words smell so much of it—as your clothes do of smeech (smoke). Again, I say, I am ashamed of you, and setting up to be religious too."

"I haven't told any stories," said poor Tamsin meekly. "'Tis past believing, I know, what we saw up in London, but 'tis true, nevertheless. We went to a place called the Zoo, where there are lions, and all manner of wild beasts; and birds with feathers as bright as a sunset and all the colours of a rainbow; and creeping things enough to frighten the life out of you only to look at them, and great big adder-like things, black, yellow, and green."

Much more they told the astonished Miss Kernick and her niece Mary Ann, who listened eagerly, if somewhat sceptically, and begged to hear it again—not twice or thrice only, but many times, until Tamsin grew tired of telling them. Others came to hear of the old lady's travels and sight-seeing too, and the place where little Blaze lay so many months, and she tried to satisfy everybody as well as she could. But she loved to tell them most of the kindness they had received, especially

from her sweet lady, Lady Staversworth, and her son, and little Lady Marjorie. "Hearts are full of love, my dears, and, I suppose, God has need of His poor children, to draw it out to Himself. P'r'aps that is why so much sin and sorrow are allowed in the world."

Tamsin and her grandchildren soon settled down to their usual quiet life in their cottage, and worked at broom and mat making as before. The weeks passed away, and before autumn came again little Blaze was able to walk without his crutches, and great was the rejoicing, not only in the moorland cottage, but at the Churchtown, in the Middlesex Hospital, and in Lady Staversworth's Highland home. It was hard to tell who was most glad and thankful. The dear child was not very strong yet, but his little heart often swelled with gladness that he was no longer a helpless cripple, and that there was every likelihood of his being able eventually to support his dear grandmother, if she were spared to him until he was old enough to work for her. He was such a helpful little fellow already, and so thoughtful—the outcome of his suffering little life—and he aided her in every way he possibly could, proudly looking after Roger, Nan, and the fowls, and taking the brooms to St Ives whenever he was allowed.

A few years passed quickly away, and almost before Tamsin was conscious of it, Alsey had come to

> "Where the brook and river meet,
> Womanhood and childhood fleet!"

and a bright, winsome maiden she is! It is impossible for her to be otherwise, so grannie thinks, as she often gazes into her sweet face with her fond old eyes, because her young heart is being filled more each day with the beautiful love of God, which she still constantly prays for. And He who *loves* to answer our prayers for grace, is making many, through her, to seek the riches of His love too. Blaze is a tall, slender stripling, not quite so handsome as when he was a little fellow, but he has the same tender heart and childlike faith, and he is God's

faithful child still, and the very apple of his grandmother's eye. He does not now live in Zennor, but in a cathedral town, where

> "In the great minster transept,
> Where lights like glories fall,"

his sweet voice is lifted up in praise to God nearly every Sabbath and holy day; still, he comes home as often as he can to see his grandmother and Alsey.

Lady Staversworth never allowed her interest in Tamsin and her grandchildren to die out. Four or five years after Blaze came out of the hospital, she and Howard came again to Cornwall, and finding the lad fairly strong, and that his beautiful voice had wonderfully increased in richness and power, she told his grandmother that it ought to be cultivated and dedicated to God's service. So, exercising her influence with a dignitary in the Church, she interested him in the lad, with the result that he was admitted into the cathedral choir.

There is no lad in the great cathedral more glad to help in God's service than Blaze Rosewarne, and no voice there more beautiful than his. His voice is the pride of the whole of the clergy, and many flock from far and near to hear it ringing through the House of God. If others are proud of his voice he is not, and he cares but little for human praise; it is enough for him that he is privileged to lift his voice with the angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven, in laud and praise to that Glorious Name. And if, at times, vanity creeps into his heart when he is complimented on his great gift, and when he hears the words "How splendidly you sang to-day, Blaze," he tries to think how infinitely better the angels sing the praises of the Holy One "before the sapphire-coloured throne." And that thought humbles him, and helps to keep him lowly in heart. He continually asks that God, who gave him the power to sing, will use his voice, not only in His praise, but in drawing souls to Himself, and lifting

them to where He sits, ever ready to make intercession for us, and to accept our offering of praise and thanksgiving. It is his grandmother's earnest prayer, too, that her darling may be kept humble and pure-hearted as when he was a small child, and tried to bear his little cross of pain after Jesus the Crucified. Lady Staversworth knows it is prayer and God's grace alone that keeps him lowly still.

Tamsin, although very old and very feeble, keeps at her broom and basket making, but there is no need for her to do it, as Blaze has enough to supply her and Alsey's simple wants, and would fain have them come and live in the city where he lives, but she is too old to be uprooted from her moorland home. But she likes to give her earnings to the London hospitals for sick and suffering children, who, she hopes, will get as much good in them as her own dear Blaze did at Middlesex Hospital. And she is also enjoying the use of a small fortune left her by Mr Abner Sweet, whom she had never seen from the day she saw him counting his gold. He had been ailing for a long time before his death. When his will was opened, it was found that he had possessed considerable wealth, all of which, except the few hundreds left to Tamsin, went to a distant relative, much to the rage of his housekeeper, Amanda Rowse, who declared it was hers by right, as she had helped him to save it. Tamsin was more than surprised at being remembered by one who for so many years had hardly been civil to her because of her having her grandchildren to live with her. But when she was told by a minister of Christ, who had visited him in his illness, that he had been requested to tell her he was grieved to say he had stolen her money, and that the sum left her by will was a token of his *deep* sorrow for his sin, it was the best of news to dear old Tamsin, and she declared that she was far more rejoiced at it than with the legacy. And we know she was. When Mr Sweet's effects were sold, there was discovered in a drawer a letter addressed

to Tamsin, containing the notes of invitation, which, as we have learned, were never delivered—whether out of spite or forgetfulness, nobody could say. But this apparent evil, which for a little while was so productive of disappointment and pain to the orphaned children and their grandmother, God used to work out all manner of good, both to their souls and bodies, deepening their faith, increasing their longing for His *best* things, and fulfilling in them, again and again, His promises, and proving to them and to others the verity of the Apostle's words—"*All things work together for good to them that love God.*"

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