ROSES

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PROBABLE SONS"

ROSES

"Watchful,
The opening buds absorbed her care."

ANON.

"Clapped his hand on his nephew's shoulder, with a force that almost made him quail."

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ROSES

By AMY LE FEUVRE

Author of "Probable Sons," "Teddy's Button," "The Odd One," Etc.

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CHAPTER I

"A Dreamy Old Place"

ALONG an old-fashioned terrace walk, in apparent oblivion of all the sweet scents and sounds around her, moved Mrs. Fitzherbert. She looked in keeping with her surroundings. A little old lady with snow-white hair, and delicate ivory-tinted complexion, daintily attired in black silk and old lace, with a broad-brimmed garden hat shading a pair of the softest blue eyes you could come across. No wonder everybody said she was like an old picture. And many a young girl envied her soft rippling voice

and laugh, and the faculty she possessed of attracting and interesting all who came in contact with her, by her bright personality.

Her quaint, old-fashioned house, with its casement windows and deep window seats, its old oak staircase and paneled rooms, and the scent of pot-pourri and lavender in the air, seemed to belong to a past generation. Four servants formed her establishment, and the youngest was over fifty. Sarah, the cook, a stern, hard-featured woman, had lived with her mistress for thirty years. She was never seen to smile, though not at all destitute of humor. "I do my duty, and the world would be a better place if every one did the same," was her favorite saying.

Taylor, Mrs. Fitzherbert's maid, was a marked contrast. She was inclined to be stout, wore at all times a placid smile, and was never known to be ruffled in temper. If she had any peculiarity, it was her imperturbable deliberation. No one could

hurry her; no one could astonish her. Bertha, the housemaid, would declare that if the moon were to fall, Taylor would only smile, and say, "A pretty sight!" Bertha herself was a bustling energetic woman, with a wholesome horror of dust and spiders, and a tongue that was continually getting her into difficulties. Lastly came Jonas, the gardener and coachman combined; a "character," as he was termed by all who knew him. He regaled the women with all the gossip of the neighborhood, and had an exasperting trick of nodding his gray head up and down mysteriously after giving out his news: "And in course there's a deal more to be said, but not by I to women folks who chatters!" All were devotedly attached to their mistress, and were so wedded to the quiet regular routine of the house, that a change of any sort seemed as impossible as unexpected.

Mrs. Fitzherbert rose at eight, breakfasted at half-past nine, had prayers im-

mediately afterwards, and then retired to her morning-room, for an hour, to read and write her letters, interview Sarah, or attend to any domestic matters needing her consideration. At eleven, she put on her garden hat, and spent the rest of the morning in her garden; for it was the joy of her heart, and she superintended every inch of it. Like everything else around her, it was typical of its owner. The green turf surrounding the house was like velvet to walk upon; the mulberry tree, the weeping willow, and the stately elms and beeches were scattered in graceful groups about it. But the flower garden and the old terraced walk were Mrs. Fitzherbert's favorite haunts. Roses of all sorts and sizes bordered the terrace; violets, lilies of the valley, mignonette, sweet peas, and all sweet-scented flowers were grown in profusion; but no entreaties from either Jonas or any of her friends would ever induce the old lady to have a scentless flower. "They may be

fair to look at," she would say quaintly; "but I require something more than color and brightness. I like my flowers to have an influence in my garden; to spread their fragrance round about; to remind me of their presence when I do not see them."

And you had only to see Mrs. Fitzherbert handling a plant or flower to tell how much she loved it. At one o'clock she would come in to her luncheon, after which she would retire to her room for a short nap. At three o'clock she would drive herself out in her low pony carriage to pay calls, or do some shopping in the neighboring town. Then came afternoon tea; a short time with the newspapers or the current literature of the day, and dinner at half-past seven. The rest of the evening would be spent in knitting and reading, and at half-past ten the little household would have retired to rest.

For nearly twenty years Mrs. Fitz-

herbert had led this quiet life, and this morning as she paced along the old terrace her thoughts were in a tumult. Perhaps if we glance at the letter held so tremblingly in her hand, we may guess the cause of her discomposure. It was from a clergyman in London, and read as follows :—

"DEAR MADAM,—

"I am taking the liberty of writing to you, though a perfect stranger. For some time past I have been relieving, as well as I have been able, a very sad case lately brought to my notice. It is that of a gentleman reduced in circumstances. He is now recovering from a severe attack of fever, brought on by starvation and exposure to wet. An opening has been found for him in the colonies, but he is anxious to find a home for his little girl, as it is impossible for him to take her with him. He mentioned you to me as being her godmother, and I am venturing

to ask if you would like to do anything towards providing her with a home. Her mother died when she was born. It might be possible to put her in some orphanage or school. They seem to have no relations, but she has been carefully brought up, and is an engaging child. You will doubtless remember her father, by name, Arthur Seaton. He tells me he was the son of a clergyman, living in your neighborhood. Apologizing for troubling you with this matter,

"Yours faithfully,

"C. HALL."

It was a lovely June morning, and the roses seemed bathed in golden sunshine. As Mrs. Fitzherbert passed to and fro amongst them, her thoughts took her back eight years ago to a young couple pacing that same terraced walk. Arthur Seaton had been a great favorite of hers, though she often shook her head at his light way of taking life; and when he

became engaged to a penniless doctor's daughter on the strength of being put on a certain literary staff, Mrs. Fitzherbert was the first person that was informed of it. He brought Miss Violet Wood to see her one summer evening, and would often after that take possession of the old terrace walk. Love amongst the roses was very sweet, and the young couple looked forward to the future with blissful ignorance of ways and means, and supreme indifference to the warnings of their more experienced relatives and friends.

Mrs. Fitzherbert shook her head and sighed; but gave them a handsome wedding present, and consented, eighteen months after, to be the godmother of their little girl. Poor Violet had left her motherless little babe to the care of strangers before the christening took place, and Arthur had been too overwhelmed with grief and bewilderment to keep his old friend informed of his move-

ments afterwards. Mrs. Fitzherbert was under the impression that the child had not outlived its mother, so that the letter now received by her was a great surprise.

She was deep in her thoughts, when a brisk step on the gravel walk made her look up.

It was Mrs. Howard, the vicar's wife, a bright-looking, energetic woman, who ruled her husband, house, and parish with a firm hand, for she was a born manager. Mrs. Fitzherbert was the only one that she could not rule, and she liked her the better for it.

"I am come to beg, Mrs. Fitzherbert, or you would not see me here at this time of the morning. Dear me, how lovely your roses are! Why cannot ours do as well? This old garden would have a very demoralizing effect on me if I were in it long. It is such a dreamy old place. I have come for your subscription to the Cottage Hospital. It was due yesterday.

You do not look well. Is anything the matter?"

Mrs. Fitzherbert laid her hand gently on Mrs. Howard's arm.

"A little upset, my dear. I have enjoyed such a peaceful quiet life that I dread any change. Have you time for a little chat?"

"Certainly. I hope you do not meditate going away?"

"Let us sit down on this sunny seat. Now I will give you this letter to read."

The old lady sat very still whilst her friend perused it, and when it was handed back to her she said quietly:

"It was rather strange this morning. I came across that verse in my daily reading: 'Wo to those that sit at ease.' I thought a good deal about it whilst I was dressing. I have been 'sitting at ease' for many years now, and then comes this letter to wake me up."

"But, my dear Mrs. Fitzherbert, you know I am not one to encourage laziness;

and I honestly think that you have nothing to reproach yourself with on that score. At your age, when you have borne the burden of life with all its troubles and cares, you have a right to rest a little. We all want some good people who have time to listen to our tales of wo, whether fancied or otherwise. And that is the post you occupy in this neighborhood. Your time, your purse, and your sympathy are all at our disposal. I do not see that this letter need disturb you. I remember Arthur Seaton, a good-for-nothing scapegrace, with more brains than his laziness would let him use! I always think his old father's death was due to anxiety caused by him. Why don't you put this child into the Orphanage school at S——?"

"I am going to let her live with me," was the quiet reply.

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Howard; "you must not dream of such a thing. I have never had any children of

my own, but from what I see of other people's, they are an infinite trouble to train. A child in your household would upset everybody and everything, and try your nerves most dreadfully. It is not to be thought of."

Mrs. Fitzherbert rose from the seat.

"Will you come into the house now? and I will get you my subscription."

Mrs. Howard obeyed at once, but used all her expostulations and entreaties to ward off this proposed addition to the quiet household. All in vain. As she parted from Mrs. Fitzherbert a short time later, the old lady said with some spirit, and more brightness than she had shown as yet:

"I will bring her to see you the day after she arrives, and you will fall in love with her on the spot!"

CHAPTER II

"Daddy and I"

SHE had come: and stood before her godmother in the quaint, shady drawingroom. White and speechless, her dark gray eyes fixed intently on the kind old face bending towards her.

She had a rough shock of auburn curls, a pale, determined little face, and in a blue waterproof a world too big for her, and a woolen tam o' shanter, looked very unprepossessing in appearance. Taylor had been sent up to London for her, and seemed quite in perplexity about her.

"She hasn't said a word, ma'am, the whole way down. The clergyman came to Waterloo Station with her, and she hugged him round the neck when he

wished her good-by. She might be a deaf and dumb for all I can get out of her."

"Never mind, Taylor, she is shy and tired, poor little mite. Take her up to your room, give her some tea, and put her to bed. She will feel more at home to-morrow."

Mrs. Fitzherbert dismissed the child with a kiss; and an involuntary sigh escaped her as Taylor disappeared with her. She had made every arrangement for the child's comfort; Taylor had willingly agreed to look after her, and a little bed had been placed in her bedroom accordingly. The workroom, Taylor's special domain, was a pleasant, sunny room, with two broad windows overlooking the meadows and river beyond. This was to be her nursery; a new, smartly-dressed doll, some bright picture-books, and a little cushioned chair awaited her there.

Down-stairs, Mrs. Fitzherbert was turning over anxiously some newly-bought

books, and each bore somewhat of this title: "The Mother's Help," "Children, and How to Train them," "The Nursery Guide."

"How I wish," she said softly to herself as she gazed out into her flower-garden already fading from her eyes in the evening mist and twilight—"how I wish I knew as much about children as flowers! If only the same training would do for both!"

And then her blue eyes assumed a wistful, dreamy look, as mentally she began to con over to herself all that one of her favorite roses needed to bring it to perfection. Looking up at last to the evening sky, she murmured with a smile, "Lord, she is one of Thy rosebuds. Thou hast given me the honor of tending her in Thy garden. Make me a wise and skilful gardener."

Mrs. Fitzherbert did not see her little godchild again till the next morning, when she was about to take her usual

walk along the terrace. Nervousness kept her from making any advances. She was informed by Taylor that the little girl had slept well and eaten well, but as yet would only reply in monosyllables, and she did not feel quite equal to undergo the impenetrable stare and impassive stolidity of the little stranger so early in the morning.

But as she came up the old stone steps to the terraced walk, she was witness behind the rose bushes of a touching scene. Trotting along the walk, her crop of curls bare to the air and her little face dimpled with smiles, was her god-child. The transformation in her little person was marvelous.

"See, daddy, take my arm; you aren't vewy strong yet. Do you smell the roses? Oh, it's lovely! There's enough of them to make the bed of roses you say will never come to you and me. Let's sit down. Dear daddy, isn't this fairy land? Smell this pink one; see, I'm

pushing it to you. Isn't it still? All the cabs and carts have gone away, and there's no fried fish to smell instead of eat here. Oh, daddy, let me snuggle up to you. It's only make-believe you know, and everybody looks so strange. I must talk to you, dear darling daddy. The little old lady is so grand; she's like Cinderella's godmother. But, daddy, you and me will come and walk in this lovely garden evewy day; yes, we will, dear, and you'll get fatter and stronger, and be able to tell me wonnerful stories."

The little head was nodding up and down, the hands gesticulating, and the busy tongue hard at work, when the rustle of a dress, and the sudden appearance of Mrs. Fitzherbert, interrupted the happy "make-believe."

In an instant the child's figure drooped, the sparkle in the eager little eyes died out, and the tightly closed mouth seemed to intimate that all speech was at an end.

Mrs. Fitzherbert gave her a bright

little nod, then turned to her roses, and with her garden scissors began to snip off first one beauty, then another, till her basket was full. She did not speak, and the child watched her in silence. Then suddenly Mrs. Fitzherbert turned to her.

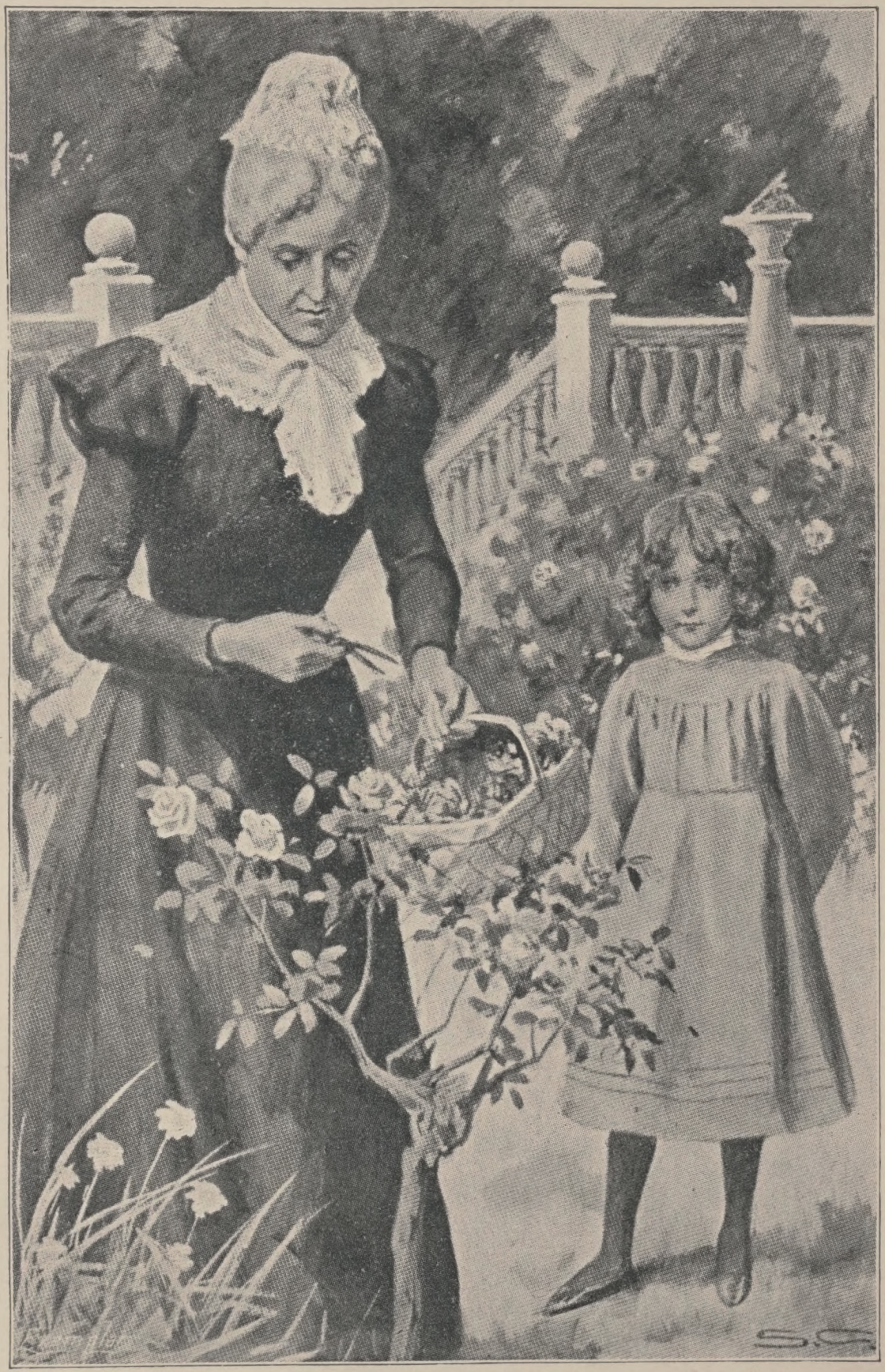
"Here, little one, these roses are for you, for I know you must love them as much as I do. What will you do with them?"

It was a crucial moment. The small hands that were so tightly clasped behind her, relaxed their hold, the lips began to quiver, the eyes beamed with delight, and then Mrs. Fitzherbert was startled by a rush, a spring, and two little arms were hugging her round the neck.

"I love you, old godmother, I love you. Next to daddy and the roses, I'll love you."

The roses had conquered, and the child's lonely little heart was won.

A few minutes later, and the garden seat was occupied by the old lady and her godchild.



"With her garden scissors began to snip off first one beauty, then another."

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"Yes," the child was saying, "my proper name is 'Dimple,' because daddy gave it to me. He pokes his fingers in my two little holes when I laugh, and calls me 'Dimple.' Isabella is my church name, what the clergyman gave me when I was a baby. Mrs. Briggs told me he did, and I'm sure I didn't want him to, because Dimple is a much nicer name, and I shan't never be called Isabella by anybody!"

Then, after a pause:

"What's your name, godmother? What used your daddy to call you when you were a little girl? Didn't you never have a nicer name than godmother?"

"I used to be called Sylvia. Now every one calls me Mrs. Fitzherbert, for my daddy went to heaven long ago."

"My daddy nearly did the other day, but he's quite well now, only he feels his bones rather. What shall I call you?"

"I think you may call me 'Granny';

that will be shorter than godmother. Do you think you will be happy with me?"

Dimple clasped her small hands round her knees and drew her feet up to consider. She looked at the roses by her side, then at her godmother, and then her eyes roved round the old garden to the house in the distance.

"It's living in a story book here," she said at last. "But, oh, I want daddy, I want daddy!"

She did not cry, but the pathos of her tone brought the tears to the eyes of Mrs. Fitzherbert.

And then Dimple began to speak eagerly and excitedly.

"Daddy and I have grown up so many years together. I never remember not having daddy with me; and when he was late home, I always had the toast ready for him, and sometimes we had an egg between us for tea—turn about, you know; but daddy always gave me the biggest spoonfuls, acause he wasn't hungry, he

said. And then, if the fire was out and we had no more coal, I would snuggle inside his coat, and he would tell me stories in the dark, and then I went to bed in the corner of the room, and daddy would light a candle and write books, and afore daddy got ill we would take a walk in the park on Sundays, and it was lovely! And sometimes we had s'rimps and watercress on Sunday, and once Mrs. Briggs made me a cake, but that was afore we got very poor and had to leave her."

"Tell me more," said "Granny," as the little voice paused.

"And I had a little kitty, such a dear little mite, and she only took a weeny tiny drop of milk, but daddy said I must give her to Mrs Briggs, acause there wasn't enough milk for me. I did cry when Kitty went; I couldn't help it. But daddy always was unhappy when I cried, so I didn't very often; not till he tumbled down in the street and was carried home by a policeman; but when he got better,

he told me it was because he hadn't eaten, and then I ran to the baker's and he lent me a loaf without paying, acause daddy's money was late in coming."

Dimple turned over the roses in the basket rather thoughtfully before she went on. "Daddy used to hold me up in his arms to look at the flowers in the shops, but these bu'ful roses would be pounds and pounds in London. We couldn't never have bought any, could we? When daddy makes a lot of money, he is coming back to fetch me to a nice little house in 'Merica, with roses on the walls and a garden like this, and we will have meat evewy day and always butter with our bread, and I'm to be a good girl till he comes, and p'waps he'll come next week."

She nodded her little head cheerfully, and then clambered down from the seat. "May I walk on the grass here?" she asked.

"Go wherever you like, darling," Mrs.

Fitzherbert said. "If you're a good child, you will be sure to be a happy one, and I want you to enjoy yourself."

Dimple trotted off, talking either to herself or to an imaginary father, and Mrs. Fitzherbert tended her flowers that morning with a preoccupied mind. She was deep in a reverie whilst she was absently brushing some green fly off a pet standard, when a voice at her elbow made her start.

It was Mrs. Howard.

"I have seen your little godchild," she began abruptly; "she's a regular little character. I was passing by the gate when I saw her looking through the rails, so I came in. 'Good morning,' I said cheerfully; 'will you shake hands with me? I know all about you. Where is your godmother?' She drew up her curly head, folded her small arms with the air of an actress I assure you, and her tone was withering: 'I keeps myself to myself, thank you, and don't speak to strangers.' And then she walked off to

the house without another glance at me. I haven't felt so small for a long time."

Mrs. Fitzherbert looked up with a smile.

"I am full of her training this morning; wondering whether I ought to get a governess, or nurse, or whether I ought to take her in hand myself. Her chatter to me has made me feel very sad. Tiny child though she is, she must have seen a good deal of privation and want. I sometimes wonder why I have been so shielded through life whilst others from their infancy have to bear suffering and starvation."

"It is one of the mysteries of life," responded Mrs. Howard briskly; "you have rescued one small waif at any rate, so be thankful for that mercy. And don't bother yourself about the child's education. She is too small for anything of that sort at present. Let her run wild this summer, and by the time the winter comes you will be able to arrange something."

She talked on for a few minutes, then said good-by, for she was too busy a woman to pay long visits to any one, and had only come in to have a glimpse of the new arrival.

"Dimple," said Mrs. Fitzherbert a little later, coming up to where her little god-child was holding an animated conversation with Jonas, as he was weeding out some young lettuces, "what did you say to that lady who came into the garden just now?"

Dimple looked up unconcernedly.

"Only what Mrs. Briggs taught me to say to everybody."

"But it isn't polite to my visitors," said Mrs. Fitzherbert; "it may be city manners, but it certainly isn't country manners; and when people are good enough to take notice of you, you must hold out your hand prettily and answer their questions."

"Do you speak to everybody in the country?" asked the child, looking up

with earnest eyes through her unruly locks. "We never do in Lunnon. Must I shake hands with a black sweep if I see him?"

Mrs. Fitzherbert did not answer; she turned to Jonas, and was soon deep in her garden difficulties, and Dimple listened eagerly till the talk got above her head; then she flitted away, exploring with a child's sharp eyes every nook and cranny of the old-fashioned garden.

She carried her roses into the house soon, and climbed up the stairs, singing a wordless little song to herself as she went. Taylor met her at the work-room door.

"Come in and drink this glass of milk, Miss, you will want something before your early dinner."

Dimple opened her eyes rather wide, but said nothing, only thoroughly enjoyed her milk and biscuit; and then fetched the new doll in all her finery and surveyed her with critical gravity.

"Do you like her?" asked Taylor, set-

tling herself to her needlework with comfortable deliberation.

"She doesn't want a daddy or muver to take care of her, she's too grand," was the slow reply; "I shan't have nothing to do with her while she's so grand."

She laid the doll on her face in the corner of the room, and then, taking her basket of roses, climbed on the low window seat by Taylor's side.

"I like these best," she continued, fingering them softly. "Aren't they puffickly lovely? I should like a little bed all of pink roses, and pillows and sheets of white roses, and a house of dark red roses, and all the carpets yellow roses; that's what I shall have when I go to daddy's house he's getting ready for me."

"You can't live on roses," said Taylor. "You put your cheek down on those and tell me how it feels."

Dimple tossed her roses out, and laid her little cheek against them, then started up with a cry.

"They've got prickles like pins. Look, I'm bleeding."

