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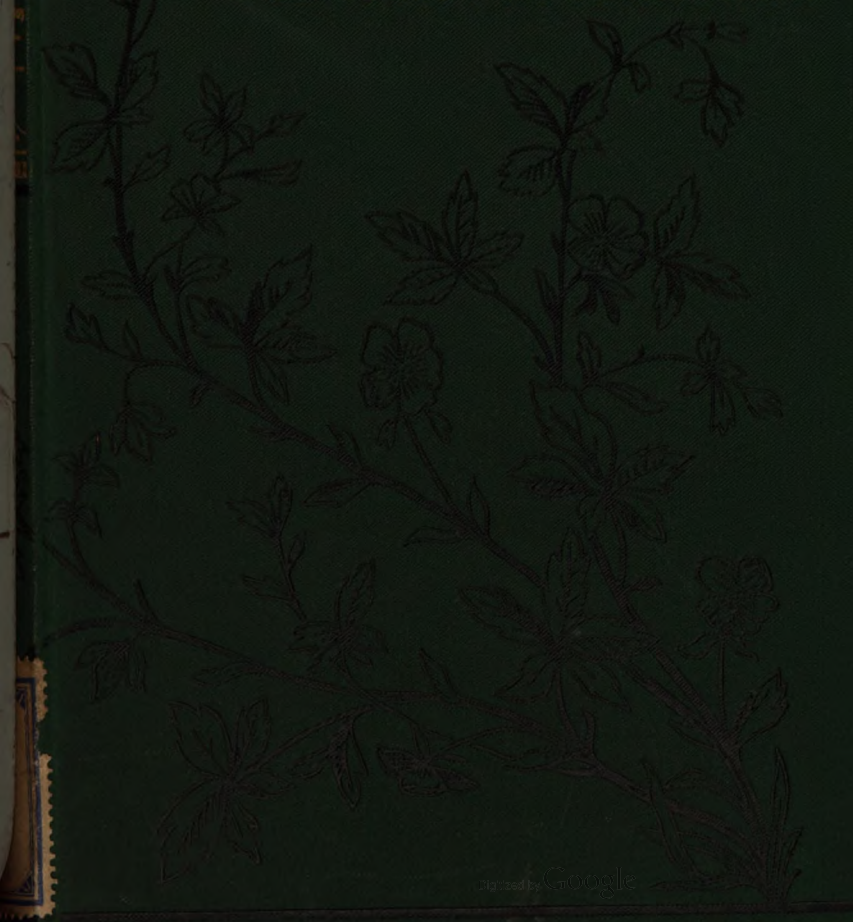
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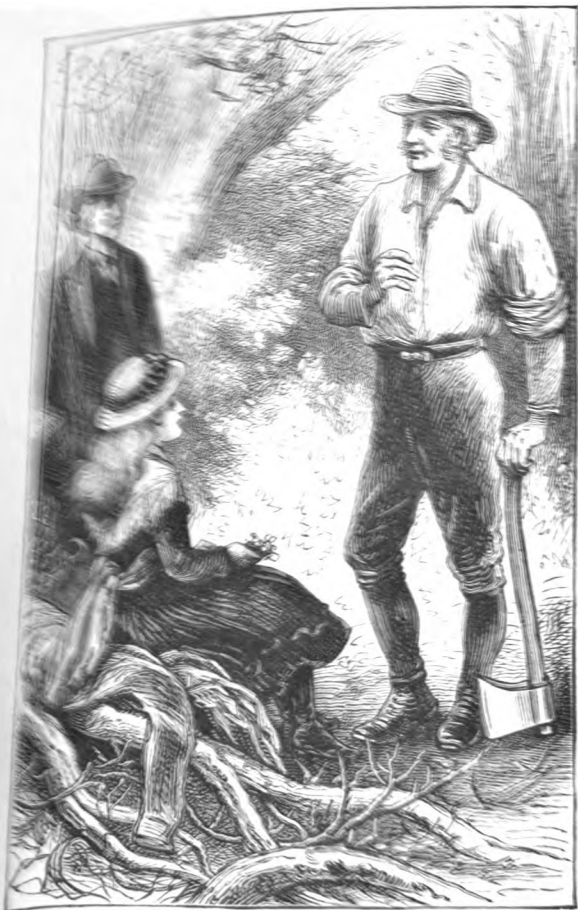
FOREST HOME

A STORY FOR THE YOUNG.





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"DEAR, KIND LAURITZ."

(Page 33.)



HENRIK'S FOREST HOME;

OR,

A BETTER SPRINGTIME COMETH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BEN AND KIT," "FISHER DAN," "ROSE, ROBIN,
AND LITTLE MAY," ETC., ETC.

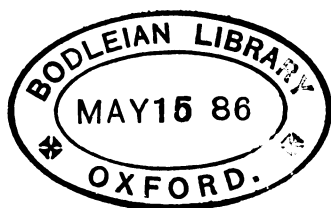


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HENRIK'S FOREST HOME;

OR,

A Better Springtime Cometh.

CHAPTER I.

WREATHS FOR THE GRAVES OF THE LOVED
AND LOST.



IT was a cold misty day in February. Leafless trees along the hillside bowed themselves before the gale, and dead leaves, which had long since fallen, were first whirled high in the air and then scattered over the fields below. The roaring of the sea could be distinctly heard from the shady foot-path at the bottom of the steep hill, and foaming billows could be distinctly seen at intervals between the trees.

Many small vessels were riding at anchor out-

side the harbour of one of the sea-ports of Denmark, while one or two fine barques were being borne swiftly over the waters, on their passage up the Baltic.