"Yes," said Taylor quietly; "they are like most things that we cry out for in this world. When we get them, we discover their sting."

Dimple stood pondering over this.

"That's like the way daddy says things," she said. "But I love the roses, and I love their prickles too."

With which conclusive assertion she clambered down and begged to have some water to put them in.

"Daddy said flowers get as thirsty as we do; but water is cheap, isn't it? They're not like my little Kitty, who had to have milk."

And when arranged in a bowl to her liking, Dimple stood over them with loving solicitude, just a little sigh escaping her: "If only daddy could see them!"

CHAPTER III

"Nobody to Take Care of"

IT was some time before the household could get reconciled to a child's presence, and Dimple proved a restless, talkative little being, with a busy brain and still busier fingers. Occupation she must have; and if it was not found for her, she would find it for herself.

"A child is meant to have a nursery and be kept in it," observed Sarah severely, when the old servants had met for a gossip round the kitchen fire in the evening. "She has the run of the house, and it ought to be put a stop to!"

"She has the run of my flower-beds," put in Jonas ruefully. "She come a-

dancing across 'em as if they be planted all for her. 'What do you plant those ugly old cabbages for?' she asked me this morning, 'instead of pretty flowers?' and she fills her hands with Missis's best carnations and tucks them inside her frock; and when I shakes my fist at her, she says, laughing and running away, 'Granny and I love flowers, and you love cabbages; and I love Granny, and I don't love you.'"

"'Tis a pity she hasn't got a nurse to look after her," said Bertha sharply. "The Missus looks at her as if she's a curiosity from China, and lets her have her way most dreadful. She will be a handful soon if I'm not mistaken!"

"I'm supposed to have the charge of her," observed Taylor quietly; "and she's not so difficult to manage if you go the right way about it. You can't expect a child to be like us folks, and always prefer sitting still to stirring round."

"Speak for yourself, please, Taylor,"

Bertha retorted. "It isn't all of us that loves a h'easy chair as you do, or has the chance to use it! I think if I had the charge of Miss Isabella, I'd teach her a few things!"

"There go you wimen!" exclaimed Jonas; "allays a-ready to bite each other's heads off! As for the little maid, Bertha must just have bin sich anither when she were young!"

Bertha tossed her head indignantly at this accusation; but Taylor, in her slow, unmoved way, said: "She has a loving little heart when you get to understand her. She comes into the work-room this morning from the garden, dragging her doll after her, in rather a shamefaced way. I looks up, and there I saw that beautiful doll, that cost no less than ten and sixpence, in a most awful state! Blue silk dress covered with mud, paint all off cheeks and mouth, all soaking and dripping with water! 'Why, whatever have you been doing with it!' I says.

She looks up at me with her solemn eyes. 'She used to be a rich lady,' she says as grave as a judge; 'but, poor thing, she went to Lunnon, and she's got very poor. She had no house when it rained, so she has got very wet; she felt very hungry, so her cheeks got pale; she got her clothes dirty, and there was no one to wash them; and so—so she doesn't turn her nose up at me any more, for she's crying hard, and she's very unhappy. I found her in a Lunnon street, and I'm going to have her as my little girl, and I'm going to love her like Granny does me.' With that she walks off to her corner where she plays; and she's as good as gold talking to, and dressing that doll for two hours after. And now she'll never let it out of her arms, when she would hardly so much as look at it before. Children are very queer, when all's said and done."

"She's out of place in this house," said Sarah conclusively, and the subject of conversation was changed.

Every morning now, Mrs. Fitzherbert took Dimple into her room, and read a chapter from the Bible to her, explaining it as she did so. She did not keep her long, for she did not wish to weary her, but for the time Dimple was interested and attentive.

"You see," she said to her godmother one day after she had been listening with breathless attention and with tearful eyes to the story of the Cross, "no one didn't explanise things to me in Lunnon. Daddy did try to teach me 'Our Father' one Sunday afternoon, but it was too differcult, and I didn't know that Jesus was so good and kind. I never knew it was to let us into heaven that He let those wicked men kill Him. I do love Him for being so kind, don't you?"

"Yes I do," said Mrs. Fitzherbert simply; "but I'm afraid neither you nor I love Him half as much as we ought, or we wouldn't grieve Him so often."

"Oh, I don't grieve Jesus at all," said

Dimple, shaking her curly head emphatically. "Shouldn't think of such a thing. I love Him very much!"

"But do you know that every time you are cross and naughty you grieve Him? Jesus wants you to be good; that pleases Him."

Dimple looked quite taken aback; then she said quickly, "Well, we mustn't tell Him anything about it, will we? and I'll try and remember to be cross very softly when I have to be, so that He won't hear."

Mrs. Fitzherbert could not help smiling, but little by little, line upon line, she taught her small godchild something of her own sinful little heart, and something of the Saviour's love and power to keep her from the bondage of it.

After the daily Bible reading was over, Dimple scampered about for the rest of the day, being in the open air for the greater part of it. Yet she had her grave moments, as Mrs. Fitzherbert soon discovered.

She came across her one day sitting on the edge of a cucumber frame, with a wo-begone little face; her doll in her lap, but her thoughts evidently far away.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Fitzherbert cheerily. "Dolly is not hurt, is she?"

Dimple looked at her doll with a comical face of disgust.

"*She's* quite well, granny. She's too stupid to get ill or anything nice. I'm very, very tired of her. She says nothing, and does nothing, and she stares at me always wide awake, and she smiles if I slap or shake her. She's every day the same; she's as bad as a picture on paper!"

"Granny" looked puzzled.

"Don't you like dollies? I did when I was a little girl. I used to think they were my little children, and loved them like a mother.

Dimple looked at her godmother with a

quivering lip, and then burst into a passionate wail:

"I want daddy; he's better than a stupid dolly. I want some one to take care of. I always tooked care of him, and now I've nobody. I used to pull his chair up to the fire, and brush his coat, and I could sew his buttons on—Mrs. Briggs taught me how; Mrs. Briggs said I was a little woman when I dusted the room, and I kept daddy's room so tidy. I did sweep the floor once, but the horrid broom kept tripping me up. I've nobody to take care of here, and I don't know what to do. Daddy said I used to comfort him and do him a lot of good."

She nodded her little head wisely, as she paused.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was silent for a moment, then she said, "You must try and take care of me, Dimple; I am an old lady, and I can't run about as I used to; you must run my errands, and comfort me instead of daddy."

Dimple gazed at her godmother thoughtfully.

"You aren't poor, and hungry, and sad, like daddy used to be; and Taylor brushes you and makes you comfable; there is nothing left for me. You don't want nothing to-day, do you?"

"Yes!" was the brisk reply. "Come along to the tool-house with me, and help me to pot some seedlings."

Dimple jumped up with alacrity. She was so happy with a small trowel and some earth, that a brilliant thought struck Mrs. Fitzherbert.

"You shall have a little garden all of your own, Dimple, dear, with some little tools, and you shall plant it with what flowers and vegetables you like. Come along with me and we will choose a place for it. Taking care of flowers has been my pastime for many years, and it can be yours. You will find flowers more interesting than dolls, I expect."

Dimple's face was radiant as she fol-

lowed her godmother round the garden; and when a good-sized plot of spare ground was alloted to her, and she was told she could have it for her "very own," she threw her little arms round her godmother in a fervent embrace.

"I shall have heaps of roses, and no nasty vegetubbers. Oh, granny, it's ever so much nicer than my dolly!"

"You must set to work and take all the weeds out first," said Mrs. Fitzherbert, heaving a sigh of relief as she saw what a source of occupation and interest the little garden would be to the busy head and fingers.

And for the rest of the day Dimple was quite engrossed with her new possession.

As she was wishing her "granny" good-night that evening she said earnestly:

"And have you had no one but flowers ever to take care of?"

Mrs. Fitzherbert's eyes filled with tears.

"Yes, I have had several people, dar-

ling, but I gave them up to One who can take care of them much better than I can."

"Who?"

"God. They are in heaven with Him. And now I have a special little flower, a rosebud that I hope is planted in God's garden down here, and I am going to look after her, and try and help her to blossom into a beautiful sweet-smelling rose."

"Is that me?"

"Yes, you are one of God's little buds that He expects to go on growing until fit for His beautiful garden in heaven."

Dimple's eyes grew big with earnest feeling.

"I shall like to be one of God's little roses. Are you one, granny?"

"I hope I am one of His flowers; but I have given my Gardener a lot of trouble since He planted me."

There was silence; the little head was full of new thoughts, and as she was being tucked up in bed that night, Dimple said, with emphasis, to Taylor:

"Granny must be a rose without any prickles, for she never hurts any one, and I shan't have any prickles too, and I won't have any prickle roses in my garden. I shan't let them have prickles."

"You've got roses on your brain," said Taylor good-humoredly, whilst Dimple added in a contented whisper to herself, "and when my roses are growed I'll send every one to daddy, so he shall have a rose in his coat every day besides Sunday."

The next afternoon, Dimple crept up to her nursery tea from the garden, with a mysterious air.

Taylor had Bertha to tea, and they were so busy talking that the child was for some time unnoticed.

She ate her bread and butter and drank her mug of milk in silence; but presently her small voice broke out in the way she had of talking to herself.

"And it's a good job, my dear, for the poor child to be tooken. She never would

a done nothing, and she's safe fwom this wicked world."

"Hear her now!" said Taylor in an aside to Bertha; "the way the child has picked up bits of talk from them Londoners is wonderful!"

"Who's safe from this wicked world?" said Bertha with a laugh.

Dimple looked up solemnly.

"My dolly. She doed nothing and said nothing, and I can't take care of her aside my garden."

"And what have you done to her, you naughty child?" Bertha exclaimed. "I never see such a destructive little girl. I used to make my dolls last years, and here you've only had a bran new doll a week, and when I see her yesterday she looked quite wore out already."

"I've buried her in my garden, and she's never going to live any more. I'm going to take care of flowers now, like granny."

"You don't deserve your granny's

kindness, to go and destroy what she's been kind enough to give you," said Taylor slowly.

"She's all right, my dolly is," responded Dimple with a cheerful little nod. "I tied her face up in a pocky-hanky. Flowers is put into the ground, and flowers is much nicer than she is. She's very comfable there, and I isn't going to think about her any more!"

When Mrs. Fitzherbert was told of the fate of "dolly" she shook her head.

"Ah! little one, have you such a small heart that it will only hold your garden? Couldn't poor dolly find a place there too? Come, tell me whom you love."

"Daddy!" was the quick reply.

"I am thankful the garden has not been his rival in your affections."

"And I love you," the child went on; "and I love the roses; and I love Taylor a tiny bit, and I don't like Jonas acause he won't let me use his big scissors, and he says, 'Get along with you, Missy.'

And I don't love Bertha acause she scolds me for being a child; and I don't love Sarah acause she shakes her head so dreadful when she sees me!"

Dimple paused for breath, then stroked her godmother's soft white hand coaxingly.

"Are you angry with me because of dolly? I do like my garden better than her. And you don't play with dolls, do you? And babies who are put in the ground are always better off, aren't they? Everybody says so."

Mrs. Fitzherbert was not used to such quick deductions, so she remonstrated no further.

CHAPTER IV

"A Dear Little Tiny Pig!"

"JONAS, 'sposing you had to grow out of the ground, what would you like to be?"

Dimple asked this question as she stood watching Jonas in the potting shed. She was very busy over her garden; all the weeds were gone, and she was waiting patiently for some little pansy plants that Jonas had been told by his mistress to give her.

Jonas grunted; he had plenty of conversation for the kitchen, but none for children, whom he heartily disliked.

"I expect you'd like to be a cabbage, now, wouldn't you? Better than being a rose!"

"Roses don't feed the hungry," growled Jonas. "I'd be of some use in the world if I could."

"Granny likes roses, and you like veg'tubbers; she told me so. I hate veg-'tubbers; I always told daddy not to buy any in Lunnon; I like buns best. It's a pity you can't grow buns, Jonas!"

Again a grunt, but no more.

"I wish my dolly would turn into a flower, and come up one day," went on the child, chattering away as only children can to a silent listener. "Do you think if I water her well she would, Jonas? She ought to do somefin under the earth if she's in a flower garden; I'm sure she's better than a flower seed. Jonas, does God ever make any new flowers? Or has He made all He is going to? You told granny yesterday there was a new sort of—of—now what new flower was it? Don't you remember, you called it a lady somebody!"

"Carnation it were."

"Yes! When did God make it? Last week? He must have made it pretty lately, mustn't He?"

Jonas shook his head, and went on with his potting.

"I wish I could make flowers, it must be dreffully differcult; you would have to have such tiny fingers to get into some of them, but I'm going to grow lots of them. My garden will be like a big Lunnon shop soon, and I'll have roses and roses and roses; I should like a hill of them in the middle. Will you give me a lot of rose seed Jonas? I sowed some mustard and cress in a window in Lunnon once. I should like to sow roses quite as thick as that. Who sows the weeds, Jonas? They're thick enough, nasty things! Granny told me I was a little rose yesterday, one of God's little roses. What are you Jonas? You aren't a rose, I'm sure!"

"I'm what the Lord made me," was the grim reply.

"When will my plants be ready? You

don't speak to me half so nice as Taylor does. I expect——" here Dimple paused, cast about in her mind for something that she really disliked, and brought it out with much emphasis and disgust. "I expect you're one of God's *onions*, that's what you are!"

Her patience and her talk were exhausted; and she darted out into the sunny garden, dancing over the green lawn, and singing as she did so. A few minutes later and she was swinging on the front gate, looking out into the road for want of something better to do. Presently a boy with a basket came along. Dimple stared at him in silence. He looked up and grinned.

"Will you know me again, young un?"

"I don't know you now," she said gravely. "What's your name? Granny says I can shake hands with people in the country, and speak to them too. Shall I shake hands with you?"

The boy stood still, attracted by the

winsome little lady. Dimple descended from her perch, opened the gate, and held out her hand.

"I'm very glad to see you," she said with an old-fashioned air of politeness, "are you coming in?"

"Not I," said the boy, laughing; "are you coming out?"

"Yes, I think I will," said Dimple, taking him at his word, and stepping out beside him with great energy. "You see, in Lunnon, Mrs. Briggs told me I couldn't know people, acause some of them were wicked; but no one is in the country, are they? What have you got in your basket?"

The boy lowered his basket and let her peep inside.

"Some chickens, and sausages, do you keep a chicken shop?"

"Bless your heart, these don't come from a shop. They're from Darley Coombe Farm, and they're agoin' to the big house up yonder."

"Who lives there?"

"Squire Watcombe."

Dimple was none the wiser, but she thought she was.

She nodded her head.

"And who are you?"

"My name is Bert White."

"Bert? That's a nice easy name, and are you going home when you've taken your chicken?"

"Yes, I be."

"Then I'll come with you, and you can show me your home."

Bert looked a little uneasy. They trudged along, and soon met another lad leading a donkey-cart full of vegetables.

The boys knew each other, and stopped to have a chat; Dimple walked round the cart and inspected it with her nose in the air.

"Only nasty veg'tubbers," she said; then she gave an exclamation of delight.

"Oh, there's a dear little tiny pig

asleep in the bottom. Oh, do let me see him! Wake him up. Where are you going to take him?"

Bert laughed.

"I'll leave her with you, Ben; she's follered me ever so far, and you'd best take her back, or we shall hear of it agen!"

Ben looked at Dimple and then at his cart. He was a stupid-looking, red-headed boy, and when he watched Bert hurrying away, he scratched his head in perplexity.

Dimple seized hold of his coat imploringly:

"Do lift me up in your cart to see that little pig," she said.

He awkwardly obeyed her.

"He's a-goin to market. Feyther be goin' to sell him."

"Oh, I wish I could buy him, I wish I could; he's *such* a darling! Look! he's opening his eyes! May I sit down and take him in my lap?"

"Sit steady, for I'm a-goin' on."

The donkey started, the boy jumped up and took his place on the seat. Dimple was already sitting on bunches of turnips in the botton of the cart, her busy hands quietly liberating some cord round the little black pig's legs.

There was a great deal of squeaking when she took the pig in her arms; and then a shriller squeak, and a loud cry from her, made the stolid boy look round.

The pig in his fright and struggles had dashed out of the cart, and was making the best of his way across a green field.

"Well, I'm blest! Whatever are I to do! Feyther's countin' to make a deal from him!"

"Shall I run after him? Lift me down, quick, quick!"

Dimple scrambled out of the cart and was tearing after the runaway, delighted at having a scamper over the green grass.

Ben scratched his head again, looked after her and considered. Then, when he could see the pig no more, he shook the reins and slowly jogged on his way to market.

Dimple's breath soon gave way, and she paused.

"He is a stupid pig to run away so fast. He ought to like me to nurse him—my dollies do—but I think a pig would be nicer to nurse than a doll. I will try and catch him!"

Off she started again, but was suddenly confronted by two gentlemen.

"Well, little lady, what are you doing here?" asked one of them.

Dimple put out her hand at once.

"How do you do. Please I'm catching a pig!"

A hearty laugh followed this statement.

"A runaway pig! Where has he gone?"

"I don't know," said Dimple, as she looked in vain for some signs of the

truant. "He ran right across the field; p'raps he has climbed a tree."

"Clever pig!" murmured the other gentleman.

"Please help me to catch him," pleaded the little girl. "He tumbled out of the cart, and the boy will be so angry!"

"I'm afraid it is beyond our powers," said the first speaker. "Does he belong to you?"

"No, but he was *such* a darling, and I was going to ask granny to buy him. He has such twinkling eyes; I would like to have him for my own."

"And who is your granny? She ought to look after you better, and not let you run about after pigs in this fashion."

"Granny doesn't know I've come away. She said I must shake hands with people who speak to me in the country; so I did when I saw Bert, and I walked out with him, and I met another boy, and he let me ride in his cart, and nurse the pig; and d'reckly his legs came undone he jumped

out. My granny takes care of roses and now she's taking care of me. Do you know her, please?"

"I shouldn't wonder," said the elder of these two new acquaintances, "if this isn't Mrs. Fitzherbert's fresh importation. My wife told me of a *rencontre* with her." Then turning to Dimple, Mr. Howard—for it was he who spoke—said drily:

"I wonder if you know a little girl who 'keeps herself to herself' when ladies speak to her. Gentlemen seem privileged."

Dimple nodded with a smile.

"I always 'keeps myself to myself' in Lunnon, but granny told me it wasn't a proper thing to say in the country. I'm going to shake hands with everybody I see."

"Your acquaintance is not limited, even to pigs. Did you shake hands with him?"

"Oh, no. Please will you help me to catch him?"

Mr. Howard laughed; then obligingly turned and scoured the field with her; and when Dimple's legs began to ache, he suggested giving up the search and taking her home.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was already beginning to get very uneasy about her, and was much relieved to see her under Mr. Howard's care.

When she heard the story she said a little apologetically to the vicar:

"I am as yet unused to children and their ways, and do not understand how much I must forbid. I never thought she would wander off outside the gate. You must not run about the roads, Dimple. You have made me very anxious, darling. Now run up-stairs, and stay with Taylor till dinner-time."

"And what about the pig?" asked the child anxiously.

"I do not know that we can do anything. The boy ought to have gone after it himself."

Dimple trotted up-stairs, and Mrs. Fitzherbert gave a little sigh.

"Are you repenting your decision to have the child here?" asked Mr. Howard.

"No, oh no; she is a constant interest and amusement. A little tiring at times, but I am not so young as I used to be, and I am anxious to train her rightly. I feel the responsibility, Mr. Howard.

"Yes, I suppose you do," said Mr. Howard; "but I envy the child under your rule. There is no chance of the life and spirits being starved and quenched, as is so often the case."

"But I may err on the other side; plants require hardening if they are not hot-house ones; and I want to be a good disciplinarian from the beginning."

Mr. Howard laughed. "You and your roses are associated in my mind with sunshine and sweetness; don't try and bring a discordant element into your atmosphere."

But Mrs. Fitzherbert shook her head

with a smile, though she did not pursue the subject. Later on she went up-stairs to the work-room. Dimple was perched on the low window-ledge talking away to Taylor.

"Pigs is better than dollies, acause they kick about, and their eyes twinkle, and they roll over and over. I should like one *so* much. I wonder where he is. Could he get down under the earth with the rabbits? Why do they creep under the ground, Taylor? Couldn't they live in nests in the trees? That's what I would like to do."

Here she noticed her godmother's entrance, and running to her took hold of her hand.

"Please, granny, come and sit down and tell me things like daddy used to do. He always answered my questions. He said that was all grown-up people were good for. Do tell me why pigs can't climb trees. Taylor says she never saw one; cats climb, don't they?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Fitzherbert, sitting down and taking Dimple on her knee; "but cats have claws and very light bodies. They stick their claws in the wood, and hold on, as pigs could not do."

Dimple nodded wisely. Mrs. Fitzherbert continued,—

"You see, darling, what is right for one animal to do, isn't right for another, and it is just the same with us. One little girl who has no friends or anybody to care for her may run about in the fields or roads as she likes, but another little girl ought not to do so."

"That's me," put in Dimple. "I didn't mean to be naughty, granny; you told me to shake hands and be friends with everybody, and I did it."

"No, I think you mistook granny. If any one comes to this house, any of my friends—and I think you will know who are likely to be granny's friends—then I shall expect you to shake hands with them, but I do not expect you to scamper about

the roads with strange boys and make friends with their pigs!"

Mrs. Fitzherbert ended her sentence with a little laugh, but Dimple looked very serious.

"Have you many friends, granny? Daddy said he hadn't a true friend in Lunnon, and I hadn't one acept my kitty. Mrs. Briggs wasn't a true friend, for she slapped me once, and I told her she wasn't my friend any more."

Then clasping her godmother tightly round the neck, she said with one of her quick changes of thought:—

"Oh, granny, do you think I shall have an appletree in my garden soon? How long will it take to grow up? I buried an old apple that I found in the hay-loft. I dug a hole, and I put it down very deep, and I poured a whole can of water over it. Jonas laughed at me. He said, when I asked him, that no doubt I'd have a fine crop to-morrow; but I b'lieve

he wasn't speaking true, acause he laughed so."

"You have a good many lessons to learn yet, darling, if you are going to become a good gardener. And one of the first lessons a gardener learns is to be patient."

After a little more talk Mrs. Fitzherbert left the room, and Dimple still stood by the window, pondering in her childish fashion over what had been said to her.

CHAPTER V

"Are there Thiefs
in the Country?"

A DAY or two after, Mrs. Fitzherbert had a visitor—a tall, handsome woman, who arrived in a carriage and swept into the house with rustling draperies, and an atmosphere of sweet perfume about her.

It was a sultry afternoon; and Mrs. Fitzherbert, instead of going for her usual drive, was indulging herself in an armchair in the cool drawing-room, with the last new book.

"Lady Dorothy!" I am glad to see you. I thought you were still abroad."

"I have been home a month, and would have been over to you before, only I have had the house full of visitors.

Lady Dorothy stooped to kiss her old friend affectionately; then sank into an easy-chair with a little sigh of content.

"I do enjoy coming here! I always feel so good when I am in one of your sweet peaceful rooms. They are just like you. Sometimes I would give anything to change places with you, Mrs. Fitzherbert. You seem to have passed through all the troubles of life, and are in such smooth waters now."

"You ought not to know much trouble, my dear, in your circumstances."

And Mrs. Fitzherbert looked sympathetically into the discontented, tired face of her visitor.

Lady Dorothy laughed impatiently.

"Oh, yes; so everybody says. Wealth and youth are supposed to be infallible proofs of happiness. I long sometimes to be one of the hardworking mothers in our village. They never get so tired of everybody and everything as I do. Even Herbert and I have quarrels now. I'm sure

it is for want of occupation, but it is not soothing to one's spirits. I often think that I am of no use to any one, and long to have done with life altogether."

"We shall never come to that," said Mrs. Fitzherbert very gently; "this life is only the beginning of another life hereafter."

"Oh, I know, I know. I wish I were good like you. Now will you take me to your rose walk? It is always such a pleasure to see you amongst your flowers."

Mrs. Fitzherbert rose at once. "We will just have time before tea comes in; I believe you are as fond of flowers as I am; come this way."

Lady Dorothy followed her hostess with a wistful face along the old-fashioned walks, but stopped short at the little figure of a child in white sun hat, and brown holland overall, stooping over a bed of newly-planted pansies.

"Why, who is this?" she asked; "you have no grand-children?"

"No, but it is a little godchild living with me now. Come and speak to this lady, Dimple."

Dimple turned round showing a heated earnest little face, and very grubby hands.

"I'm very busy, granny; there's a nasty snail and two worms crawling all about, and they wriggle away d'reckly I catch hold of them."

Lady Dorothy's face softened wonderfully as she looked at the child.

"You're a happy little creature," she said smiling, "to be living in this old-world garden with such a fairy godmother."

"Yet it was only a day or two ago that Dimple was experiencing some of your difficulties," said Mrs. Fitzherbert, laying her hand on the child's brown curls. "She was very unhappy because she was of no use to any one."

Dimple looked up, and gave one of her emphatic little nods.

"That was acause I didn't have any

one to take care of. But I've got such a lot of flowers now, and they're my little chillen, and they keep me very busy."

Lady Dorothy moved on, but her voice was somewhat unsteady as she said, "If I had children to take care of, I should be a happy woman."

"But there are others wanting your love and care, my dear. Believe me, there is nothing that will bring more gladness and interest to your life than your taking interest in those around you, who need your help and sympathy."

"I don't care for poor people. I don't know how to talk to them."

"Because you do not know them. But I was not only thinking of your poor tenants. There are others in your own class of life who are often in trouble and in want of a friend."

"They would never turn to me," and Lady Dorothy's tone was rather bitter. "No, I shall never pose as a benefactor to any one. It isn't in my line."

She had stopped, and bent her head to a most beautiful crimson rose.

"I always think your roses have the sweetest scents of any I see. I can almost smell them as I am driving by."

Mrs. Fitzherbert smiled.

"And don't you think, my dear, we human creatures ought to give some sort of fragrance in our lives to refresh the passers-by? You know my weakness. I will not have a flower in my garden that does not impress the atmosphere with its sweetness."

Lady Dorothy laughed.

"I always love your little sermons amongst your roses. You carry your precepts into practise, for I am always refreshed by you."

Mrs. Fitzherbert said no more, but soon after led her guest back to the house, and conversation drifted into other channels.

Just as Lady Dorothy was leaving the house, she met Dimple coming into her

nursery tea. She held out her little hand gravely.

"I can shake hands and say good-by, for I've washed them in the greenhouse tub, and Jonas let me dry them in his big red handkerchy. And I've found a little frog I'm taking in to have tea with me. He's in my pocket, would you like to see him?"

"No, thank you," laughed Lady Dorothy, stooping to kiss the soft cheek turned up so confidingly to her. "I think you must come over and see me one day. Will your godmother spare you?"

"Oh, no; I'm sure she can't," was the quick reply; "acause we work aside of each other in the garden every day!"

"I shall steal you away from her one day altogether, and take you to be my little girl." And then, with a laugh at Dimple's astonished face, Lady Dorothy stepped into her carriage and was driven off, the child gazing after her with a strange kind of fascination.

She walked up-stairs very slowly, and not the antics of her frog when deposited in a basin of water could distract her mind from those farewell words.

"Taylor, are there thiefs in the country like in Lunnon?" she asked when seated at the tea-table in a clean pinafore.

"Why, yes, of course" said Taylor slowly; "the country is not free from those kind of folk."

"And do they steal chillen?"

"Not that I am aware of. Are you thinking of gipsy folk?"

"No, lady thiefs."

"Well," said Taylor looking at her little charge, "whatever has put that into your head? It makes me think of a story an aunt of mine told me once about a lady passing a pretty child on a road in a close carriage, and she stops her carriage, snatches hold of the child, and drives off with it, and it was never seen again from that day to this. They did say she took it off to France and adopted it, but the

parents died of broken hearts within a twelvemonth."

Dimple's eyes grew round and big at this tragic story, but not another word did she say. Only that night in bed, when Taylor had left her, she clutched hold of her father's photograph that always went with her to bed, and a frightened sob escaped her.

"She shan't steal me, daddy; you won't let her, and God won't let her. I'm granny's little girl, next to yours, and I shall run away and hide when she comes again. Oh, daddy, come back soon, and take me to your little cottage, and we'll let granny come and live with us acause I love her."

Mrs. Fitzherbert had other visitors besides Lady Dorothy who took a fancy to her little godchild; but Dimple, though not shy, would generally creep away when much noticed, and nothing would induce her to go out to tea. She was asked to the Vicarage, and to one or two other

houses in the neighborhood where there were children, but she would only clasp her godmother's hand very tightly, and repeat over and over again, with the utmost deliberation, "I'll never leave granny, thank you. I has my tea in her house evewy afternoon, and I don't want to go away till I go to daddy."

Her father was never out of her mind. Many a wet afternoon was spent in the drawing-room with granny, concocting and dictating wonderful letters to him, which granny put down in her clear flowing handwriting, and sent off by the very next post, so that "daddy might get the letters very quick."

And when a foreign letter came for the little maiden, she was beside herself with excitement, and had it read to her over and over again by every member of the household, from granny down to Jonas. After every reading she would exclaim triumphantly, "Isn't daddy clever to write such a letter? You couldn't send

me such a nice one, could you?" And then the letter would be tucked inside her frock and carried to bed, and folded and refolded so many times that it would fall to pieces before a week was out.

Her garden occupied all her time. She was sadly distressed at only having one rose bush in it, and Mrs. Fitzherbert promised to give her several small standard trees in the autumn to bloom next summer.

"Why won't they bloom now? I want them now," was the impatient rejoinder.

"Why won't you grow up into a woman at once?" Mrs. Fitzherbert said with her amused smile. "You are not a bit bigger than when you came to me. I don't get impatient at my little rose-tree growing so slowly.

And Dimple pondered over this, and dimly understood.

One afternoon Taylor took her out for a walk. She was sent on a message to a farm, and their way took them through

some green meadows and a wood. When they got to the wood, Dimple's footsteps began to flag.

"Let us sit down. I'm so tired."

"We haven't time now. Come along, there's a good child; the farm is just the other side of this wood."

"Well, you go on, and I'll wait for you here. I can't walk any more."

Taylor hesitated. She saw the child was tired, and dreaded having to carry her home.

"Will you promise me to stay where you are till I come back?"

"Yes, I promise." And Dimple contentedly seated herself at the foot of an old oak, and began playing with the acorns on the ground.

Taylor looked doubtfully at her, then quickened her steps onwards, whilst for some time her little charge chattered to herself in her own fashion, without a thought of anything but her pleasant surroundings.

Suddenly she heard footsteps approaching her, and looking up saw to her astonishment a little boy. He did not notice her, and seemed in great trouble, for his eyes were red, and his chest still heaving with half-suppressed sobs. He was dressed in a shabby brown velveteen suit, and a ragged straw hat covered a dark, silky little head of hair. In his hand he carried a book, but every now and then he brushed his coat cuff across his eyes, as if to wipe away any stray tears that would find their exit.

Dimple gazed at him in wonder. And then, as he came stumbling past her, his eyes on the ground, her sympathetic little heart prompted her to speak.

CHAPTER VI

"Just the sort of person
I've been looking for"

"HI! boy, what's the matter?" The little boy started, and pulled himself up very erectly as his gaze met hers.

"Who are you?" he asked then, rather anxiously. "You're aren't a fairy, are you?"

Dimple laughed merrily. "No, I'm only a little girl, but you look as sad as daddy did. Come and sit down by me, and tell me all about it."

The boy considered for a moment, then promptly obeyed the invitation. Dimple had adopted a very motherly tone, and she took one of his hands in hers and patted it caressingly.

"What's your name, dear? Mine is Dimple. That's what everybody calls me. I have a daddy the other side of the sea, and I'm going to him soon; but I'm living with granny now."

"My name is Archibald McBride. You can call me Archie if you like."

"And what has made you so unhappy?"

Archie drew his head up a little proudly.

"I've been in trouble over my lessons. Uncle Stephen has been so angry. I *hate* lessons!"

"I don't go to school or do lessons. Granny says she teaches me lessons in the garden, but I don't know when she does it. She never has a book. What's your book?"

"And then Archie's face kindles with delight.

"It's my fairy book. I've only had it since my last birthday. Hector gave it to me; he is my uncle's servant, you know, but he's very nice to talk to, and he quite believes in fairies, and so do I."

They chatted on as children do, freely and unconstrainedly. Archie told about a strange, far-away life in India, and of being sent home a few years before to a stern, silent uncle, who only relaxed his cold severity when he fell into a towering passion.

"It's always at lessons. I get frightened over my Latin, and he throws books at me, and I don't mind that; but he says I'll live to be a disgrace to the family, and it's because I've black hair and eyes like my mother, who wasn't a Scotchwoman at all!"

"What's the family?" asked Dimple, in awed tones.

"It's just *the* family, that's what he says. There are pictures of them up in the dining-room, and most of them wear a kilt. He says he would be ashamed to see my white skinny legs in a kilt, but Hector says I'll never do credit to the family till I'm in one."

"And where's your daddy?"

"Do you mean my father? He and mother died before I left India. I hardly remember them. I've no one to take care of me here. I hate it!"

His dark eyes flashed out for a moment, then he dropped his head sorrowfully.

"Are you ever tired?" asked Dimple eagerly.

"Yes, often."

"And hungry?"

"Sometimes."

"And do you feel as if nothing will be any good any more, and you'd better lie down and die?"

"Yes, that's just it."

"Then you're just like daddy. And he used to say, when he came in tired, I was his greatest comfort. And if you like, I'll be your comfort, and take care of you as I used to do of him. I've been looking out for a sad, unhappy person ever since I came to granny; but you see she's very happy and comfable, and Taylor is always smiling, and Bertha and Sarah

won't have nothing to do with me. And Jonas says I'm an imp, and children are born to plague grown-ups. But I'm very glad I've met you; and now we'll make out what we'll do. For you're just the sort of person I've been looking for!"

Dimple's rapid speech rather disconcerted her new friend.

"I'm a boy," he said, feebly remonstrating; "boys don't want girls to take care of them."

"Oh, yes they do, always." And Dimple nodded her head knowingly. "Daddy always said a man without a woman is very badly off; they can't keep themselves tidy and mend their clothes; and if they cook their chops, they make such a mess, and I always had to brush daddy's clothes, and dust his boots, and put a flower in his coat."

Archie looked down at his shabby clothes and torn stockings with a sigh.

"I can't keep myself tidy; but we're rather poor, and Hector says that Uncle

Stephen can't afford a proper kilt for me. He says it would be splendid if I had one, for Mrs. Blaikie wouldn't have to mend any stockings. You see, she only lets me have one pair a week, and my knees seem to come through directly. I don't think she's a good mender. Hector says he'd like to see me in a kilt, for he's sure Uncle Stephen would think me more in the family then!"

"I'm afraid I can't mend stockings well," said Dimple thoughtfully; "but Taylor does them beautifully. She has made me a lot of frocks, too, since I came to granny. Perhaps she could make you a kilt. It's what Scotchmen wear, isn't it? There was an old man in Lunnon in our street who used to go out and play the bagpipes. The boys used to call him "Sandy," but he was nearly always tipsy. Can you play bagpipes?"

"No, but Hector can. He plays in the kitchen sometimes."

Then, looking anxiously round, Archie

said, "I must go back; it will be tea time. Will you come to the wood again?"

"Where do you live? In a castle in the middle of it?"

Archie laughed.

"Oh, no; our house is just outside it on the high road, behind those pine trees. Where do you live?"

"In a beautiful house with a garden full of roses. You come and see it to-morrow, and I'll show you my garden, and then we'll talk about my taking care of you."

Archie smiled: he held out his hand, but Dimple lifted up her face and kissed him.

"Daddy always said my kisses were like dew to the thirsty earth. Do you feel better after my kiss?"

Archie had not yet arrived at that stage of boyhood when girls' kisses were abhorred. He answered promptly:

"Yes, I'll let you kiss me because you don't smell of whisky like Mrs. Blaikie.

And I'll come and see you to-morrow. I'll find the house by the roses!"

He turned back and set off at a run. Dimple watched him with eager interest. Yet when Taylor came up and they walked home, not a word did she say about her new acquaintance. Her childish instinct told her that Taylor might not approve, and she judged it wiser to gain granny's sanction first.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was out when they returned; but after her nursery tea Dimple went in search of her. She found her seated with her knitting in the drawing-room by the open window, enjoying the sweet scents that were wafted in from her flowers by the evening breeze.

"Granny, I've found somebody at last to take care of. Let me tell you, do."

Impatient little hands got hold of the knitting, and made a place in granny's lap to climb up to.

Mrs. Fitzherbert kissed the eager face. She never checked her godchild's con-

fidences, and in consequence all the childish plans and purposes were taken at once to her.

When her story was told, Dimple said breathlessly:

"And he's coming to-morrow; and may he stay to tea? and will you tell Taylor to mend his stockings? He's much better than my dolly to play with."

"And much nicer than your garden, little one? Is that going to be pushed aside now for this new comer?"

Dimple shook her head.

"No, he shall help me with my garden; he shall pick up all the weeds and take the nasty worms away."

Mrs. Fitzherbert laughed as she stroked the sunny curls resting against her shoulder.

"I know who the little boy must be," she said meditatively; "but I do not think his uncle cares to know his neighbors, and perhaps he may not like his nephew to come here to see you. I know

Mr. McBride slightly, but we have only just exchanged calls."

"And is he like a wicked ogre, or like the uncle of the Babes in the Wood, granny?"

"Oh, no, no; you must not talk like that! And another time, darling, never ask anybody to come and see you without asking me first."

"But you'll let him come, won't you? Acause I do want somebody so dreadfully to take care of!"

"I shall be very glad for you to have a little companion, if he is a nice boy, and if his uncle is willing."

"He's a very nice boy," Dimple said earnestly, as she twisted her godmother's rings round with her restless little fingers. "He had been crying, and his eyes were red, and he's a very sad person. I like people who cry, don't you, granny?"

"We feel sorry for them, certainly."

"Yes, and I'm going to be his comfort, like I was to daddy."

"And must poor old granny be left out in the cold because she doesn't cry and look a sad person?"

For answer came a violent hug and throttling embrace.

"I love you quite different granny, but I do love you next to daddy; I do really!"

All the next morning Dimple was in a very excited state of mind, running backwards and forwards to the garden gate, but it was not till half-past three in the afternoon that her little friend appeared. He looked perfectly radiant; his straw hat was tilted back on his head, and he wore a red geranium in his buttonhole.

Dimple surveyed him disapprovingly.

"You should have come in crying," she said severely; "that's how I like you best."

"Boys don't cry when they go visiting," returned Archie, quite unabashed.

Dimple was too eager to show him her garden, to pursue the subject, and Archie admired and exclaimed so much at every-

thing he was shown, that he quite reinstated himself in her favor.

"The pine trees shut out all the sun from our garden, and we haven't got any roses."

"But you've got those red gewaniums that granny won't have because they don't smell."

And Dimple eyed the buttonhole with displeasure.

"I picked this off Mrs. Blaikie's pots that are in the kitchen window; don't you like it?"

"No; I was going to put a rose in your coat, and brush you, and now you've come to me all clean, and there's nothing for me to do to you."

Dimple's face was wobegone; but when Archie understood that she had taken the trouble to carry a clothes-brush about with her all the morning, in the glad hope of using it upon him,—when he was shown the special red rosebud that granny had said she might pick for him, and had

seen the very duster that was to wipe the dust off his boots, then he began to see the enormity of his offense, and the necessity for remedying it at once.

So, in a most obliging manner, he pulled the offending geranium out and stamped upon it with both feet, and then deliberately lying down on the gravel walk, he rolled himself over and over, till his coat and knickerbockers were liberally supplied with dust.

"Now," he said triumphantly, "you can clean me, and I'll always come and see you as dirty as possible."

Dimple set to work at once with cheerful alacrity, and when she had brushed and dusted and polished to her heart's content, she took him to the rose-bush, and was arranging the rose with a good many pats and flourishes in his coat when Mrs. Fitzherbert appeared upon the scene.

"Here he is, granny," exclaimed Dimple, pushing him forward. "I've

been tidying him, but it's taken rather long, for he had to untidy himself first. He make a dreadful mistake, but he promised never to do it again."

Mrs. Fitzherbert felt drawn at once towards the white-faced, wistful-looking lad, and kissing him tenderly, said, "Does your uncle know you have come here, dear?"

Archie's dark eyes looked up in a frightened kind of way.

"No, I never tell him things!"

"But I cannot have you come to see my little godchild without his permission."

"I—I—don't think he would mind," stammered poor Archie; "he lets me go out every afternoon where I like, and never asks me questions. He teaches me lessons till one o'clock, and then he tells me to make myself scarce for the rest of the day."

"Oh, granny," pleaded Dimple, not liking to see the grave look on Mrs.

Fitzherbert's face, "don't send him away; do be kind to him!"

"I am not going to be unkind to him, darling; but his uncle must know where he is, before I can let him stay here and play with you."

A silence fell on the little group. Mrs. Fitzherbert looked at the anxious faces of the children, and considered; then she said with a smile:

"I will tell you what had better be done: Archie can stay an hour or so with you, and then I will drive him home myself, and ask his uncle if he will allow him to come to tea with you another day."

This being settled, the little friends were made perfectly happy, and Dimple's busy tongue never ceased as she trotted Archie round the premises.

She had taken him into the house and out again; they had enjoyed a romp under the mulberry tree, and paid a visit to the greenhouse, where Jonas had in a spasm of generosity given them each a small

bunch of grapes; and now they were lying on the grass in the shade, feeling rather tired and very warm.

"It's a beautiful garden," said Archie thoughtfully. "A princess might almost live here."

"Granny has been taking care of flowers all her life, she says; and I'm one of her flowers now—a rosebud I am. Are you in God's garden?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Why, granny says all little children ought to be in God's garden. God has a big, big garden, and Satan comes along and is always trying to spoil the flowers; and God and granny try to make me grow into a beautiful rose. Satan makes the weeds come, you know, and the prickly thistle, and the—the dandelion—I think that's one of his flowers because Jonas is always cutting them out of the grass. And he makes worms come and eat up the roots; and if you ever see a flower not growing properly, it's Satan who has been

spoiling it. I hope he won't spoil me. What flower are you, I wonder?"

This confused parable delighted Archie.

"Tell me more," he said. "What else does your granny say?"

"Oh, she tells me lots, and some I make up myself. I've got to smell sweet you know, and not mind when Taylor scolds, for she's a kind of gardener's boy, you know, like Bill, who weeds the gravel paths. And she helps granny to make me grow, and God helps granny."

Then Dimple started to her feet. "Come here, Archie. I'll show you what rose you are. Jonas says granny is very fond of her little Scotch roses, and you're Scotch, aren't you?"

She dragged him after her to a corner of the old house where some pure white roses were climbing up a trellis.

Archie looked, and his eyes sparkled.

"Yes, I'm a Scotch rose—Hector says I'm a white-faced weakling,—and I love climbing."

"They've got horrid little prickles though," said Dimple. "I think our prickles are our wicked tempers."

Archie nodded. "I've got a lot."

Then silently, hand in hand, they retraced their steps, both busy brains revolving the problem of natural sin.

CHAPTER VII

"A LITTLE CROOKED TREE"

To Dimple's delight, Mrs. Fitzherbert took her in the pony carriagewith Archie, when it was time for him to go home. When they reached Fir House, where the little boy lived, Dimple looked up at it curiously. It was a gloomy place, with a thick yew hedge in front, and the pines behind seemed to cast a black shadow upon it. The door was opened by a tall gaunt Scotchman in a shabby kilt, who showed them silently into an unused drawing-room, which had a close damp atmosphere, and a moment after Mr. McBride entered.

He received Mrs. Fitzherbert courteously, though very stiffly.

"Has my nephew met with any ac-

cident, or has he been trespassing on your grounds, madam, that you should have had the trouble of bringing him home?"

"Neither," said Mrs. Fitzherbert, smiling. "He and my godchild have struck up an acquaintance when out, and I have allowed them to play together in my garden. I shall be very glad if you will permit him to come and see my little girl sometimes, but I told him it must not be without your permission."

Mr. McBride's brows contracted as he gazed sternly at his trembling nephew, and then at the smiling little maiden. Then he made a courtly little bow.

"I have the greatest respect for you, madam, and am quite sure my nephew will benefit by your influence. I would rather his playmates were sturdy boys to give him the bracing he requires. But if he prefers the gentler sex, I shall not stand in the way."

The shrug of his shoulders as he finished his speech brought the color in

a rush to Archie's face, who felt the contempt that was conveyed in that motion, but was too small to understand the reason for it. Dimple put her word in rather shyly.

"I want him to come and play with me," she said; "and you will let him stay to tea whenever granny asks him, won't you?"

"My nephew can please himself," was the reply. "As long as he is in this house by eight o'clock every evening, he can go where he likes."

Then Archie braced himself up for a mighty effort.

"And may she come to tea with me sometimes, uncle?"

Mr. McBride looked across at Mrs. Fitzherbert with a grim smile.

"Hospitality must be returned, I see. As long as you can amuse yourselves without disturbing me I shall make no objection; and for the tea, well, Mrs. Blaikie is housekeeper; ask her."

Mrs. Fitzherbert did not stay much longer; but when she and Dimple drove away, Mr. McBride laid his hand not unkindly upon his nephew's shoulder.

"Ay, but you're a poor-spirited bairn, to be so terrified of coming to me yourself about the little lassie. Where did you pick her up?"

"We found each other in the wood, uncle. I—I like her."

Mr. McBride laughed as he turned away.

"You would not be a McBride if you were not fond of the women folks, but you are full young yet to begin it."

And so the acquaintance, having now the full consent of the elders, progressed rapidly. Dimple mothered Archie to her heart's content, and his lonely little soul was too pleased at the interest and affection shown towards him to resent her patronage.

Very serious talks did these two small people have as they wandered amongst

the roses together. Sometimes granny was called upon to solve a difficulty; but more often they were put aside with that large-hearted faith of a little child:

"Oh, well, I don't know how it is, but granny told me God said so, and it must be true."

Dimple stood at her nursery window with a very discontented face. It was a wet day, and Archie had promised to come over that afternoon and help her with her garden. There was a tiny creeper that was to be trained up on a stick, some pansies wanted to be thinned out, and a few plants that had finished flowering were to be taken up and potted. And potting was a fascinating employment; her little fingers fairly longed to be at it. She had had her dinner; granny was resting; Taylor sitting in a low rocking-chair mending a torn little pinafore, but now and then nodding with sleep over it. Dimple looked across at her with an impatient sigh, then she murmured to herself: "He ought to come;

he ought to be 'shamed of himself to be afraid of the rain. He's a frightened baby boy, that's what he is. If Taylor would let me, I would run out of doors myself—yes I would!"

"No, you wouldn't!" said Taylor catching the last words and rousing herself with a start. "Come away from the window, child, and get something to do." There's nothing like idleness for making one feel cross."

"I don't feel cross," said Dimple with a pout; "and I like being idle. Oh, oh! here is Archie in such a funny long coat, he has come at last!"

She darted to the door and scampered down-stairs as fast as her little legs could carry her. She met Archie with a radiant face.

"Oh, how wet you are! How lovely! Now I'll dry you and pretend you're daddy come home. Let me take your coat, and come up-stairs. I tell you what we'll do: we won't go to Taylor, but we'll

go to the box-room and have lovely games. Come on, quick!"

She dragged her breathless guest up the stairs to the end of a long passage, and together they entered the dusty unused room, that is always such a delight to children's hearts. Archie was made to take off his wet boots, and Dimple brought him a pair of her own shoes to wear. They were a little too small, but Archie ingeniously tied them on with string, and stumbled about with them quite satisfactorily. Then for an hour they were quite absorbed with their surroundings. The boxes served in turns for a robbers' cave, an enchanted castle, a train, and a ship, and at last heated and dusty they sat down on the floor to rest, until their active brains received fresh ideas.

"I wish I was grown up," said Dimple suddenly: "I wouldn't be so stupid as some grown-up people are,—like Taylor. She likes to sit in a chair and go to sleep in the day time,—just fancy!"

"What would you do?" asked Archie.

"I would have a house with a lot of rooms and greenhouses. I would have roses growing up the walls inside the house as well as out, and then I would fetch trains full of poor children from Lunnon, and we would play games in every one of the rooms, even the drawing-room, and have tea parties and dinner parties, and I would dress them all up in nice clothes and send them back to Lunnon again."

"They wouldn't like to go back," objected Archie; "I shouldn't!"

"Nor more should I," said Dimple thoughtfully. "P'raps I'd build a lot of little cottages just outside my big one and let them live there and be happy ever after."

"I saw a boy to-day who came from London yesterday. He's a cripple, and he has come down to stay with his aunt. Mrs. Blaikie knows her, and she's going to have her and the boy to tea to-morrow night."

Dimple became interested at once.

"Do let me see him. Really from Lunnon has he come? P'raps he knows Mrs. Briggs. There was a cripple boy in our street who used to make faces at me. He used to wait till I came to the doorstep with daddy, and then, when I waved my hand and called out "Good-by and good luck!"—that's what daddy always liked me to say—he used to shake his fist behind daddy's back and call out, Bad bye, bad luck!' And one day he ran after me on his crutches!"

"What did you do?"

"I stopped and told him he was a wicked boy, and God would punish him worse than making his legs bad if he didn't take care; and then he called me names, and then Mrs. Briggs told me I was never to speak to him again. And I didn't, never after! But I should like to see your cripple boy. You ask me to tea to-morrow, do!"

"I can't unless I ask Mrs. Blaikie first."

"Well, ask her and come and tell me to-morrow morning after you've done your lessons."

"All right, I will. Now what shall we play at?"

"Let's have a see-saw with that long piece of wood over granny's big trunk."

And so their games went on till nearly tea-time, when Taylor came to hunt for them, and was not over pleased at the dusty dirty state in which she found them.

Dimple got her invitation the next day, and appeared at Fir House in due time. Tea was in the kitchen, and she was formally introduced to a pale-faced sharp-eyed boy on crutches, who eyed her up and down in silence, for a minute, then said, "You're a rum little un!"

"Hush, hush," said his aunt with a warning nudge. "She's a little lady. You mustn't speak to her like that."

He grinned, but said no more, and tea went off very quietly. But afterwards, when the three children were out in the old garden, their tongues unloosed.

Tim Porter the cripple, was full of London airs, and Archie listened to his grand sayings with great respect. Not so Dimple. Her experiences in London had not been pleasant ones, and she looked back to it with the greatest horror and dislike.

"I hope I shall never see it again," she said sturdily. "It makes people ill and poor and misable. And I shouldn't wonder"—here she turned to Tim with a pitying look—"I shouldn't wonder if it had made you a cripple!"

"Ain't you a greenhorn!" said Tim with scorn. "I made myself a cripple, and no one h'else has anythink to do with it. Why did I? 'Cos I were tired of bein' like other people and wanted to be pecooliar! This was the way of it. I were skylarkin' over some very high boardin's.

I always was h'acrobatically inclined, and in course I could beat the t'other chaps hollow. I was a turnin' a Catherine wheel on a bit of a board, when there was a gust o' wind, and over I went like a nine-pin, and pitched on the brick foundation of a shop they was a-buildin'! I was picked up for dead and taken to the horse-pital, and there I were for over four bloomin' months; and when I come out, 'twas like you see me, only a bit more shaky!"

"Well," said Dimple, "if you'd lived in the country, you wouldn't have had any high boardings to climb. It's only Lunnon has those ugly things!"

Tim ignored this thrust.

"But if h'I'm a cripple, I can run and jump like any other chap. You just try a race with me. Get a couple of sticks and keep your left knee bent and see who wins!"

Archie was delighted with this novel idea. He ran into the house and returned

with an umbrella and stick of his uncle's that he had found in the hall.

Dimple entered into the spirit of the game. She started them off and stationed herself at the goal—an old elm—clapping her hands and dancing up and down with delight at Archie's cumbrous and unavailing efforts to keep pace with nimble Tim. Tim had strapped one of Archie's feet up very securely, to prevent any unfairness in the race, and then had generously given him fifty yards' start. They were in a meadow at the end of the garden, and Tim reached the goal hardly out of breath. He looked back at Archie with a laugh.

"How would you like it?" he demanded, alluding to his crippled condition, of which he seemed almost proud.

Archie stumbled up, hot, panting, and disconsolate. As he reached the tree, he tripped over one of its old roots and fell heavily; there was a sharp crack, and he

was lifted to his feet unhurt; but the umbrella stick was broken in two.

"It's uncle's best umbrella!" gasped Archie as he sat down on the grass, and tried in haste to untie his leg. Tim took it up and examined it. Then he gave Archie a meaning wink.

"I'll put it back, young shaver; don't you fret. I'll make it look as right as a trivet, and the old bloke will never be the wiser. We'll keep it dark!"

Archie had released his foot and now stood upright with a pale anxious face. He glanced from Tim to Dimple, who stood with round eyes looking at the cripple.

"Uncle will be so angry if he knows," he faltered.

Then Dimple shook back her curls with a little impatient gesture.

"You never tell stories, Archie, do you?"

"I—I try not to, but—p'raps he won't ask me anything about it."

"Granny told me yesterday," said Dimple in her little breathless way, "that hiding things you did wrong, and telling stories, was being crooked. She showed me a little crooked tree—it was a rose-tree—and it came to her crooked, and she wouldn't put it with her nice roses, and so it's in the dark shrubbery where no one sees it; and I told her I'd never be crooked—never, and you oughtn't to be crooked, Archie. If you begin crooked, granny said, you'll go on getting crookeder and crookeder. Shall I run and tell your uncle about it? He won't be *very* angry with *me!*"

"You're a pair of softies," said Tim with a mocking laugh; "'tis only babies blab of all they does!"

Dimple turned upon him like a flash.

"You're a wicked boy, and you're crooked all over, and me and Archie aren't babies, so there!"

Then Archie straightened his slim little figure. He was dreadfully frightened of

his uncle, and secretly longed that Dimple should go to him; but he had a little of the Scotch pride in his veins, which stood him in good stead now."

"I'll tell uncle myself. Give me the umbrella, Tim!"

Tim relinquished it, muttering, "You-'re a young fool." Then he threw himself down on the grass and began whistling. Dimple beamed all over, and seated herself by his side.

"We'll wait here for you, Archie. Be quick!"

Archie preserved a brave front till he reached the house. Then as he approached the study door he trembled all over. Twice he crept up to the door, twice he came away, and then with sobbing breath he wandered into the empty dining-room and looked up at his grim ancestors on the walls, as if hoping they would inspire him with the courage he now needed.

Then he came to a standstill and bowed his head.

"O God, do make me brave like the family, and don't let my knees shake so. Please do help me, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Surely and swiftly did the great God stoop from heaven to strengthen one of His little ones.

Archie went back to the study door, knocked, and was admitted, and though his lips were white and strained he held himself bravely.

"Please, uncle, I'm very sorry, but I've broken your umbrella?"

Mr. McBride wheeled round in his chair, and looked at his small nephew with cold, merciless eyes.

"And since when have you taken upon yourself to appropriate other people's belongings?"

Archie's pale cheeks were crimson now, but he did not falter, though a lump seemed to rise in his throat.

"I took it out into the garden to play with. I didn't think!"

"Pshaw! 'Didn't think!' And you never will, for there isn't an ounce of manliness or sense in your miserable little body. When I was your age, it would have been a gun and not an umbrella that would have been my pastime! Did you not have half a crown on your last birthday? Is it spent?"

"No."

"Fetch it here. It will go towards remedying the mischief you have done."

Archie slipped from the room, returning very soon with a little holland bag from which he produced his treasured coin. He placed it on the table and then shyly put down two pennies and a halfpenny by the side of it.

"I've got these besides," he said; "Hector gave them to me."

Mr. McBride looked at the little fellow with a queer light in his eye. Then he said shortly, "Ay, leave them, and if ever you take a possession of mine again for a plaything, I will give you a good thrash-

ing. Now go, and leave me in peace. You never will get beyond your babyhood!"

His words stung his nephew far more than blows would have done, and outside in the hall Archie's erect little figure drooped at once. All the spirit was taken out of him, and he felt more fit to creep into a corner and cry, than run out into the sunshine and join his companions in play.

Dimple and Tim were still on the grass. They had been silent for a few minutes after Archie had left them, then Tim said a little discontentedly, "Don't think much of this 'ere country. I h'ain't seed a decent chap since I come. Not much fun in lyin' 'ere like an old sheep."

"What would you like to play at?" inquired Dimple.

"I ain't quite a babby, thank'ee. You are jest a couple of hinfants, that's what ye are. I'm a goin' to have a smoke."

He pulled some brown paper out of his pocket, rolled it up into the shape of a

cigar, then produced some matches, and lighting it, lay on his back and puffed away with the air of an habitual smoker. Dimple gazed at him with astonishment.

"Is it nice?" she inquired with interest.

Tim would not deign to reply. Then Dimple continued, watching him gravely, "I expect you're one of the roses that grow as they like. Granny says some boys and girls do. I think it must be rather nice, isn't it, not to have anybody saying 'you're not to do this,' and 'you mustn't go there,' and 'you must do what I tell you.'"

"I'd like to see the bloke who would order me!" said Tim, taking his paper cigar out of his mouth, and letting the smoke slowly issue from his nostrils.

"Yes, but you won't grow up so nice," said Dimple, still pursuing in her mind some of granny's wholesome truths; "nobody ever does; they get all wild and crooked, and aren't no use at all!"

"Shut up, and don't preach at me. Gals are no fun!"

He got up, and walked away. Dimple waited, and Archie soon came out. He tried to assume a cheerful air as he approached her.

"Was he very angry?" Dimple asked.

"Well, he was rather. Where's Tim?"

"Gone away. I don't like him, Archie: he tried to make us crooked, and he smokes!"

"I don't think I like him much either."

"We'll forget all about him. Come and give me a swing."

Archie obeyed with alacrity, and the rest of the evening passed very pleasantly. When Dimple was going home, she said to her little friend confidentially, "I expect poor Tim hasn't got any gardener to take care of him, and that's why he is so funny!"

CHAPTER VIII

"A Boy for
Sixpence a Day!"

THE next afternoon, as Archie and Dimple were playing together, Dimple ran in to ask her godmother for something and found Lady Dorothy in the drawing-room. For a moment she hesitated, then went forward and held out her little hand very gravely.

Lady Dorothy seized hold of her rather impulsively. "Won't you give me a kiss, you little mite? Mrs. Fitzherbert, when are you going to let me have her for a little? I have coveted her ever since I first saw her. Shall I take you home with me to-day, Dimple?"

But this was too much for Dimple's equanimity. She broke away with a little

cry of terror, and fled out into the garden again, where she joined her playfellow breathless and perturbed. Archie was busy with the garden shears, which had been purloined from the tool-house while Jonas was away. He was trying to clip the box border round Dimple's garden, but dropped them in haste when he saw her face.

"Has anybody been angry?" he asked.

"It's a—a lady who is trying to steal me away from granny. I know she'll do it one day. She will take me away in her carriage, and you won't ever see me any more! And what will you do then, Archie?"

"I shall come after you," said Archie sturdily; "and fetch you away again!"

"Will you, really? How will you do it?"

"I'll fetch some soldiers, or—or some policemen, and we'll break into her house, and take her to prison, and bring you home again."

Dimple's face brightened.

"Now promise me true and faithful you'll do it, Archie, and then I shan't be frightened ever again."

Archie promised with his head erect, and hands clenched with determination, and Dimple heaved a deep sigh of relief.

"I won't be stoled away if I can help it," she said; "but if I can't help it, I shall expect you to come and take me away from her. She frightens me, but I'll creep out of her way, and then she won't be able to catch me."

Many and earnest were the conversations held about the kilt; and now that Dimple had seen the array of warlike chieftains hanging in their old oak frames on the dining-room walls at Fir House she was more than ever determined that Archie should have one. "We must ask God to help us," she said, looking at her little friend with grave eyes. "I'm sure your uncle will think you're quite in the

family when you're dressed in one. It will make you look much fatter, Archie. How much money does it take to buy one? We'll save up our money all we can, and then we'll go to the shops and get one."

"I shouldn't take *your* money for a kilt," said Archie, drawing up his slender little figure rather proudly. "The McBrides have never been beggars, Hector says; and I mean to earn some money as soon as ever I can, and buy one for myself!"

"How will you earn it?"

"I don't know."

Silence fell on the pair for a moment, broken by Dimple with a flushed eager face:

"There's a boy not much bigger than you that comes and weeds in granny's garden. Jonas says his back is too stiff to pick up weeds, and Bobby gets sixpence a day. He's only a poor boy acourse, but he's not as clever as you; he can't tell me nothing when I ask him. He

"They had not gone far before they met Tim on his crutches."

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doesn't know how many leaves grow on a rose!"

Archie's eyes sparkled. "If anybody would let me weed their gardens for them, I should be very glad."

"That's what you'll do," exclaimed Dimple, joyfully; "and to-morrow afternoon, we'll go and find a nice untidy garden, and ask the people to let you weed, and then you must put the money in a money box, and when it's quite full, we'll buy a kilt!"

They separated in the best of spirits, and for once Dimple did not take Mrs. Fitzherbert into her confidence. Circumstances helped to prevent it, as Mrs. Fitzherbert was staying with friends for a night, and did not come home till after the children had arranged to start.

At three o'clock they set off hand in hand down the high road in quest of honest work. They had not gone far before they met Tim on his crutches. Neither was best pleased at the sight of

him, for since that unfortunate incident of the broken umbrella they had agreed not to play with him again.

"He calls us babies," said Dimple indignantly, "and he isn't a nice boy!"

"Haven't you gone back to Lunnon yet?" she asked him now, as he came shuffling up with a grin of recognition.

"Well, do it look like it? Where may ye be goin'?"

"We're going to look for work," said Archie, dropping Dimple's hand and trying to speak in a manly tone.

"Yes, he's going to earn some money, and we're too busy to stop," said Dimple, breathlessly.

"My eye! Ye're two little cures! I'll put you up to a dodge or two if ye'll come with me?"

"Where are you going?"

Tim did not reply for a minute, but winked at Archie knowingly.

"Send that gal home, and foller me.

I'm goin' to make my fortin' when I get back to London."

"I'm not a gal," said Dimple, flushing with anger, "and you shan't take Archie away. We don't want you!"

"How would you make your fortune?" asked Archie, standing in the middle of the road and eyeing the cripple irresolutely.

Tim chuckled. "You folks in the country are awful soft. You wastes and throws away what London chaps would cry their eyes out fur! I'm a goin' to take some h'old hampers back with me. My h'aunt has given 'em to me, and I promise you they'll be chock full—most enough to set up a shop."

"What will you put in them?" asked Dimple, becoming interested.

"One on 'em is to be full of cress, there's a stream full of it close by, and the t'other will have wood, which jest rots for the picking up, and the t'other—well I promises to go shares in the profits if

ye'll help me. Are you up to climbing ?"

He addressed Archie.

"Yes, I can climb trees, if that's what you mean !"

"That's the ticket. Come on ; and if the gal won't split, she can come too."

Dimple's curiosity was aroused. After a little further discussion, Tim led the way down a narrow lane, talking grandly of the money he was going to turn over in his pocket by this enterprise. He paused at length outside a high wooden fence.

"Just you look over there, young 'un !"

Archie pulled off his jacket, and was up the fence in a twinkling. Sitting astride, he looked down the other side.

"It looks like an old orchard," he said ; "but there are only a few cows grazing."

"Nothin' else ?"

"There's one—two apple trees, and some apples on the ground, hardly any on the trees !"

"That's the ticket!" shouted Tim, bobbing up and down on his crutches excitedly. "Them apples ain't wanted, so they be rottin' and wastin' there for folks to take the trouble of pickin'!"

"But," said Archie, "they aren't ours to pick; the field belongs to some one!"

"Now you jest take my word for it, and slip down and throw us over a few. I can see 'em through a chink, and Londoners are wonderful fond of a bit o' fruit. I could sell 'em at four a penny. Shake the trees while you be about it. I know the h'owner o' the field; my h'aunt be a neighbor of his. And 'ow d' you know I h'ain't been and asked his permission? He don't want these h'apples; he sez they're worthless. I does want 'em, and I'll be obliged if you jest does what I'd do, if my legs wasn't in the way. 'Tisn't much a poor cripple can do, is it now, unless some'un gives him a 'elpin' hand!"

Archie looked helplessly from Tim to Dimple who hardly took in the situation.

"Did the man tell you you might come and take them, Tim?" she demanded, adding quickly, "acause I remember, in Lunnon, seeing two boys being taken to prison by a policeman, and daddy said their pockets were full of apples, and I heard one call out that he'd picked them up in the street, and Archie and me aren't going to be thiefs, and—and I think you'd better come down, Archie; you'll fall!"

At this juncture brisk steps were heard in the road, and Mrs. Howard made her appearance. Tim had promptly disappeared, and Archie looked rather sheepish from his high post.

"Why," exclaimed that good lady, recognizing the children at once, "what are you two pickles doing here? Are you trying to break your legs, young man? Come down at once. What are you doing here, so far from home?"

Archie thankfully slipped down on the road again and looked about for Tim.

Dimple replied with knitted brows:—

"Archie and me are out for a walk, and we're just thinking about some apples."

"Don't tell me you are thinking of robbing orchards," said Mrs. Howard. "What would your granny say? Did she send you out? I'm afraid you're in mischief. You had better come along with me. I am only just going to a cottage quite near, and then I will take you home. Why, Archie McBride, I'm ashamed of you! I thought you were a little gentleman!"

Archie said nothing, but Dimple dragged hold of his hand.

"We're tired of this walk, please," she said. "We didn't mean to come here, and we're going back, and we aren't in mischief, and acourse we wouldn't rob orchards!"

She set off running, with Archie at her heels; Mrs. Howard looked after them with a shrug of her shoulders, and went her way.

When the children slackened their

pace, Dimple said, "We won't never speak to Tim again. He's a wicked boy, he ran away and hid behind a tree when Mrs. Howard came, I saw him! I believe he wanted you to steal, Archie!"

"I believe he did," said Archie seriously. "Mrs. Blaikie said last night his aunt said he was a handful, and she was going to send him home. I always thought cripples were so good; they are in books!"

"Yes, but not when they come from Lunnon," said Dimple convincingly. "And now, Archie, we must begin to find you work. There's a little old house granny took me past once, and it's just along this road. You look through an iron gate, and there's a gravel path full of weeds. I think we'll try there first!"

She spoke with much assurance, and they plodded on hopefully till they reached it. Archie peered through the gate anxiously.

"I'm afraid nobody lives here," he said.

"Oh yes, they do. An old old man in a cap and tassel walks up and down smoking his pipe. I've seen him. Let's pull this bell, Archie! Help me to pull. It's so stiff!"

They were exerting all their strength, when down the gravel path walked the old gentleman that Dimple had described. He looked up as the bell rang out, and shook his stick fiercely at the little faces peeping in.

"Go away, you scoundrels, you vagabonds! I'll have the police after you! A taste of the birch is what you want!"

"Please, we really want to come in," cried Dimple in a piteous tone; "we've got to speak to you on aticular business!"

The old man puffed and snorted as he hobbled up to the gate, and surveyed the children with angry, curious gaze.

Dimple was quite unabashed.

"I've brought you a boy,—a very nice boy he is, who will weed your garden for sixpence a day. He can't come all the day, you know, for he has to do lessons aside weeding, but he'll do his very best, and won't play with the cat, like Bobbie does, when Jonas isn't looking!"

The earnest eyes and bobbing curls of the little speaker arrested her hearer's attention.

Archie struck in, feeling the silence of the old gentleman augured well. Thrusting his hands into his pockets, he produced a paper bag.

"I've got the salt to put in the holes, and prevent the weeds coming up again, and I've a pocket knife to take them out with, and I promise you faithful I'll take up the roots and not cut them off at the top."

"All for sixpence a day," repeated Dimple with emphasis. "And he'll be able to begin now—this very afternoon!"

The amazement and bewilderment of the old gentleman was considerable.

"What the dickens are you after! Not right in the head I fancy; or is it some joke you're trying? Go away—go away! Can't I be free from bothering children here?"

"Oh, please, please," cried Dimple entreatingly, "listen to us. You might try Archie. Your garden has got such heaps and heaps and heaps of weeds, more than anybody else's, and Archie does want to earn some money. If you won't tell, we'll tell you, but it's a great secret. He wants to buy a kilt, so as to properly belong to the fam'ly, and he wants to get it with his own money. Weeding is the only thing we can think of; but acourse he can do lots asides. He could water your flowers!"

The old man chuckled, and dimly began to see that there was an earnestness of purpose in these young people's motives that quite acquitted them of the sin

of practical joking. He stood tapping his stick on the gravel, and questioning and cross-questioning, till he had solved the riddle, and then said abruptly: "As a reward for your originality, I will engage you straight away to weed my paths, and I will give you fourpence an hour if you do it in silence!"

Dimple heaved a great sigh of relief. She had not expected any difficulties in their quest; and when the old gentleman opened the gate and let Archie in, she asked inquiringly, "And what am I to do?"

"I think you had better go home," was the gruff response.

Dimple stood, one chubby finger in her mouth, considering, whilst Archie was already down on his knees, tackling his work.

"P'raps I'd better," she said slowly, "unless there's anything else you'd like me to do. Archie and me generally play in the afternoons. I think I shall feel rather alone if I go back."

The old gentleman shook his head rather testily.

"Now run away, run away; I can't stand chatter, and the female tongue never stops; the boy can weed if he doesn't talk, but I can't open my premises to idlers."

Dimple said no more; her mission was done; and she trotted home contentedly, though feeling rather forlorn. She found "granny" looking for her in the garden, wanting to take her for a drive; and when a little later the small maiden was seated opposite her godmother in the pony trap, with solemn eyes, she unfolded to her the success of her plan. Mrs. Fitzherbert was touched and amused, and a little uneasy at the extreme independence of her little godchild.

"You must never do such a thing again without telling me. And I do not approve of your going to strange houses in such a fashion."

"But, granny, it had to be done; it was

very easy. You just go tc a very weedy garden, and ask for work. You see, Archie will get ever so many fourpennies, won't he? How many fourpennies will buy a kilt? Do you know? Will he have enough in twenty days?"

Mrs. Fitzherbert laughed merrily.

"Oh, you children! Where are you going to keep these pennies?"

"In a money box. Daddy used to have a money box to spend in taking me drives on the top of a 'bus, and to the Zoo, but somehow we had to break open the box very often for other things too. But Archie and me will never break open this one till it's quite full."

"And we will keep it on a table in my room," said Mrs. Fitzherbert brightly. "I will keep it for you. Archie deserves a kilt if he is going to work for it, but I don't know what his uncle will say."

"Oh, granny, it's going to be a great great surprise. Archie isn't going to say a word about it. But he'll dress up and

walk in to see his uncle one day, and will be thought quite one of the family; Hector says so!"

Mrs. Fitzherbert smiled, and said no more.

CHAPTER IX

"She's Stoled Me!"

"TAYLOR, let me go! I shall! I shall! I know the way, and I won't be lost, and I shall go!"

Struggling in the grasp of Taylor, with hot, flushed face and angry eyes, Dimple suddenly obtained her freedom, and dashed down-stairs, only to run into the arms of "granny," who was watering her plants in the hall.

Mrs. Fitzherbert looked so astonished that Dimple came to a standstill, abashed and confused. She had more fear of her gentle little godmother than of any one else in the house, and could not withstand the grave scrutiny of those soft blue eyes.

"I may go and look through the iron

gate at Archie, mayn't I, granny? I've told Taylor I shall, and she says I shan't. She's so cross, and Bertha is crosser, and —and Jonas is puffickly beastly!"

Mrs. Fitzherbert took hold of a very hot little hand, and led Dimple into her morning-room. She did not say a word, only sat down in her easy-chair by the window, and drew the child closely to her. It was by no means the first tussle with Taylor, and, unfortunately, being much more nimble than her captor, Dimple generally managed to escape, knowing Taylor was too lazy to pursue her far.

"When you have recovered breath, my dear child, you may explain matters."

Mrs. Fitzherbert never called Dimple "a dear child" unless something was wrong, and Dimple stood with hanging head before her.

At last she made an effort to defend herself.

"Granny dear, don't be angry. I do feel very alone without Archie. How can

I see him if I don't go to see him? He hasn't time to come and play with me! And Jonas—Jonas said, when I told him a little about it, that he never heard of a boy wanting to leave trousers and go back to pett'coats; he said Archie had better get long baby clothes and a bib! I hate Jonas! And then I told him I hoped he would fall down and break his leg, and then I ran up very quick to get my hat, and Taylor said I must stay in, acause it was going to rain; and then we fighted together, and I pulled off one of her apron strings; and I may go to see Archie, mayn't I? He will get quite tired of pulling up weeds if he has nobody to talk to."

"I think my little rose tree wants weeding," said Mrs. Fitzherbert, looking gravely at the tumbled curly head and pouting face before her. "If she doesn't try and pull up the weeds herself, granny must try and do it for her."

Two startled gray eyes looked up at once.

"Yes, I see a lot of weeds this afternoon. A nasty ugly one has just cropped up, called disobedience; and impatience and self-will have been up some time, and are growing bigger every day. What are we to do with them? Let them grow and spoil my little rose, or pull them up?"

"I don't know, granny. It's Jonas; he teases me, and I get cross!"

Tears were starting to Dimple's eyes. "Granny" went on in her soft, clear voice:

"My little rose told me this morning she was really trying to be good to-day. And when I was in the greenhouse this morning, I heard her stamping at Jonas and telling him to be 'quick directly,' without any 'please,' when she wanted a flower pot. If she isn't nice to Jonas, she can't expect Jonas to be nice to her. And the naughty names she calls him are very sad to hear."

Then impulsive little Dimple, with heaving chest, sprang upon "granny's"

lap, and, nearly stifling her with a tear-stained, fervent embrace, sobbed out: "I'm truly sorry—ever so sorry, and I will be good. I will try and pull up my weeds. Shall I go and tell Taylor, and Bertha and Jonas, I'm sorry."

"Yes, darling, and any one else?"

Dimple understood, and nodded her small head.

"I will tell God first."

She trotted up-stairs, and slipped into a little dressing-room adjoining Mrs. Fitz-herbert's bedroom. Kneeling down, with fast-shut eyes, she whispered: "Please God I've been a naughty girl again, and I've come to say I'm sorry. And will you pull up all my weeds, acause it's too hard work for me and granny. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."

She got up and continued her rounds, with a serene face, making peace with all; and returning to her godmother shortly after, was quite consoled by the promise that Archie should come to tea

with her every afternoon after his weeding was done.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was finding her little charge rather a handful at times; and if it had not been for a very loving little heart, and great contrition for her faults, her quick passionate temper and strong will would have proved formidable foes to combat. As long as she went her own way with no contradiction, Dimple was sweetness itself; and with her godmother she was always most docile and obedient, but the servants teased and coaxed her by turns, and Taylor was not wise in managing her. There were constant battles, and Mrs. Fitzherbert had to exert all her influence to preserve the peace between them.

"She be but a morsel o' humanity," said the irate Jonas when alluding to the child one evening in the kitchen; "and yet she fancies she'll ride over us adults roughshod! She have got a temper big enough for six men; and if it ain't put

under to once, she'll get the bit between her teeth, and go to destruction."

But Dimple was learning lessons of self-control slowly and surely, and, in spite of the trouble she gave, was fast becoming the joy and pride of her godmother's heart.

Archie kept steadily and bravely to his work. The money box was given to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and every day the boy dropped in his well-earned pence. Dimple looked on with supreme satisfaction.

"You're quite, quite sure you wouldn't like me to put in a penny?" she would say sometimes, and Archie always promptly replied, "No, not one penny. I must do it all myself."

The old gentleman, Mr. Brewster by name, found plenty of work for the boy, and now and then would address a remark to him; but generally Archie, keeping to his compact, worked on in silence.

One day not long after this, Mrs. Fitzherbert was taken ill with a severe attack

of influenza. Poor little Dimple wandered about the house feeling very forlorn; she was not allowed to go near the sick-room, and had to content herself with messages and bunches of flowers. Taylor was too busy to attend to her, and Bertha resented the charge of her.

In utter desolation one afternoon Dimple crept into the drawing-room, and sobbed out her griefs to a small kitten on the window seat. She was found in this position by Lady Dorothy, who had called to inquire after her old friend.

"You poor little creature; you shan't stay a day longer here. I will take you home with me. No one is looking after you, and I'm dying to have you."

Before Dimple realized what was being done, impulsive Lady Dorothy had run up-stairs, received permission from the invalid, had a bag packed by the delighted Bertha, and was driving away with the astonished and affrighted child in her brougham.

"Well, big eyes, don't look so scared! You wait and see what lovely times you are going to have. Do you think I am going to eat you?"

Not a word did Dimple say. When her little heart was in a tumult, she generally took refuge in silence. She was stolen at last, carried away forever from darling granny, and she would never, never see her again!

This was the sum and substance of her thoughts. No wonder her eyes were big with consternation and horror. Lady Dorothy did not reassure her.

"I have always coveted you," she said. "I told Mrs. Fitzherbert I should steal you away from her one day, and now everything has favored me."

Dimple said nothing; but suddenly in a bend of the road she saw Archie plodding steadily along on his way to his afternoon task. In an instant, before Lady Dorothy knew her intention, Dimple's curly head was thrust out of the open window and a

piercing shriek brought Archie to a sudden standstill.

"Archie! Archie! save me! She's stoled me! Fetch me back!"

"You little stupid!" exclaimed Lady Dorothy, astonished and amused by this display of feeling; "I am only in fun. Your 'granny' wants you to stay with me till she is better. I expect you will like me so much that you will never want to leave me. Here, come and sit on my lap, and let me tell you about the beautiful things I am going to show you. Are you fond of animals? Have you ever seen any peacocks? We have four, and two of them have such beautiful tails."

Lady Dorothy talked on, and after that one outburst Dimple relapsed into stolid silence. She was perfectly certain in her own mind that she had been stolen, and nothing that Lady Dorothy could do or say would convince her to the contrary.

When the carriage stopped at last, she was taken into the big house, and petted

and caressed by Lady Dorothy, till the little tongue was unloosed, and she was led on to talk of her father. Dimple was always eloquent on that subject.

"I love daddy better than all the world," she exclaimed, "and daddy loves me, and we're going to have a little house together till we get quite old, and our teeths drop out, and daddy shall lie on a sofa, and I will bring him beef tea, and we shall be very, very rich, and have roses everywhere, and always *plenty* to eat."

"But what will your granny do when you leave her?"

"Granny shall come and live with us, and so shall Archie, and he'll wear a kilt."

"Tell me about Archie. Who is he?"

"Will you promise true and faithful to keep a secret if I tell you?"

"'True and faithful,' I will."

Then in a confidential whisper Archie's story was told, and Lady Dorothy listened with moist eyes to Archie's longing to be "one of the family."

"How much money has he got?" she asked.

"Oh, lots of shillings, but not any pounds yet; and I expect a kilt costs a lot of money, doesn't it? You see it must be the McBride tartan, and Archie says it ought to come all the way from Edinburgh; but I think Lunnon would sell it; don't you think so?"

"I expect it would. I wonder if I could help Archie to get it."

"You mustn't give him any pennies, acause he won't let me give him any; but if you had some weeding for him to do, he would be very glad. You see, he's nearly done the old gentleman's. Archie works dreadfully hard, and when it's finished, he won't be able to get any more money."

"Well, I must talk to my husband about it. Now come along, darling, and we will put you into a clean white frock, and you shall have dinner with Herbert and me for once. We are quite alone,

and it won't hurt you to sit up a little later to-night."

Dimple trotted off, apparently perfectly reconciled to her surroundings; but Lady Dorothy would have been surprised if she could have known her thoughts.

"I've told Archie, and he promised faithful to come after me and fetch me back. He'll be here very soon."

Lady Dorothy's maid did not approve of "her ladyship's new freak," as she termed it, when talking over matters to Jenkins the butler; "and I'm very sure of this," she wound up with, "if I've to turn nursemaid to a h'alien child, I'll resign my situation within a week."

Dinner was a very solemn affair at Trixham Hall, in spite of Lady Dorothy's lively talk and laughter; and Dimple, seated on a cushion to make her higher, looked strangely diminutive and out of place in her heavy oak chair. She was very silent; there was a startled look in her large gray eyes, and she eyed the

door opposite with an anxiety that could not be hid. Mr. Hill, Lady Dorothy's husband, was a pleasant-faced, placid-looking man, and he tried to reassure the frightened child.

"It's rough lines to bring you down to dinner when you ought to be in bed, little one, isn't it? You look as if you thought we were going to eat you. What's the matter? Don't you like your food?"

Dimple cast a glance at the two footmen and butler moving backwards and forwards, and her words came out in a frightened gasp: "Are those men keepers?"

Lady Dorothy laughed outright, and signed to the men to leave the room, as dessert was just being put upon the table.

"What do you know about keepers?" she asked.

Dimple replied at once with very round eyes:

"The keepers in the parks in London always have coats with brass buttons;

they take care of the flowers, you see. It's only in the country that people pick flowers ; they never do in Lunnon."

"You have a vast amount of worldly knowledge," said Mr. Hill with a laugh. "Yes, we have keepers too, it's a good name for them. They have the care of something more valuable than flowers."

"Flowers are the best things in all the world," said Dimple in her breathless way ; "and roses are the bestest of all."

There was a slight stir in the hall—voices and steps, and a shrill, boyish treble, that made Dimple scramble down from her chair, and make a frantic rush to the door, which was being opened by the butler with a perplexed and puzzled face. The voice rang out with great decision :

"I've brought a policeman, for she has been stolen, and Lady Dorothy is to give her up at once."

CHAPTER X

"One of Granny's Very Best Stories"

LADY DOROTHY and her husband came out into the hall to find a little group of servants round a stalwart, sheepish-faced young policeman, and a very small boy in a shabby velveteen suit, with an earnest determination not to be frustrated in his attempt at effecting a rescue.

Dimple had rushed at him and embraced him with warmth.

"I knew you would come! I knew you would remember what you promised!"

Archie held up his head proudly. His success at obtaining an entrance in a strange house, supported by the presence of such an important official, seemed to

have so exalted him that his habitual shyness had entirely disappeared. And when Lady Dorothy, in her soft silk gown and sparkling jewels, came gracefully forward, followed by her six-foot husband, whose broad shoulders and Herculean frame made even the young policeman look stunted in growth, Archie addressed them in severe accents with a little wave of his hand to the servants round him.

"You have stolen Dimple away from her proper house, and I've come to fetch her back. I've brought a policeman, and you'll have to go to prison if you don't give her up. We're going to take her home now, this very minute, if you please."

He paused. Mr. Hill looked first at his wife, and then at the speaker, and then burst into an irrepressible fit of laughter, in which Lady Dorothy joined him.

The servants, at a sign from their mis-

tress, withdrew, and the young policeman, looking exceedingly foolish, was trying to imitate their example, when Archie in desperation gripped hold of his belt, and with scarlet cheeks exclaimed:

"Will you tell Lady Dorothy that she's to give Dimple up? Tell her you'll take her to the police station if she doesn't!"

Then Lady Dorothy, pitying the young man's embarrassment, turned to him gently.

"I do not know what you expected to do. You may be certain that Mr. Hill, being a justice of the peace, would not allow any irregularity of the law in his own household. Did the little boy fetch you from your beat?"

"Please, my lady, I didn't rightly get hold of the story. He come rushing up to me, my lady, and dragged me off, sayin' there was a theft committed, and I were to come at once,—which I did when my beat was over; and he were so over excited like, that I'm sure, lady my,

'twasn't till we were here I rightly understood he were charging your ladyship; and I beg pardon humbly, my lady, and I hope his worship will overlook it; but 'tis only quite lately I've joined the Force, and I thought, my lady, I were always to go where there was theft——"

Mr. Hill cut him short.

"There, my good fellow, that's enough. Here's something for your trouble. Your energy has overstepped your caution. Good night. Leave the young gentleman with us."

Dimple had disappeared during this conversation. She now trotted downstairs, her hat on her head, and her jacket half on, half off. When she saw Archie's blank, disconcerted face, and the hasty retreat of the policeman, she uttered a piercing cry.

"Archie! Don't let him go! Take me back, take me back to granny!"

She was making a wild dash out of the door, when Mr. Hill lifted her up and

carried her, struggling and screaming, into the library close by.

Lady Dorothy drew Archie in after them, and in quiet, low tones tried to explain matters to him, whilst Dimple lay in the corner of a couch sobbing her heart out.

"Is she not stolen at all?" questioned Archie perplexedly. "Did her granny ask you to take her for a little visit? Will you take her back again directly she is better?"

And then Dimple stopped her sobs and sat up to listen, too, to Lady Dorothy's explanation. She was very tired and worn out, poor mite, by her experiences and emotions that afternoon. It was long past her bedtime; and when Lady Dorothy took her on her lap to reason with her, her little head dropped heavily, and a moment after she was fast asleep.

Then Lady Dorothy carried her up to bed, and her husband was left with Archie, who began to feel more and more uncomfortable at the failure of his rescue.

"You're a true knight errant, my boy. Don't be ashamed of it. I wish all the distressed damsels in the world had such a prompt deliverer as you have proved yourself to be. And now, if you are assured of our honesty, don't you think you ought to be making for home? What will your people think? Do they know where you are?"

"My uncle is in London," said Archie, in reply. "Hector will be angry, but I didn't think of that. I didn't know you lived such a long way off; it took us a long time getting here."

"You shall be driven back in the brougham, and you must come over and spend a day with your little friend whilst she is with us."

Mr. Hill rang the bell, and gave an order for the carriage to be brought round. Then he sat and smoked, talking cheerily to poor Archie, who, now the excitement was over, was fast relapsing into his usual reserve.

Lady Dorothy came down in time to wish him good-by.

"Dimple is fast asleep, my boy, so you must believe she is in good hands, and directly Mrs. Fitzherbert wants her back you shall come and fetch her away. I promise you that pleasure. Are you the little weeder? Would you like to come and do some weeding here whilst your little playfellow is with us? Can you come to-morrow?"

But Archie shook his head.

"My old gentleman told me to come to him very special to-morrow afternoon. I've done his weeding, but he wants something else done."

Lady Dorothy forbore to press him, and Archie got into the comfortable carriage feeling ashamed and crestfallen, and wondering anxiously what Hector would say to him on his return.

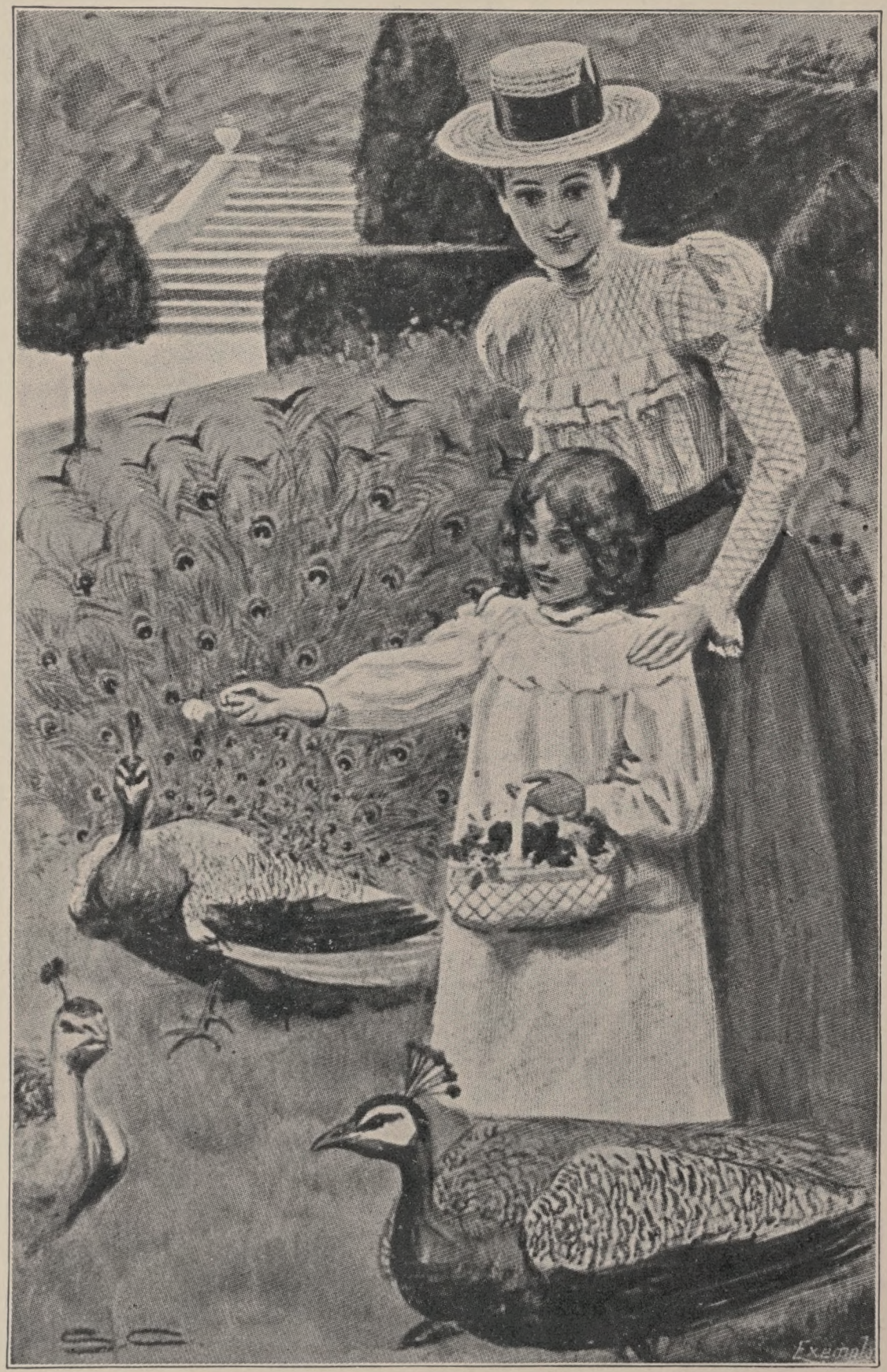
It required all Lady Dorothy's skill and energy to keep Dimple happy and content in her new surroundings for the next

few days. But, childlike, she could not be long impervious to the kindness shown her. And the peacocks and flowers were a never-ending joy. She trotted about in the gardens, talking incessantly of her own little garden and "granny's beautiful roses."

The third day was a wet one. Dimple employed herself all the morning with scraps of silk and old artificial flowers making a "bonnet for granny." She pricked her fingers, and had many bursts of impatience over her task; but she came into Lady Dorothy's boudoir just before lunch with a radiant face, holding out a most wonderful medley of colored scraps in her hand.

"Isn't it very nice? Do you think she will like it? P'raps she'll wear it in the garden one day. It has a beautiful pink rose in it, but it doesn't smell, and it hasn't any prickles."

The bonnet was duly admired, and the restless little being sat supremely satis-



"The peacocks and flowers were a never-ending joy."

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fied with herself through lunch. Afterwards she wandered over the house, touching everything she came across, and talking away to herself in a rapid undertone:

"Yes, there are a lot of beautiful things, but they isn't granny, and next to daddy I wants her. I think I shall go away in the carriage like Archie.—How do you do, granny, dear? I've comed back, you see, and I shan't never leave you again. The lady was very kind, but she said she didn't steal me, and she did, and I aren't going back to her any more!"

Lady Dorothy stopped these murmured musings by catching her up in her arms.

"Come along, you little oddity. I'm in a big arm-chair by the drawing-room fire, and I want to be amused. There is room enough for both of us, and we will tell each other stories. I hate a wet day as much as you do. I'm getting quite moped."

Dimple was quite ready for a story; and after she had heard the wonderful

tale of the sleeping beauty in the wood, she sat thoughtfully looking into the fire.

"Well," said Lady Dorothy, "tell me what is going on inside that little curly head. I wish there was a window that I could look through."

Dimple laughed merrily; then she said slowly:

"Don't you think the flowers ought to talk? P'raps if I was to kiss and kiss the roses, and go on kissing them, they might wake up and speak to me. Shall I try?"

"Oh, you funny child, you have shown me through the window. Now I guess that half your little head is full of thoughts of daddy, a quarter full of granny, and a quarter full of roses—not a tiny corner for poor me anywhere, is there? Isn't that a good guess?"

"There's Archie," said Dimple thoughtfully. "I like him next to the roses I think."

"There's less chance for me than I thought! Now it's your turn to tell me a story. I think it must be about roses, and then you will be happy."

"I'll tell you one of granny's very best stories she tells me on the garden seat, shall I?"

"Yes, I shall love it."

"I ask granny to tell it very often, so I know it quite well."

Dimple clasped her hands, and leaning her little head against Lady Dorothy's shoulder, gazed dreamily into the fire, and began in a soft low voice, imitating unconsciously her godmother's intonation:

"Once, in a very ugly old ditch, lived a poor little wild rose; she had only stinging-nettles, and frogs, and blackberry bushes to play with, and she was always getting in a tangle with the brambles. She tried to grow straight, but she couldn't; she just went anyhow, and the hedge was a horrid untidy one, and kept

all the sun away from the little wild rose. One day a big bumble bee came to see her. She was very glad to see him, but he wouldn't stay very long; and when she asked him to talk to her, he said crossly, 'I don't like this old ditch, it's so dark and muddy. I can't get any honey. I'm going over the hedge into a beautiful garden, where everything is lovely.' And he flew away, and the little wild rose began to cry. But by-and-by she thought she would try and climb over the hedge and see what was on the other side; so after a long time she did, and then she saw a wall, and she got over that, and then what do you think she saw? Such a beautiful garden, the grass was like velvet, the paths were like yellow sand, there was a fountain playing, and beds of all kinds of lovely flowers, and such smells. She sniffed, and sniffed, and it made her quite hungry, and it was all sunny and bright; and, best of all, all the way round the grass were beautiful

roses. There were crimson ones, and pink ones, and yellow ones, and white ones, and they were smelling very wonderful. Then she thought she would try and creep over by herself and get down into the garden; and she managed to do it at last, but a cross gardener came along and seized hold of her.

"'Oh, please!' she cried out. 'I will be very good if you will let me stay. It is so nice here, I don't want to go back to the ditch again.'

"But the gardener was crosser. 'You're only a wild rose—just a weed,' he said, 'and we aren't going to have wild things in the master's garden; you'll be trailing all over the place and giving me a lot of work.'

"And then the gardener threw her over the wall, and she dropped over the hedge into the old ditch again, and her heart was broken!"

Lady Dorothy laughed at Dimple's tragic tone.

"You're a capital little story teller," she said; "I am quite interested—go on!"

"And so," continued Dimple, shaking her head solemnly from side to side, "the poor little wild rose was miserabler than ever, and she left off playing with the brambles, and she wouldn't speak to the stinging-nettle; and then they quarrelled with her, and told her she was stuck up and proud, and she didn't care; but she was always trying to get over the hedge again. And at last she did, and she got back into the garden again; she couldn't really keep away, and she hoped the gardener wouldn't see her. But one morning he came along, and the master came with him, and the gardener frowned when he saw her; and he was just going to throw her over the wall again, when the master put out his hand and stopped him. And then he took the wild rose very gently in his hand and looked at it.

"'It is always coming over here,' the gardener said, crossly.

"'Perhaps it wants to come,' the master said; and he spoke so kindly that the little wild rose burst out crying.

"'Oh, do let me stay here,' she sobbed, and then the master smiled.

"'I know how to let you stay,' he said: 'I will make you into a garden rose, and you shall become like those beautiful ones that I have. But nothing wild grows in my garden, only the flowers that like to be trained and taken care of by me. And my flowers don't grow just as they like. When they are in my garden, they grow as *I* like. Would you like to come:'

"Then the little wild rose laughed and clapped her hands, and she said, 'Yes,' she would love to come, and the master one day went outside into the ditch and pulled her right up by her roots, and took her into the house; she was taken right away from the ditch, and at first she thought she was dead, but she wasn't. Then one day the master cut a tiny, weeny bud off his best rose tree, and he

cut a little hole in the wild rose and slipped the bud into it and tied it round with worsted, and then he said to her:

"'Now I've made you into one of my garden roses, and you won't be a wild rose any more, because your heart has been changed. You must wait a little longer and be patient, and then you will be put in my rose bed.' So the little wild rose was patient and did all she was told, and tried to hold herself straight when she was put into a pot, and didn't mind being tied up to a stick and watered; and then one day at last she found herself in a bed on the beautiful lawn, and every day her buds grew bigger and opened into lovely red roses that smelt right across the garden, and she was happy ever after. The bees and the butterflies came to her, and the birds loved her, and the master loved her best of all, and used to come and pick the roses off her himself. There! isn't that a pretty story?"

"A lovely one," said Lady Dorothy,

whose eyes were glistening with tears. "I wish I had had a granny when I was a little girl to tell me stories like that."

"Granny tells me it very often, and then she explanises it to me!"

"'Explanise' it to me, dear."

"The little wild rose is me, and any other little children who grow up anyhow; and Jesus takes me into His garden, and gives me a new heart, and makes me one of His roses. That's what granny says; and I'm not in the ditch any more, I'm right in the garden; and when I'm very good, I grow roses, and Jesus comes to pick them."

Lady Dorothy was silent for a moment; then she gave a little sigh. Dimple lay back in her lap and thought. Presently she said, "I expect you're a garden boy, or a kind of under-gardener, aren't you? Granny is my proper gardener; she looks after me; but now she doesn't, I s'pose you do it instead."

"I wish I could say I was in that gar-

den," muttered Lady Dorothy. "No, no, Dimple, I'm not one of the Master's gardeners; I think I am a big bramble, and I've just climbed to the top of the wall this afternoon, and am wishing hard to be in the garden out of the ditch!"

Dimple laughed. Her grave mood was at an end, and she jumped down and danced out of the room after one of the dogs. Lady Dorothy did not move. She was still looking over the wall into the garden.

CHAPTER XI

"Another Pair of Eyes for Me"

"OH, granny, granny dear, you'll never send me away again, will you? Promise me faithful, true, you won't!"

Two little arms were nearly choking Mrs. Fitzherbert in their tight embrace; the soft childish lips were covering her face with moist kisses.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was down-stairs in her pretty morning-room. She leant back in an easy chair, looking fragile and white, and her sweet blue eyes did not seem quite so bright as they used to be.

She clasped her little godchild affectionately to her.

"Granny is very glad to get her little

rose back again ; she has missed her very much, and she is so glad to hear from Lady Dorothy that Dimple has been a good child."

" Yes, I've been puffickly good, except when I tied my best pinafore round the puppy, and when I pulled the peacock's tail, and when I said I wouldn't go to bed when Lady Dorothy said I was to ; but I was sorry after, and she won't never take me away from you again, will she ? "

" I shall want you to wait upon your poor old granny ; she feels very weak yet, so you must fetch and carry for her."

Dimple's eyes sparkled.

" Like I waited on daddy when he was ill ? I like ill people, granny. I'm so glad you're going to be ill a little longer."

Mrs. Fitzherbert did not echo the wish ; but slowly her strength returned, and it was a proud day for Dimple when she led her godmother round the garden to see her favorite roses."

It was late autumn now, the days were

growing short, and the garden becoming bare and desolate. Still the autumn roses lingered as if loth to say good-by to the gleams of golden sunshine that still brightened their lives. Mrs. Fitzherbert sighed sometimes as she watched her favorites one by one wither and fall. She complained a good deal of the want of sunshine and light, and would amuse her little godchild sometimes by her want of observation.

"Dimple, darling," she said one morning as she sat in her morning-room, "do you see my knitting anywhere? I am sure I put it on this table by me, and it is not here."

"Yes, granny, it is, straight in front of you; look!"

Mrs. Fitzherbert stretched out her hand a little uncertainly, and found the knitting. For a moment she sat silent with her hands folded in her lap; her lips quivered, and then she said in a voice that trembled in spite of herself:

"Dimple, fetch me the newspaper."

The child obeyed instantly, and her godmother wiped her spectacles, replaced them on her nose, and began to read.

Dimple went back to her occupation of sorting some flower seeds, when she heard a little rustle, and looking up, saw the newspaper fluttering out of Mrs. Fitzherbert's hand. The old lady gazed at her little godchild with a wistful smile.

"Is it very dark this morning, darling?"

"No, granny. See! The sun is coming out."

Springing up from the floor, Dimple picked the paper up, and stood looking at Mrs. Fitzherbert with a little perplexity.

"Granny, aren't you happy? You look as if you are almost crying.

Mrs. Fitzherbert made a little brisk movement in her chair.

"I want you to go on an errand for me, Dimple. I can trust you I know. Run

to the Vicarage, and ask Mrs. Howard if she will come and see me this morning."

Dimple trotted off delightedly, and returned very soon, bringing Mrs. Howard with her.

"I'm sure your godmother is not well," Mrs. Howard said in her brisk way. "This dreadful influenza always seems to leave such weakness; she is not her bright self at all since her illness. I was talking to Doctor Annan about her only the other day. He says she has made a good recovery, but I—I don't know."

Dimple was sent out of the room during her visit, and the child dimly began to understand that something was wrong when the doctor was sent for; and a few days after, Mrs. Fitzherbert, accompanied by Mrs. Howard, went up to London and stayed there a week. The old servants talked together in mysterious whispers, but stopped directly they noticed Dimple's presence.

"She's that sharp," muttered Bertha one afternoon as she walked away from Taylor in the work-room, "there's no hiding nothing from a child that's all eyes and ears!"

"What are you trying to hide?" demanded Dimple; "it's only thiefs, and jackdaws and magpies that hide things."

"Imperent little creature," said Bertha with a toss of her head; "you're too free, Miss, to be calling me such names, and I would have you remember that I won't stand it!"

Bertha marched off, and Dimple said no more. She wandered about the house and garden longing for Mrs. Fitzherbert's return. Not even Archie's coming to spend two whole days with her comforted her little loving heart.

"Do you think granny is going away from me like daddy?" she asked Archie disconsolately when they were standing at the dining-room window watching a heavy shower of rain.

"Oh, no, she wouldn't leave her own house. Who would take care of it?"

"I expect Jonas would try to. He's dreadful cross now granny is away. He won't let me into the greenhouse. He says everything is his, even the trowels and rakes. He made a bonfire yesterday, and he wouldn't let me help; he said even the bonfire was his, and I told him it wasn't, acause there were lots of leaves and sticks, and those were God's. Jonas never made the trees grow, he doesn't know nothing about them. He only likes the vegtubbers!"

"Your granny is sure to come back," said Archie confidently.

Then they began talking about the important subject of the "kilt," and Archie was full of animation at once.

"I really do think I might get it by Christmas, don't you think so? Old Mr. Brewster said he thought so. He lets me dust and arrange his books in the big library now, and he gives me ninepence

an hour, just fancy! He says books want more careful handling than weeds, and I'm awfully careful. He says I must have very clean hands, and I always show them to him when I begin; but do you know books are quite as dirty as weeds, at least his are? And I couldn't help telling Hector last night; do you think it matters? He brought me up some black currant tea because my throat hurt, and I was in bed; and he was awfully pleased, and he says if I'll give him the money, he'll get me one as cheap as anybody, because he has a brother in the trade."

"That's lovely," said Dimple, clapping her hands; "and you'll come to church on Christmas Day with a fierce look on your face, and your hand on your dagger, like the pictures of the fam'ly!"

"I'll try to," said Archie modestly.

They talked themselves into good spirits again for the time; but Dimple soon reverted to her godmother, and it

was only bed-time that gave her busy brain a rest from fretting after her. It was a bright sunny afternoon when Mrs. Fitzherbert returned home. She said good-by to Mrs. Howard at the gate, and came in alone. Dimple flew into her arms, and led her breathlessly in; Taylor hovered about her anxiously, but she was very silent; and then, when she was resting a little later in her easy chair, and having a cup of tea, she looked up and spoke:

"Taylor, come here; don't leave the room; and Dimple, darling, listen too, for your granny will want all your care and love. I have seen two or three oculists, and they all tell me the same thing: my failing sight is incurable, and I shall soon be totally blind."

Taylor gave a slight gasp; Dimple looked up puzzled, and stroked her godmother's hands caressingly. "Are you going to be blind, granny dear? Poor granny! what a pity! but I will lead you

about. You shan't have a dog and a string! Oh, granny, dear, won't you be able to see your flowers and the roses any more?"

And here the reality of it came over the little maiden with such a rush that she burst out crying.

Mrs. Fitzherbert stroked her curly head with trembling fingers.

"You will be my little guide and comfort, darling; you must be another pair of eyes for me, and tell me all you see. What should I do without my little godchild?"

"If you please, ma'am," said Taylor in a voice which was divided between injury and pity, "you have me that will lay down my life if I could bring your eyes back, and if it's not to be, you'll never want a thing to make your life a comfort while I am in the house!"

And then Mrs. Fitzherbert took Taylor's hand in hers, and tears began to gather in her blue eyes.

"I know you will be the same faithful friend that you have always been, Taylor. I thank God I shall still be surrounded with comfort and kindness. You will have to bear patiently with your old mistress, if she tries you with her helplessness. I have led such an active life that I cannot yet understand what it will be to be left with so little occupation, and to become so dependent on others; but I can say, and I think you will join me, "Thy will be done."

"Granny," said Dimple a short time afterwards, "do you remember, when I first came to live with you, I told you I was unhappy acause I had no one to take care of like I did daddy? And then you gave me my garden, and then I found Archie. But Archie doesn't want me so much now; he's growing so big; and when he gets his kilt, he will be quite grand and won't want me any more. But now I've really, truly got you to take care of, and I will do it for ever and ever

till daddy comes for me, and then we must still live all together acause I shall be a bigger girl and quite able to take care of daddy and you too! sha'n't I? Oh, granny, I will be very good, and will never be naughty again, if you'll promise me faithful you'll always let me take care of you,—and not Taylor!"

Impetuous little Dimple was all excitement as she danced up and down before her godmother, and Mrs. Fitzherbert tried to be cheerful.

"Perhaps I shall be such a clever old lady that I shall be able to take care of myself, but I shall have plenty of errands to give you, Dimple. And I think my little godchild must make haste with her reading, so that she will be able to read the newspapers to her granny."

"Oh, I will, I will," cried Dimple; "I'll learn as fast as ever I can, and I'll never run away when Taylor tells me it's time for my lesson."

Dimple had been for some little time

slowly making her way through a First Reader under Taylor's tuition; it was a trying time to both teacher and pupil, and brought many scoldings and tears.

When Dimple went to bed that night, she called Taylor to her.

"Please, Taylor, I want my reading-book under my pillow. I'm going to learn to read as fast as I can now, and I'll begin it when I wake in the morning. I'll read all day except when I'm with granny; and if I'm very quick and busy, do you think I'll know how to read next week?"

Down-stairs Mrs. Fitzherbert was sitting with a large print Bible on her knee. She was not reading, but her lips were moving, and her eyes were shining through her tears.

"The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

CHAPTER XII

"When Roses have no Gardener,
they Come to Nothing"!

"TAKE care now, you young scamp; you will ruin my books if you let let them tumble!"

It was Mr. Brewster who spoke. Archie was mounted on a step ladder with duster and brush, and he was in the act of taking some rather heavy books out of their places when one slipped from his grasp and came to the ground. He came down from his perch at once with a humble apology for his carelessness, and Mr. Brewster, with an anxious face, came to see which of his treasures had fared so roughly. It was an old book, and had been well read. As Archie picked up a

loose leaf that had fluttered out, he said with interest, "It's a rose book, Mr. Brewster."

"Yes," said the old man, taking it in his hand, and turning over its pages with loving, trembling fingers; "it is a book on the cultivation of roses."

He moved back to his chair by the study table, where he usually sat, and, placing the book before him, sighed heavily as he perused it.

Archie stood looking at him with a perplexed face. He was getting to feel quite at home with the old gentleman by this time, and presently he asked, "Shall I put it back, sir?"

"In a minute—in a minute," was the impatient reply. Then, as the leaves of the book were being turned over, a piece of pale blue ribbon fluttered to the ground.

Archie picked it up and laid it on the table. Mr. Brewster took it up, looked at it with a quivering face, then gave the book back abruptly to the little fellow.

"Put it away. It is over forty years since I had it in my hand."

He walked to the window, and stood looking out on his green lawn, which was lying in the sun before him.

"Did you ever plant roses?" asked Archie a little timidly.

Mr. Brewster did not answer for a minute. He seemed strangely moved. Then he said huskily, "Leave your books, and come into the garden with me, and I will show you where I planted roses."

Archie cheerfully obeyed; the sunny garden was much more to his taste than the dusty study.

Mr. Brewster took up his old straw hat from a chair on which it was lying, then fumbled in his writing-table drawer for his bunch of keys, and gravely led the way down one of Archie's neatly-weeded paths, till he reached a small iron gate in the midst of a shrubbery.

Archie knew the gate well. It was rusty with age, and was locked with a

padlocked chain. He had often wondered where it led to, and had asked once if there were not paths the other side of it that needed weeding. Mr. Brewster had scowled upon him ferociously, and forbade him ever to mention the gate to him again.

He looked on surprised as the old man fitted a key in the padlock, and after a great deal of straining and turning opened it, and let himself and his small companion through.

They came out upon a perfect wilderness of rank, tall grass. Briers and brambles flourished, and it was difficult to keep their footing through the tangled undergrowth.

A few rusty iron arches stood up in the midst of it all, and on one of these was still a creeping rose. Only green leaves were to be seen, and Mr. Brewster took a spray of it in his hand to examine it. Then he turned solemnly to Archie.

"This was a rose garden many years

ago," he said. "I spent all my time and money over it when I was a young fellow."

Archie looked round with great interest. "I expect it was a lovely garden," he said, shyly.

"Ay, it was that. Some of the choicest standards that England can produce were here, and I had over two hundred of them."

He paused as they came upon a rusty iron seat, now almost hidden under the long grass. The sun shone across the neglected spot, and seemed to rest lovingly on the bent head of the old man.

Archie looked about him with pained and puzzled eyes.

"Why did you lock it up, sir?" he asked timidly.

Mr. Brewster shook his head, and began pacing up and down the long grass in some agitation.

"That book has upset me," he murmured more to himself than the boy.

"How I loved it! How she laughed at me! How often I was dragged away from it, and how I worked here? I seem to smell the fragrance now, and it is all gone, gone, gone, and I am an old fool to come here again!"

He took out his handkerchief, blew his nose violently, and shook his head despairingly again. Something in his lonely, dejected attitude made Archie creep up to him, and steal his little hand into his for very sympathy. He dared not ask who the "she" was, but wondered in his heart if she were a sister, mother, playmate, or wife. Mr. Brewster clenched the soft little hand in his very tightly.

"My boy," he said solemnly, after a short silence, "make the most of the sunshine and roses in your youth; the time will come when your heart and life will be like this old rose garden, and all you can do is to lock up the past and try to forget it."

Archie felt awed and depressed; he tried

hard to imagine the deserted place in its former wealth and beauty; but even with the sunbeams dancing across the swaying grass, and the bees and butterflies hovering over the creeping briers and brambles, it looked dreary and forlorn. Mr. Brewster was slowly wending his way back to the little iron gate, and he seemed to have become older and feebler than usual. When they reached it, Archie turned round and took a long look at it all again; then he said reflectively, "It's just like Dimple says. When roses have no gardener, they come to nothing."

"They have not had a gardener for over forty years," said Mr. Brewster sadly.

"And I suppose," the boy continued, "that you would not let me try to cut the grass and make it tidy?"

"No," the old man said sternly; "I have unlocked it to-day, and unlocked a good deal besides; and now I shall lock it up again for the rest of my life. I want

no more roses in this world; they only mock me!"

They went back into the house in silence, but Mr. Brewster did not seem able to settle down to his reading again, and at last he said testily, "I think you had better run away, and leave the rest of the books to another day. I can't be disturbed so by your dusting!"

Archie slipped down from his ladder with a blank face, but not a word would he say, and he was just creeping out of the door when Mr. Brewster called him back.

"Here is your eighteenpence; don't you want it?"

Archie drew up his little figure proudly at once. "I haven't earned it."

"Pshaw! Take it and go; do you hear me? I would rather have your room than your company."

Mr. Brewster had relapsed into his old querulousness.

Archie pocketed the coins with great

reluctance, and his little feet lagged as he slowly went down the garden. He paused at the little iron gate, and, leaning against it, looked wistfully through the dark evergreen shrubs.

"It looks like an old graveyard," he murmured to himself; "and I suppose it is a kind of rose graveyard!"

He was startled by hearing a voice at his elbow:

"It's a graveyard of buried hope and love, and all that makes up a man's life!"

Turning round, he saw old Mrs. Burke, Mr. Brewster's housekeeper. She had her apron full of cabbages, for she was taking them in to cook, and had followed him up to the gate.

"What has made the master come here to-day?" she asked, looking at Archie with her keen gray eyes. "What have you been talking about? And why did he bring you here? I saw you from the kitchen window."

"I think it was the book made him

come," said Archie simply; "a book about roses that tumbled down from the top shelf when I was dusting it."

"And what made you tumble that one down above all others?" she demanded fiercely. "Isn't it bad enough to have an old sore without a child's awkward fingers picking it open again!"

"I didn't know," faltered poor Archie.

"Of course you didn't; but you might a been careful of his books. They're his life blood: every one has a history, and the one on roses most of all! There! Don't get tears in your eyes about it. Has he turned you out?"

Archie turned his back on her, and nodded. He was very angry with himself for showing any emotion; but for the first time in his life he had come in contact with hidden sorrow; and his affectionate little heart ached for the desolate old man.

Mrs. Burke was fond of Archie. More than once she had called him into her

cheery kitchen, and given him a hot cake or some other little dainty. Her life was a monotonous one, and she had watched him come and go with the greatest interest. It was she who suggested to her master how he could still be employed after the weeds were done. Her orderly soul had long been vexed with the dusty, untidy state of Mr. Brewster's bookcases; and she had been positively forbidden to lay a finger on any of them. It was with a quiet triumph that she viewed her suggestion being carried out; and she regarded Archie as a real benefactor to herself.

"Come into the kitchen for a bit," she said cheerfully; "there's no need for you to hurry away."

Archie willingly obeyed her.

Mrs. Burke's kitchen was a picture that afternoon. The floors and tables were scoured as white as a good strong arm and plenty of soap and water could make them. A canary lifted up his voice and sang in the sunny bow window,

round which ran a broad ledge filled with bright fuchsias and geraniums. Rows of burnished copper pans and quaint old china adorned the walls. An eight-day clock ticked away in the corner, and in the front of a bright blazing fire on a scarlet rug lay Mrs. Burke's favorite tabby, the personification of comfort and satisfaction.

Archie slipped himself into a grandfather's chair, and Mrs. Burke, a little breathless and very warm with her outdoor exertions, sat down in another similar one, and fanned herself with her pocket handkerchief.

Then she began to talk, and Archie listened eagerly, for he hoped to hear about the old rose garden.

"I was a youngish maid when I first come here. My Ned, he was a courtin' me, bnt my aunt was housekeeper to young Master then; and I came up to give her a helpin' hand about the house. Master was a youngish man then, and quite

wrapped up in his books till he met Miss Nora Percy. She came to live with her uncle, the old doctor—he's been dead these many years; but Master was just then dabbling in medicine and surgery, and such like, because he had nothing else to do; and he was always over at the doctor's; and then pretty Miss Nora came tripping over here with her aunt, and it was given out they were engaged. I can see her now in her white frock and blue ribbons, and roses at her throat or in her belt. She was wonderful fond of roses, and loved to be amongst the flowers and in the sunshine. She used to drag Master away from his books, with her merry laugh, and he just worshiped the ground she trod upon. And it was natural he took up gardening when she was so fond of it, and one day he said to my aunt: 'Mrs. Tudor,' he says, 'I'm going to make a rose garden for her, and I shall set about it at once. I want it to be a surprise, and shall give it to her as a

wedding gift.' My aunt was an old woman, and she had been his nurse, so he used to talk to her familiar like. Well, of course, he set to work, as he did most other things, throwing his whole heart and soul in it. He got a couple of men, and superintended every bit of it himself, and how he did it I don't know, except that he bought this book, and studied it from morning to night. He had the rose trees planted in the autumn.

"Miss Nora had gone back to her own home, but they were to be married the following summer, and he used to be working in that bit of garden before breakfast, and till after dusk had set in. He had arches and seats, and even tried a fountain in the middle of the turf. He left his books altogether, and was never happy unless he was rolling the turf, or planting or weeding there. And then when it was in its full bloom, he goes off and gets married.

"My aunt took me round the rose gar-

den the evening before they were expected back. And there! Though I'm an old woman now, I never shall forget the look and smell of it! The roses were in full bloom; it was a perfect bower of beauty; the birds were singin'; and says I to my aunt, 'Well, if Miss Nora won't spend most of her days here, I shall be much mistaken.' The next day passed, and they never come home. Late in the evening we had a telegram—they were in foreign parts on their honeymoon, Florence, I believe, the name of the place was—and it was to say Miss Nora had caught a chill, and couldn't travel. We heard nothing more for a fortnight, and then my aunt had a letter, and I remember her face went as white as a sheet. I never shall forget it. We were sittin' down to breakfast, and I was eatin' a piece of hot buttered toast—I never can eat a bit now without thinking of that mornin'—and she looks up with a kind of gasp.

"'Miss Nora is dead,' she says, 'and the Master is coming back alone next week.' I couldn't believe it, but true it was: she'd caught a kind of fever, and was gone, poor young thing, without ever settin' eyes on the rose garden that had been planted for her."

"And did poor Mr. Brewster come home all alone?" asked Archie, who had followed the pathetic little story with great interest.

"Yes, that he did, and he walked into the house like an old man. He went out into the rose garden that same evening, and stayed there till after dark. We got quite anxious, and aunt, she slipped out after a bit and watched for him. At last she saw him come out and lock the gate up, then he leant on it with both arms and looked over into the garden, and she fancied she heard a bit of a sob in his throat, and then he comes in; and never, though that's over forty years ago, has he been in since till to-day! He went

back to his books; but if there's one thing he dislikes more than another it's the sight and smell of a rose."

Archie sighed as the old woman paused, and then asked thoughtfully, "I wonder why God made her die just then?"

"Ah, well," said Mrs. Burke shaking her head, "I suppose the Almighty wanted her. She was a very good young lady; and isn't there a verse that says somewhat about it being better to have loved somebody, even if you've lost them, than never loved no one at all?"

Archie could not say, but he slipped away soon after, and as he slowly made his way home he pondered deeply.

CHAPTER XIII

"Daddy's own
Book"

DIMPLE meanwhile was devoting herself to her godmother with a pertinacity that surprised the old servants. She adopted a little motherly air and tone that both amused and touched Mrs. Fitzherbert, and would hang about her room suggesting little alterations that might make her more comfortable.

"I think, granny, dear, if you was to always have your chair close to the window, you could smell your roses better, and you could hear the birds sing, couldn't you? And may I have my little chair in the window, and push away this table of books? I can't read quite well enough yet

to read them to you, but I will very soon, and I can tell you all I see out of the window, like I did to daddy in Lunnon when he was tired and lay on the sofa. I used to tell him all the people coming along the street, and what they were dressed like, and where they were going; and sometimes he would laugh. Will you let me try and make you laugh, granny? I think I almost could."

There were many visitors in and out, for Mrs. Fitzherbert was a great favorite in the neighborhood; many kind gifts were sent, and much sympathy shown. And all wondered at the serene, sunshiny demeanor of the old lady. No one knew the inward conflict and the passionate prayers that went up hour by hour for the grace and strength so much needed—prayers that were heard and answered, as the outward life testified.

"It's rather a good thing for you, granny, that winter is coming, acause you won't want to be seeing your flowers

now," said Dimple one cold, frosty morning, coming into her godmother's room. "Look, I've brought you a lovely rose—a Glory one, isn't it? There are two more, and then they will be the last till next summer."

Mrs. Fitzherbert took the rose and fingered it lovingly.

"Now, Dimple, see what a good thing it is to have fragrance. I can't see this rose, but I smell it, and I shall know just where it is when you put it in water. What a lot of pleasure it gives me, doesn't it?"

"Yes," assented Dimple, "that's why you want me to smell sweet, don't you? Granny, you've got me left; I'm your little rose tree all the winter through, so you'll never be left without a rose, will you?"

The child laughed merrily as she spoke, and Mrs. Fitzherbert stroked her little curly head with an answering smile.

"Yes, granny's special rose will always

be with her, she hopes, and will give pleasure to everybody by her fragrance."

"I'm not sweet to Bertha and Jonas," admitted Dimple truthfully. "I think I show my prickles to them; but they do worry me so, and Bertha is always saying children are in the way, and Jonas says I'm born to plague him. I told him I was glad he wasn't *my* gardener; and I told him he lived in the ditch, and was just like a stinging-nettle, that's what he is!"

Dimple was getting irate at the very remembrance of her last battle with Jonas, when Mrs. Howard arrived on the scene, and the subject was changed.

A day or two after this Dimple had a great pleasure. A parcel arrived for her by post from her father, and this proved to be a book written by himself. It was a book that was already making a great stir in literary circles; and Arthur Seaton, after years of weary grind and poverty, had woke at last to fame and popularity.

After the title page came the dedication:

"To the Little Sunbeam
that Lightened a Dark Time."

The book was far above and beyond Dimple's comprehension, but it was "Daddy's own book," and that was everything. She carried it about in a cardboard box, and spent hours gloating over its closely printed pages. The dedication brought the pink color with a rush to her cheeks whenever she looked at it; and she showed it to the old servants with pardonable pride.

"That's what daddy says about me. He always called me his little sunbeam, and he's written and made up this book all himself, and it's for *me*; and when I get a big girl, granny says I will understand it. Hasn't daddy made it nicely? Look at the cover; he must have drawed it, and then painted it, and it smells so

clean. And what a long time it must have taken him to print all these little letters!"

"You silly child! your father only wrote it on paper; the printers and book-binders made the book."

It was Bertha, of course, who ruthlessly tried to shatter the child's innocent belief, but Dimple was not to be so convinced.

"You don't know nothing about it; it's daddy's own book, and he made it all himself, and he's the cleverest man in England. I shall go and ask granny if he isn't."

Dimple dashed away, and ran into Lady Dorothy's arms as she was coming out from Mrs. Fitzherbert's morning-room.

Twice every week, without fail, Lady Dorothy came to read to her old friend; and the quiet couple of hours she spent in that sweet, calm atmosphere did much to soothe her own restless spirit. Of course Dimple stopped and showed her

treasure, and Lady Dorothy duly admired and exclaimed before she took her leave:

"Your father is making his name, and he will soon be coming back with his pockets full of money. Then I suppose he will want to carry you off to London with him; and what will poor granny do?"

Dimple's eyes grew round with fear.

"Daddy shan't never go back to Lunnon. Lunnon makes everybody poor, and cold, and hungry, and ill. He shall come and live with granny and me."

Lady Dorothy smiled rather sadly.

"London is all right for the fortunate folks, Dimple. Your father's dark times are over."

She went, and Dimple trotted away to her godmother. Every new book was a trial to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and this one she fingered tremblingly. She had been a keen reader all her life, and the deprivation of such an interest and occupation

tried her sorely. Dimple never knew, as she so constantly placed her father's book in her godmother's lap, the sorrow of heart she caused the old lady; but Mrs. Fitzherbert never showed by word or sign how much she felt it. Her smile and tone were always bright to her little godchild, and the two would often have very hearty laughs together.

As soon as she was permitted, Dimple trudged over to Archie to show him the precious book. Taylor accompanied her, and while she was enjoying a chat with Hector and Mrs. Blaikie the children sat on the rug by the dining-room fire, turning over the pages of their treasure, Dimple's little tongue keeping up a ceaseless chatter.

"I must show it to your uncle. He likes clever books, doesn't he?"

"Yes, but he doesn't like to be disturbed in the afternoon."

"Oh, yes, he will like it, when he knows it's daddy's own book. I'll go."

She tapped at the study door, and then ushered herself in, staggering slightly with her load. Her arms were stiff and aching from the weight it had been to carry along the road, but nothing would induce her to let Taylor carry it for her.

Mr. McBride looked up sharply.

"Oh, it is you, child, is it? Run away, I cannot be disturbed."

"But," said Dimple, undaunted, "you don't know what I've brought you. It's the most wonderful clever book, and it's daddy's. He made it all himself. I want you to look at it."

She lifted it with difficulty upon the high table, and Mr. McBride a little impatiently took it in his hand. His expression changed when he glanced at the title page.

"Did your father write this? I have heard about it. I shall like to look at it when I have leisure. Thank you, little girl. I shall return it by the hand of my

nephew when I have read it. Now I must be left alone, please; and close the door quietly when you go out."

He turned to his writing again.

"But—but——" faltered poor little Dimple; and then seeing her father's book put well out of her reach, and Mr. McBride bury himself in his papers again, she darted out of the room, and burst into a fit of passionate tears when she reached her little playfellow.

"He's took it, and kept it, and says he's going to read it!"

Archie did not share her grief, but, on the contrary, look very pleased.

"It must be a very clever book indeed," he said, "if uncle wants to read it. He only reads very old, learned books—such difficult ones."

"But I want daddy's book," sobbed Dimple; "I shan't never sleep to-night without it. I take it to bed with me every night, and I can't go home without it."

"I expect your daddy would like my uncle to read it," said Archie craftily.

Dimple stopped her tears to consider this point, and finally became pacified by Archie solemnly promising to bring the book back as soon as ever his uncle had read the last page.

She went home, half unhappy, half proud at the result of the visit; but no peace did she allow herself or any one till the book was once more in her possession, and after that experience she was more chary in showing it to strangers.

A month later, and she heard the good news of her father's intended return to England.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, with the help of Mrs. Howard, had a great deal of correspondence on this subject, and she did not tell Dimple, till everything was finally settled, how very nearly she had been taken from her.

Arthur Seaton was anxious to settle in London and have his child with him.

"I am already bringing out another book," he wrote; "and I have had so many good offers from different publishers that I do not think I shall ever be in such straits again. I cannot thank you enough for your goodness to my little one; but she is all I have, and I want her with me."

Then Mrs. Howard wrote and pictured the loneliness and helplessness of his old friend, and told him Dimple was the joy of her life.

"If you could see her leading Mrs. Fitzherbert about, with such intense love and pride in the task, if you could know the real companionship they have together, and could see the brightening of face as Mrs. Fitzherbert hears the child's light steps coming near her, and see the little maid with her arms clasped round her granny's neck, whispering all kinds of childish secrets into her ears, I am sure you could not have the heart to separate them. Mrs. Fitzherbert begs me to say

that her house will be your home if you will only accept it. You would have time and leisure to write here, and would be near enough to London to run up and down as you would desire."

Arthur Seaton made objections, but they were all overruled, and at last he wrote to say he would take the earliest opportunity of coming down to see his child and settle the future. With that they were content. Mrs. Fitzherbert felt pretty certain of her own powers of persuasion when it came to personal talk.

"Do you remember how nervous and anxious I was at having the child at first?" she said to Mrs. Howard when that good lady was leaving her one afternoon.

"Yes," said Mrs. Howard; "though I am not over fond of Dimple, I must say she has turned out well. She seemed such a wild little untrained thing when she first came to you, but then who wouldn't improve under your influence?

She is unconsciously adopting the sweet, gracious little manners of her godmother; her very voice is an imitation of yours; and if she grows up a feeble imitation of you, she will do well. Now don't say I flatter. You know I never do. Good-by."

Dimple was not told that her father might arrive soon. Mrs. Fitzherbert dreaded the effect of such tidings on her excitable little nature. As it was, she talked of it often enough, though she still pictured it in the dim distance.

One afternoon Dimple sat by Taylor's side, eagerly spelling out her usual reading-lesson. She was making quick progress now; her desire to read to her godmother had a stimulating effect. Suddenly she paused and leant both elbows on her book. "Taylor, why didn't God make me two mouths?"

"Good gracious, child, your one is busy enough in all conscience. Whatever do you want another for?"

"I've been thinking," said Dimple

seriously, "that I shall be very busy when daddy comes home acause two peoples will be wanting me, and I've made it all out in my head what I'm going to do. One of my hands is going to be for daddy, the other for granny; one of my feet for daddy, one for granny; one of my ears for daddy, one for granny; one of my eyes for daddy, one for granny; but then there's my mouth—I do wish I had two mouths and tongues. You see, I shall want to kiss them both at the same time, and how can I do it?

"I think you're talking like a silly child. Go on with your reading."

Dimple gave a little sigh.

"You always call me silly; granny never does. And why did God give me such lots of twos? He must have known I would want to use them for two people. I want daddy to have half of me, and granny half of me, and it's only my mouth and nose that I can't make into two."

She went on with her reading, but in

bed that night Taylor heard her murmuring to herself:

"I loves them just the same; yes I do; and which half of me shall belong to daddy? I'll—I'll let granny choose first."

Taylor went down to the kitchen, and made the other servants laugh at Dimple's quaint thoughts.

"Well," said Jonas, shaking his pipe dust out against the kitchen grate, "What I sez is this here: Missis be afflicted with blindness. Be this here Mr. Seaton going to take her place in the gardenings? for I can't abide masters, and him and me'll fall out. There'll be no half and half wi' Jonas! Ha! ha! and as for the little maid, she's with all her owdacious sperrits uncommon smart. If her father be like her, he'll be wantin' to turn an old man out of his sitivation."

"Don't croak so!" said Bertha. "Mistress is not going to give up the reins yet awhile. She's as brisk as a bee, and will be out in the garden amongst her flowers

next spring just as ever she used to be, you mark my words. I don't object so to a gentleman being in the house; he'll make it more lively."

"Trust Miss Dimple for keeping us lively," said Taylor. "I did think, when first she come, she would be a terrible handful, but I've never found her out of the way so, and she is a loving little thing for all that you say!"

"Ay, ay," said Jonas with a sarcastic smile; "she planted a geranium in my hat yesterday morning, she was that lovingly drawn to it!"

CHAPTER XIV

"Really and Truly One of the Family"

IT was about this time that Archie opened his money box. He came one afternoon in an agitated state of mind to Dimple.

"Do you know what Hector has done? He has written already to his brother and ordered me a kilt. He says his brother will wait for the money if I haven't got enough, and I had better send him what I have; and I've come to open my money box, and Mr. Brewster wants to know how short I shall be, and I am to tell him this afternoon.

"Hector says it will take some time in coming, and I must have it before Christmas."

"Come and tell granny; she will count it out for us."

It was a long business. Mrs. Fitzherbert felt more helpless than the children as the big and little coins rattled out, and Archie gasped as he saw the little pile of money. "It looks like twenty pounds," he murmured, "but I've been months working for it." They counted away. Though Mrs. Fitzherbert could only feel, and once or twice had to appeal to the children, she rarely made a mistake, and at last the total was made out: three pounds six shillings and ninepence. Archie screamed with delight, and Dimple danced round the room in her excitement.

"It is a great lot for a little boy to have earned," said Mrs. Fitzherbert. "I think you have been most persevering, and you must let me add a little as a gift."

"Please no," said Archie, coloring up. "I want to say it is all my own money."

"Well, you can't prevent my giving

you a present to buy anything you like," said Mrs. Fitzherbert, taking out her purse, and slipping a yellow coin into his hand. "Now you can buy anything you like with that; it is not given for the kilt; it is given to you to reward your industry."

Archie looked doubtful and uncomfortable, but Mrs. Fitzherbert would not take the half-sovereign back, and he shyly thanked her for it at last. Then he asked if Dimple might come with him to see Mr. Brewster. "He's asked several times to see her again, but she never will come."

"No," said Dimple in a very important little voice; "I stay at home to take care of granny now; I don't make visits to anybody."

"But, darling, I think you might go this afternoon with Archie; the walk will do you good, and he will bring you back safely I know."

With a little reluctance Dimple went.

It was a bright, frosty day, and the two children ran along the country road in good spirits. When they walked up the neatly weeded gravel walk to Mr. Brewster's door, Dimple said:

"Will you stop weeding directly you've got enough money?"

"Yes," said Archie gladly; "I'm sick of weeding. I don't think I'll ever pull up another one as long as I live."

"But Mr. Brewster won't like to see his paths get all untidy again."

"I don't expect he cares. He told me the other day that weeds were for some good purpose, and they were all God's making."

"I don't think God makes weeds," said Dimple gravely. He doesn't make mine inside me; Satan does; and granny said we must go on pulling up weeds forever, at least till we go to heaven. I think it was Adam and Eve who made the garden weeds; I'll ask granny."

They were shown into a very dark and

dingy library, and Mr. Brewster, in a velvet skull cap, was sitting at his table reading out of a very large book.

"He's like my uncle," whispered Archie. "All old gentlemen read books most of the day."

He looked up at the children's entrance, then shut his book, and turned round his chair to the fire. "Good afternoon," he said; "now let me see this wonderful hoard."

Archie produced an old leather purse. Mrs. Fitzherbert had changed his silver into gold, and he proudly held out three sovereigns, one half-sovereign and six and ninepence in silver in his two small palms. Mr. Brewster tapped the boy's head with one finger, a mark of high approbation from him.

"You'll make your fortune when you get to be a man," he said. "You have got purpose and grit, and it's a pity all your earnings should go on your own back in the shape of a female skirt. I

never did hold with those Highland ribbons and rags!"

"They're not rags," said Archie with erect head and crimson cheeks; "they're the badge of our clan; Hector says so. It's no disgrace to wear the family's colors, that have fought and won so many grand battles." Dimple had never seen Archie blaze forth so before. His Scotch pride had been touched, and he looked like a little turkey-cock ready to fly at the old gentleman.

Mr. Brewster did not seem to mind a bit; he laughed heartily.

"I'm English to the core," he said with a chuckle, "and you're Scotch, my boy. Keep your family pride and wear your kilt. I'll not interfere with you. Are you satisfied with what you have earned? Are you going to give up me and my books and weeds?"

"I think I shall have to ask Hector," said Archie hesitatingly. "I don't quite know if I have got enough, but there'll

soon be nothing more to do. I've done all your books here."

"What will you do when your weeds come up again?" asked Dimple of the old man. "Archie says you like them, and will let them grow: will you?"

"We'll wait till that time comes," said Mr. Brewster. "I shouldn't think they dare show their heads after the energy and determination spent upon their destruction by this young man."

"They're sure to come up again," said Dimple cheerfully; "mine always do. I've got two kinds of weeds, Mr. Brewster, one sort in my garden, and one sort inside me. The sort inside me is the worst, because God has to pull those up; I can't do it, but I try, and so does granny. Have you any little boy or girl that you take care of for God, I wonder?"

"Tut! tut! child, what a tongue you have! Here my boy, where is your purse? Let me put your money back for you, and don't drop it out on the road. Best give

it to your man at home and let him keep it for you."

So saying, Mr. Brewster carefully closed the old purse with the money inside, and gave it back to Archie. Then he told the children to leave him.

"When you're rigged out in your petticoats, you can come and show yourself to me, not before, unless you want to earn some more money, and then I dare say I can find a job for you."

"And may I come with him?" asked Dimple.

"Well, I suppose you may, as you got his situation as weeding boy for him."

The children shook hands with Mr. Brewster, and left him. Archie was longing to run home and show his purse to Hector, but he took Dimple home first, and they parted with a kiss and embrace.

"It's just like Mr. Brewster said," exclaimed Archie in a burst of gratitude; "you taught me how to earn money, Dimple."

"Yes," assented Dimple with a pleased smile; "I know I did, and you must show yourself to me and granny in your kilt before you go to Mr. Brewster."

It was not many days after this that Dimple had the delight of receiving a note from Archie. It was brought by Hector himself with great solemnity, and Dimple turned the envelope round and round with great pride before she would open it.

Alas! poor granny could not read it to her, and Taylor had to offer her help; for though it was in a clear round hand, Dimple could not master it. It ran as follows:

"My dear Dimple,—

This is to say I shall be pleased to see you to tea to-morrow afternoon at five o'clock on very particular business. Be sure to come, please.

"Your loving friend,

"Archie."

"What is it Hector?" asked the little

maiden, dancing up and down before the gaunt Scotchman as he discoursed to Jonas in the garden on the crops and the weather. "Does Archie want me very particular? Am I to come in my best frock? I've never had such a grand asking to tea before. When is he going to get his kilt?"

"Ah, weel, Miss, ye'll just have to bide a wee, and ye'll be informed. Shall I be takin' back the answer?"

"Of course I'm coming. Granny says I may."

The next day she departed in best white frock, kissing and hugging her godmother before she went. "You won't miss me very, *very* much, will you, granny? Taylor likes it when I go out, because she comes in and reads to you."

"Yes," said Mrs. Fitzherbert brightly; "it will be her turn now. You both spoil me by so much attention. I have hardly time to think now. I am always being read and talked to so much."

Archie was nowhere to be seen when Dimple reached Fir House. She was shown into his schoolroom, where a very nice tea was spread, and then in a few minutes the door handle was turned, and in he marched, looking very shy and proud, as she broke into a delighted little cry. For he stood there before her in all his glory: his tartan kilt, his plaid stockings and buckled shoes, his plaid and brooch on his shoulder, his swinging sporran and his dirk, which he held as if ready to draw and strike. And he was trying, with rumpled brow and frowning eyes, to look as fierce as his ancestors. Old Hector stood behind him with a proud smile. "Noo, show the little lassie what a man ye are. Step out, and who'll be the ane to say that ye're not a McBride at all!"

"Oh, Archie, you're splendid, you're grand! How lovely! I didn't know you would look so fine!"

And Dimple fingered him all over, gaz-

ing at him and asking questions, and perfectly radiant with the unexpected surprise of it.

"Has your uncle seen you?"

"No," said Archie; "we waited till you came. I want you to come in with me."

"How did you manage to get it so quick?"

"Hector did that for me. And, Dimple, wasn't it funny when I brought home my purse the other day to Hector? We counted four gold pounds instead of three. We went over it again and again. There were four gold pounds, and one gold ten shillings, and then the silver. I can't make it out. We must have counted wrong before. I wonder if your granny remembers!"

"Oh, never mind the money; you've got the kilt!" exclaimed Dimple impatiently. "Do come and let us see what your uncle says to you."

She dragged him after her to the study

door, and then there was a whispered consultation. Archie was beginning to feel nervous ; he was forgetting to put on the right expression.

" Stick ye chest oot, laddie," whispered Hector excitedly ; " hold ye head up, and look as if ye feared naebody. Ye're wearin' the colors of the clan, and must do 'em credit. Show a braw front, man ! "

Tap ! tap ! tap ! And then Dimple flung open the door, regardless of the student within.

" Here's one of the family come to see you, Mr. McBride," she said.

Archie stepped bravely forward, and uncle and nephew regarded each other with a steady gaze. Archie certainly was looking his very best. The kilt had added breadth to his frail little figure ; his head erect, eyes bright with excitement, and flushed cheeks, really made him a handsome boy.

Mr. McBride put on his glasses, and

stared at him as if he could not trust his eyes.

"Where on earth have you got your kilt from?" he asked, in sheer amazement.

"He's bought it all himself," said Dimple breathlessly. "He's been earning money, and saving, and saving, and he's done it to show you he's one of the family, and every bit as good as the pictures in the dining-room!"

"You think I'm a Scotchman now, uncle? Don't I look more like one?"

There was much pathos in Archie's tone. No one knew what it had been to the sensitive child to receive the sneers of his uncle regarding his puny size and foreign build. Hector had fostered in him a passionate desire from his babyhood to prove himself a true Scotchman, and he anxiously awaited his uncle's verdict.

A strange, softened light came into Mr. McBride's eyes as a glimmer of the boy's

real feelings flashed through his mind. And when Dimple went on in her excitement to tell him all the details of the scheme, when he heard that for between two and three months Archie had been giving up every hour of his playtime to steady work, and had refused to accept help from any one, but had patiently and perseveringly toiled on, then Mr. McBride clapped his hand down on his little nephew's shoulder, with a force that almost made him quail.

"I'm proud of you, laddie. You must have Scotch blood in you after all. There, run away now, for time is slipping away; but we must let you wear kilts for the future."

They were dismissed, but Archie had happy tears in his eyes as he came out of the room. And old Hector said contentedly:

"'Tisna the clothes only, 'tis the make of the laddie that has gi'en satisfaction to the Master."

They had a most delightful tea, and then marched round under the family pictures afterwards, and Dimple returned home with a glowing account to give her godmother of all that had taken place.

"And, granny," she said softly at the end of her recital, "me and Archie went up to his bedroom just before I came away, and we knelt down and thanked God He had shown us how to get the kilt and helped Archie to work hard. We did pray about it long ago, and Archie thinks that p'raps God might have made his money a little more, acause there really was more than there ought to have been. Archie says he'll never be unhappy again acause now he is really and truly one of the fam'ly!"

CHAPTER XV

"Pricking One Another"

"IT'S just his kilt, I'm sure it is, and I won't never speak to him again!"

Dimple leant against the garden gate, and sobbed as if her heart would break. The day had begun well: she had been busy in her own way in the morning attending on her godmother, and having her reading-lesson with Taylor. At three o'clock Archie appeared, and they went out together into the garden to play.

Perhaps Archie missed his afternoon occupation; perhaps, as Dimple guessed, he was uplifted by the glory of his dress, and by the open admiration of the old servants at home. However it might be,

he was certainly more masterful and overbearing than usual, and he had a scornful objection to every game that Dimple suggested.

"That's only fit for girls. You can play that by yourself."

At first Dimple had submitted meekly to his scorn, but before long her fiery little spirit got the upper hand of her, and when it came to her garden being discussed and criticised, Archie ought to have known upon what delicate ground he was treading.

"If I had a garden like you have," he said, strutting round it with a swaggering air, "I would have a proper rose garden like Mr. Brewster made Miss Nora. I would have soft grass, and a fountain, and six arches and seats, and a little bower!"

He had told Dimple all about the deserted rose garden in Mr. Brewster's domain, and she knew the story well.

Dimple's color rose at once.

"My garden is much nicer like it is, *much* nicer. Granny says she smelt my flowers every time she walked by! O' course it's nearly dead now but it will be lovely next spring, even Jonas says it will! I can gather a few flowers for granny even now, and it's the properest garden ever made!"

"I don't think it is," said Archie, his nose still in the air.

Then Dimple stamped her foot in a fury.

"You're a horrid boy. I won't play with you, and I wish I had never met you!"

Archie laughed, but he felt a little uncomfortable.

"I don't care. You're only a girl. I wish I had a boy to play with!"

"I wish I had a girl to play with!"

Then they looked defiance at each other.

"I think," said Dimple steadily and emphatically, "that I'm quite tired of you!"

"And I mean to make a new friend," said Archie, determining to show scorn for scorn.

There was silence for a minute. Dimple sat down on a low wooden bench by the side of her rose bed. She folded her small arms, and tried to look as ferocious as her small chubby face would allow her. Archie stood with his back against an old apple tree. He fingered his sporran, and held his head erect, trying to adopt an indifference that he did not really feel.

"And who will be your new friend?" asked the little maiden contemptuously.

Archie hastily racked his brains for a suitable object of friendship. There were very few children in the neighborhood, and those few he rarely met, for his uncle was most unsociable.

At last he said slowly:

"There's a little boy in the next pew to me in church. He has only just come to live in the next village, and his mother is a widow. Mrs. Blaikie was telling me

about them. He's a real boy, and we will go and climb trees in the wood, and get nuts and blackberries, and perhaps stay there a whole day, and—and take our dinner with us!"

Certainly Archie knew how to make an outsider's mouth water! For a minute Dimple's face fell; then she also rose to the occasion.

"I don't care. Boys are stupid. I shan't never know any boy again. My daddy is coming home, and he's the biggest, beautifullest man you ever saw! I shan't want anybody to play with when I've got daddy. He will take me out lovely walks, and we shall fish in the river together, and ride ponies, and write books, and then we shall build a big new house close to granny's, and I shall have tea parties every day, but I shan't never ask you. Daddy always said he liked girls better than boys, so he won't like you, and he won't want to see you, and I shan't either. We'll forget all about

you, and I shall begin to forget you to-day."

Then Archie blazed out:

"You're a cross, nasty thing, and I shan't stay with you any more. And I'll take away that new spade I gave you yesterday. I paid a whole sixpence for it!"

He seized hold of the new spade that was lying on the ground, shouldered it, and marched off to the gate.

Dimple, with a cry of passion, sprang after him.

"You shan't have it, you shan't."

There was a tussle. Some sharp hits were given and received; but the boy overcame the girl, and Archie dashed out into the road with a shout of triumph as he waved the spade over his head. He was soon out of sight, and Dimple now stood at the gate with swelling heart, and sobbing breath, feeling as miserable as any little girl does, who quarrels with her dearest friend.

She was found there by granny, who

came out rather feebly, supporting herself by her stick, and feeling her way round the gravel paths with much caution.

"What is my little girl doing?" she asked brightly.

Impulsive little Dimple turned round and clutched hold of her godmother's dress.

"Oh, granny, dear, Archie is a very wicked boy! I'm never, never going to speak to him again. He has run away with my new spade, and he has called me names, and he's a rude horrid——"

"Hush, hush, Dimple. You need not copy his example, come and walk round the garden with me, and tell your old granny all about it."

The childish story was soon told—a few heaving breaths interrupting it at intervals; and then Mrs. Fitzherbert seated herself on the old garden seat in the terrace walk, and drew her little god-child tenderly towards her.

"It is much ado about nothing, darling.

Why, what silly little people you are! Making one another miserable by pretending you don't care for each other! What would you do without Archie, eh? And how could he do without you? Two little roses putting their thorns out and pricking one another! I am quite ashamed of them!"

"Archie pricked me first," sobbed Dimple; "true and faithful he did!"

"Then you must be the first one to forgive."

Dimple thought over this.

"He's gone home, and he has taken away my spade."

"It is too late for you to go after him now. It is getting dusk already, and we must go into the house. I can feel the damp rising. But my little Dimple must learn to be patient and forgiving to every one. You are not angry with him now are you?"

Dimple stroked her godmother's delicate white hand for some minutes without speaking, then she said in dejected tones.

"He's going to have a boy friend; he doesn't care about me any more. He says I'm only a girl!"

"I expect he is feeling very sorry now for his unkind words."

"I'm sorry," whispered the little maiden; and Mrs. Fitzherbert took her indoors and said no more.

When Dimple was tucked up in bed that night by Taylor she said gravely, "Taylor, if you have a quarrel with a friend, how do you make it up? And supposing if he doesn't want to, and you do, what must you do?"

Taylor smiled.

"Who have you been quarrelin' with? Jonas? I'd tell him very pretty, how sorry you were, and ask him to forgive you?"

"And if he won't forgive you? It isn't Jonas."

"Not Master Archie? oh for shame! Why I thought you two never quarreled."

"What must I do, Taylor?"

The tone was piteous.

"Do? Give him a kiss. He isn't one to keep up temper for long. I didn't know he had any temper in him; he always looks as meek as Moses!"

Dimple turned over on her pillow, and when Taylor turned down the lamp and went out of the room, her little voice whispered, "Please, God, wake me up early to-morrow. I'm sorry I've been cross, but make Archie sorry too, acause he was quite as bad as I was!"

It was a bright morning with just a touch of frost in the air; Dimple slipped cautiously out of her bed in great fear of disturbing Taylor, for she was not quite certain whether her meditated plan would stand her approval. She looked at her bath with great hesitation, put one rosy finger into the water jug and drew back shivering. No, a bath without any warm water was clearly an impossibility. Stockings and shoes were drawn on in great haste, and then the more difficult task of

petticoats and garments with the many buttons and strings was attacked. But they were on at last, and slipping into a warm out-door coat which buttoned in front, Dimple took satisfaction in the thought that now she was tidy. The tangled curls were brushed well, but the comb, always her deadly enemy, was not brought into requisition at all. A very little dab on her face with a moist sponge, a similar dab on her hands, and then, with her hat on her head and gloves in her hand, Dimple stole softly out of the room and down the stairs. No one seemed about, though some of the household were up, and the front door stood open.

Once outside, the little girl drew a breath of relief. "I'm so glad Taylor didn't wake; p'raps she would have stopped me, and I do want to get to Archie before breakfast. I wonder if he's very angry still? I think I will take him just a few—a very few violets."

She ran off to the garden, and bent over a much-treasured clump of dark purple violets, that she considered specially grew for "granny's" use and pleasure. It cost her something to pick them, and I am afraid that only the least fine ones were gathered. Still it was a very presentable buttonhole when a few big leaves surrounded them; and clutching them tightly in one hot little hand, Dimple ran out of the gate, and made her way as fast as she could towards Fir House.

It was a long walk and the struggles over dressing herself had rather exhausted her. She had come out in her thin house shoes, and the road seemed very stony. Great sighs escaped her every few minutes; but once having determined to do a thing, Dimple seldom drew back.

She met no one on the road for some time; but presently, in the distance, she saw a little figure approaching her; and, to her great delight, she soon recognized it as Archie's.

"He's coming to meet me."

Her flagging steps now broke into a run; there was in another moment a prompt and hearty reconciliation.

"Oh, Archie, I was horrid!"

"So was I—*beastly!* And I was coming to you as fast as I could."

"I dressed myself all by myself, and I've brought you some violets!"

"And I got out of the dining-room window, because the doors were all locked and bolted, and I've brought you a cake. Mrs. Blaikie made it for me last night." The violets and cakes were exchanged, and a warm embrace followed.

"And I do like boys better than girls, Archie, and I shall always like you."

"And, of course, I like you better than fifty dozen boys, and your garden is quite —quite stunning! And I've brought you back your spade, and I'll get you a lovely red watering-pot next time I get any money."

Then they stood and beamed at each

other; and Dimple, feeling quite ready for her breakfast, nibbled at the cake, and insisted that Archie should have his fair share of it.

"We'll never be cross to each other again, will we?" she said emphatically, "for it makes me dreffully uncomfortable inside!"

"No we won't," responded Archie with alacrity, "and, do you know, I made up a new game for us to play at last night when I was in bed. I hope you'll like it."

"Oh, do tell me!"

"I must bring over uncle's dog—Terry, and he must be a bloodhound, and you and he must hunt me; he can find me anywhere. You must shut yourselves in the tool-house, and give me a good start. I'll be a slave that has run away. I've been reading about them, and I'll creep through the long grass, and go across fields and climb trees, and get over walls, and then you and Terry must track me down to kill me."

"Lovely!" exclaimed Dimple. "Oh, Archie, you're a wunnerful boy!"

And Archie smiled a little self-consciously as he saw he had quite regained his position in his little playmate's heart.

He took Dimple back to her home, but would not stay, though she pressed him, and the little girl made her appearance not a moment too soon; for Taylor, in a worried, anxious state of mind, was leaving the house in search of her. Uncombed and unwashed, she stood before her with a perfectly satisfied smile.

"Don't be angry, Taylor. I had to go, and I dressed all by myself, and I've done what you told me to do. I gave him a kiss, and now we're friends again!"

"You've never been all the way to Master Archie's?"

"No, we met in the middle of the road; but we're never *never* going to quarrel again, and he's coming this afternoon to play a lovely game with me!"

"Well," said Taylor, with a shake of

her head, "I hope you won't quarrel again with him, if this is to be the upshot of it. How am I to dress you in proper time for breakfast, I should like to know; running off like a little scavenger!"

Dimple wondered what a scavenger was like, but judged it best to be silent, and Taylor soon recovered her usual equanimity of temper.

CHAPTER XVI

"It is Just Like we
Used to be"

GRANNY, Taylor say you want me partic'lar!"

"Yes, darling, I have something very nice to tell you."

"Is it a secret? I do love secrets."

"I don't know that it is exactly a secret, but it is something that will make you very happy. Do you see this yellow envelope in my lap? This has just come from your father."

"He is coming home!" cried Dimple, flinging herself precipitously into Mrs. Fitzherbert's lap. "When will he be here, granny?"

"This afternoon, about five o'clock."

There was a breathless silence. When Dimple was very much moved, she was alway speechless; her little heart was too full for words. She only gave her "granny" an ecstatic hug, and the whole of her little body was quivering with excitement. At last she said, "And what bed will he sleep in?"

"I have told Taylor to see that the spare room is got ready for him. I think, as it is a fine morning, you might come round the garden with me, and we will see if we can find some flowers for you to put in his room."

Dimple danced off with shining eyes, and for the rest of the day she was almost beside herself with joy. She found plenty to do. All her toys must be mended and arranged to show "daddy"; she hovered about his room, inspecting his pillows, his bed, his chairs, and arranging his toilet table till Bertha scolded her well; but scoldings were not heeded on such an eventful day. She tried to tidy

up the whole house, and questioned Sarah in the kitchen as to what her "daddy" was going to have for dinner; Jonas in the garden as to what "veg'tubbers" he was going to send in, and Bertha as to whether she had enough spoons and forks and knives for "daddy to eat with."

Early in the afternoon she took herself in hand, and begged Taylor to dress her in her very best, and make her look as "nice and big a girl as ever she could."

"For daddy will be very surprised and pleased to see me so big. I used to wear socks in Lunnon, and now I have stockings, and my frocks was torn and dirty, and now they're nice and clean. And my curls must be very tidy, and I won't move my head once to get them untidy till daddy comes."

At four o'clock she crept into the drawing-room to granny, and tried hard to sit still on a stool by the side of her chair.

All her remembrances of her father were uppermost in her mind, and Mrs.

Fitzherbert wisely got her to talk of her old life in London. That kept her interested and still; she told again of the old days of poverty and anxiety, which showed her godmother that the impressions then received were never likely to be effaced from her mind through subsequent prosperity. And she kept repeating with soft pats on her granny's hand:

"But I loves you, granny, nearly as much, faithful true I do! And daddy and I will take care of you together now!"

Once a doubt crossed her mind.

"Granny, will daddy be a gardener in God's garden? acause you won't leave off making your little rose grow nice, will you? Can I have two gardeners taking care of me, do you think?"

"Yes, darling, God's garden is big enough to hold a good many gardeners. I don't think I shall forsake my little charge just yet."

The afternoon wore away, and then at

last a fly drove up, and, white and excited. Dimple tore out into the hall to be clasped at last in the arms of a big brown-bearded man whose eyes were moist, and voice husky and uncertain, as he held his little daughter tightly to his breast. They came in together; and when Arthur Seaton saw his old friend in her sweet helplessness, and heard her soft voice welcoming him so brightly and lovingly to her home, he nearly broke down.

"I never can thank you enough," he said, "for what you have done for my child."

"It is too soon to ask you what you think of her," said Mrs. Fitzherbert. "You find her grown, of course?"

Dimple's father set her down on the floor in front of him, and looked at her with a critical eye. She held herself up proudly, and then flung herself into his arms again.

"Oh, daddy, let me feel your arms round me. It is just like we used to be;

but you don't look ill and tired now; and, do you know, you're going to have chicken, and apple-tart, and cream, and lots of good things for dinner? And will you let me show you your bedroom? Such a nice big one, and I stuck the pins in the pin-cushion all myself, and granny. and I picked you some flowers, but I put them in the little china vase, and come and see it now!"

Father and daughter disappeared, and Mrs. Fitzherbert sat in her darkness by her flickering fire.

The scent of a pot of heliotrope near her made her put out her hand and touch it softly. Then she smiled.

"I could not be lonely with God's living creatures round me. And if it is His will, I shall not be bereft of the child."

Dimple was allowed to have late dinner for a treat, and sat up for an hour later. She was inclined to resist leaving her father at first, but a gentle word from her godmother was quite enough.

"Only, daddy, will you come and let me say my prayers at your knee?"

Her father promised, and was soon summoned up-stairs.

Just before Dimple, with clasped hands and closed eyes, was beginning her petition, she looked up at her father.

"Do you remember, daddy, trying to teach me 'Our Father' out of the Bible, and I couldn't say it? I didn't know God very well then, did I? But I'm a bigger girl now, and granny has told me such lots, and I love God very much, and He loves me. And Jesus has made me one of His roses, and I'm in His garden!"

Then, in a soft, childish voice the evening prayer went up, and the strong man seemed to be a child himself again at his mother's knee. He bent and kissed his little daughter silently when her prayer was done. Then he had to tuck her up in her little white bed, and after another hug and embrace the happy child turned

her head round on the pillow and was soon in the land of dreams.

Her father descended the stairs slowly and thoughtfully, and went back to Mrs. Fitzherbert by the drawing-room fire.

There was much to talk over, but before he left her that night he had promised to accept her offer of her home for himself and his child; and Mrs. Fitzherbert laid her head on her pillow with the murmured words, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."

* * * * *

It was June once more, the month of roses, and Mrs. Fitzherbert's garden was a wealth of beauty and fragrance. The old lady wandered along her terrace walk, inhaling with joy the sweet scent of her favorites. She looked very frail this summer, and those who loved her watched her with anxious eyes.

Dimple was still her constant attendant.

Her father was much in London, and when home, would be shut up in his study for most of the day, so the little girl was able to spend as much time as formerly with her godmother. She was as passionately devoted to her little garden as ever, and one sunny morning came flying in to her "granny" excitedly.

"Granny, my rose tree that was planted last year has got a bud. Do come and see it. Oh, I am so glad; I shall have roses now as well as you."

Mrs. Fitzherbert smiled at the eager child.

"I am glad it has come, darling, at last. It has been a great trial to your patience, hasn't it? Run and get granny's garden hat for her, and she will come out."

A few minutes after, and they stood by the tree. Mrs. Fitzherbert fingered the little bud tenderly.

"It is a healthy little bud."

"Yes, I'm sure it's going to be a lovely rose. Jonas says it's a dark-red one. It's

going to be my little child granny, and I'm its gardener, aren't I? It makes me feel quite big. I like my pansies, and my 'cherry-pie,' and my 'sweet-Williams,' but they're nothing like roses, are they?"

"No," said Mrs. Fitzherbert rather dreamily; "roses are the sweetest tenants of my garden, and I like to think they will be the same to you. Give them plenty of love and sunshine, darling, and don't forget to water them." Then she added in a softer tone, "After all, much as we can do, the two necessities of their life are beyond our power to procure for them. They come from above—the showers and the sunshine."

Dimple looked up puzzled.

"I can water my rose with my little watering-can, granny."

"Yes, but you can't make the water, can you?"

"No, God makes that, doesn't He?" Then with her usual quickness of thought the child added, "I'm an under-gardener

to my little rose, like you say you are to me sometimes, and God is the proper Gardener, isn't He, as well as the Master?"

Mrs. Fitzherbert laid her hand softly on Dimple's shoulder, and said with slow emphasis,—

"Never forget, darling, that God our Father is the Head Gardener of all His roses in this world. The under-gardeners may be taken away, but He never leaves one of His flowers, and will carry the work on Himself."

Dimple was awed and impressed by her godmother's words, though she hardly knew why.

Mrs. Fitzherbert left her, and did not come out to the garden again till the cool of the evening. Then Dimple's father took her on his arm, and whilst Dimple played about, the strong man with the feeble old lady paced the rose terrace together. They talked of many things, but as usual the chief subject was the child.

"She has gained so much from being with you," the father was saying; "you are an adept at training both children and roses."

Mrs. Fitzherbert smiled.

"A little child's life is never really happy and full till it has been brought into touch with the Master who loves little children," she said softly. "I have learnt a great deal myself in training Dimple. I should say that children, like roses, want a great deal of love and sunshine, but, more than all, they need a great deal of prayer."

"I think we all need that," said Arthur Seaton in a moved voice.

"Yes," said Mrs. Fitzherbert simply. Then, pleading fatigue she sat down on her favorite seat in the midst of her roses.

"I sometimes think," she said with a smile, "that it was a presentiment of future blindness that made me so many years ago resolve I would only have sweet-scented flowers in my garden. My blind-

ness has not robbed me of my treasures. They have never seemed so dear and near to me as now, when I have their fragrance delighting me so continually. I think I will rest here quietly for a little while. What a lovely evening it is! Would you not like to take a little walk with Dimple? I will wait here till you come back. The child loves to get her father to herself sometimes."

Dimple ran up at this minute.

"I want to take daddy into the field, granny, just to look at such a lovely little wild rose in the hedge; and I will tell him your best story, shall I? You won't be dull, granny, will you? We'll come back very soon."

The child tripped off, but came back in a little while with a basket of cut roses.

"Jonas was just going to take these in, granny, and I thought they would be company for you. Aren't they lovely? Here's a red one, and pink, and yellow,

and white. They'll talk to you till we come back."

Dimple laughed merrily as she tumbled her basket of roses out on her granny's knees.

Mrs. Fitzherbert leant back in her seat, and listened to the retreating footsteps of father and daughter. She made a picture as she sat there in the golden sunset with a background of roses which fell in clusters round the old rustic seat, even framing the sweet gray head that reclined very feebly against them. Her white, fleecy shawl lightened her widow's dress that she always wore, and her delicate, blue-veined hands were almost hidden amongst the richly colored roses that were on her lap. She bent her head to inhale their sweet perfume more than once, and then a bright radiance crept into her sweet old face as she raised it to the still, blue sky.

"O Lord, Thou hast brought to perfection these flowers of Thine. Wilt Thou mercifully and lovingly bring to perfec-

tion the two other flowers that are so upon my heart to-night? I have tried to train the rosebud for Thee. Do Thou continue her training, and bring her father into Thy garden and under Thy care."

The blue, sightless eyes were shining with hope and trust, and the rays of the setting sun lit up her face with a golden glory.

A quarter of an hour later Arthur Seaton and his little girl came back to the old rose terrace. They found "granny" still sitting amongst her beloved roses; but there was a hush and peace about her quiet form that had never been there before.

"Granny" had left her earthly garden, and had passed into the Master's heavenly one. Her work as under-gardener was done.

THE END.