Henrik Nielsen had hard work to keep his fur cap on his head, as he bent before the wind. At last he stopped and tied the two lappets, which were fastened at the top, under his chin; then, with one hand in his pocket and the other grasping a basket, he went resolutely on. After passing through the Marien Lyst pleasure gardens, so dull and cheerless in February, so bright and gay in the summer, he halted for a minute at the churchyard gate and gazed wistfully in.

There were many monuments there, and many humble graves, but all gave tokens of being cared for; most of them were placed in the centre of a little plot of ground railed off, or divided by a small hedge, where low seats were placed and bushes planted, with tiny paths neatly raked over. In summer time the friends of the departed visit their graves very often, some come daily, for though many years may have passed since the beloved one was laid beneath the sod, yet in Denmark especially, it is the custom to bestow much care upon the graves, and to strew fresh flowers and hang wreaths constantly upon them.

Henrik gave a quick glance towards a humble

grave not far from the entrance of the churchyard, and then he walked hurriedly to the town. His home was two miles away, in the pretty forest he loved so well, and where he was at work about the trees under the guidance of Lauritz Harder — felling, chopping, trimming, sowing, planting out, or digging up, according to the time of year, and he had obtained leave of absence for an hour and half, by working overtime, to go on a message.

Henrik did not slacken his pace till he reached a small shop in Biergegade (or Mountain Street) with the name Hansen printed over the door. The little window was filled with evergreens and a few flowering plants. The boy looked at them with eager eyes, and then at the small coins he held in his hand.

"I cannot get much for a krone and half,"* he said to himself. "It has been very difficult to save up, and it will buy but little at this time of the year; however, I must do the best I can."

Opening the door he found himself face to face with Mrs. Hansen. "Good day, Madam," he said; "will you be so good as to give me as many evergreens as you can for two wreaths, with just a few flowers. To-morrow grandmother and I shall put them on father's and mother's grave. A krone and half is all I have to give this year.

* A krone is 1s. 1½d. in English money.

I shall get a little ivy and dried moss from the forest, and grandmother has one or two ferns to add; so will you give me as *much* of the pretty green as you can, with a few of the everlasting flowers," and the boy's eyes pleaded for as good a handful as she could give for the money.

"Now shall we see!" said the kind little woman, as she cut off a bit here and there from her plants. "I cannot take much from the window; but wait a minute while I go to our little green-house," and she quickly disappeared through the door into a little room behind the shop, while Henrik waited in hopeful expectation. After five minutes she appeared again, her round comely face lighted up with a kindly smile. In her right hand she held the pretty evergreens that Henrik so much admired, and in the left some early spring flowers, yellow and white, with a few of the kind that are called everlasting.

Henrik's eyes flashed with pleasure.

"Now, Mrs. Hansen," he said, "I know *well* that you are giving me too much."

"No, no," she answered cheerily. "The flowers have come out well this month; and my husband says you are to greet grandmother from him and give her this ribbon for her wreath," and she handed them to Henrik, saying, "Vær saa god,"* one of the common civilities of the country, that

* Pronounced "Vair so go."

is, "Be so good." On the ribbon was printed in Danish, "We keep thee in good memory," and it was intended to be twined in with the flowers.

"Have you a basket?" she asked.

"Here is one," he answered, lifting it from the ground. "And please take many, many thanks from me and grandmother; she will be glad for these. Please salute Herr Hansen from us. *Farvel, Madam.*"

"I will do so. *Farvel, Henrik,*" she answered.

The boy then turned from the warm-scented atmosphere into the cold street. After a half-hour's quick walk he neared his cottage home. It was about five minutes' run into the forest from the pretty winding path along the hillside, and already Henrik could see the tops of the dark firs and the fine beech trees that grew in thousands around.

The wind was howling through the branches and threatening to lay low some of those that stood in the most exposed positions on the hillside. In a few of them decay had set in, as shown by the fungus which in the autumn had sprung from the bark. Henrik knew most of the trees for hundreds of yards around his home, and now he was taking a special interest in them, for he had begun to earn his living by working in the forest for the last three months.

"If this gale continues and blows much

stronger we may lose the old oak tree," he thought, as he struggled against the wind, "and that would be a pity, for father used to climb it when he was a boy, and grandfather too."

Henrik now began to ascend the hillside, and he worked his way in and out between the trees till he reached the top. For a moment he stood and looked at the fine prospect before him. There were the Swedish mountains plainly visible on the other side of the Cattegat, and he could see, directly opposite him, the king's residence and the forests around it.

The waves were rolling along between; the white foam on the breakers making a great contrast with the dark sky and sea. On his right, three miles away, stood the Castle of Kronborg, a fine massive structure with five splendid turrets; it looked very picturesque in the distance, with the masts of many ships which lay in the harbour around it. Henrik gave a hurried glance at the scene before entering the forest, and after a quick walk for five minutes, saw the cottage windows through the trunks of the trees.

Before he reached the door it was opened for him by his grandmother. You could see at a glance that she was a very respectable woman, and one who knew her own mind. Her keen grey eye and decided mouth showed that. But

at the same time there were some pleasant lines about her face that showed she could in the days gone by join cordially in a bit of fun or merriment. Her nose was slightly aquiline, and there lingered in her cheeks a little tinge of colour that caused people to say, "*She was a good-looking girl in her day.*"

"In her day!" Madame Nielsen had had a bright little day forty years since! I suppose most of us have a time that we look back upon sooner or later as "our day." With some it quickly passes, and, as far as this life is concerned, dark shadows settle down and shut out all the sunshine. It was so with Henrik's mother. Others of us think our day is past and that the clouds will never lift again, when, lo, we find ourselves mistaken, and bright gleams glance across our path from time to time. It was so with Henrik's grandmother, but still she always looked back to a certain time in her life when the world seemed so bright and gay that it was a joy to rise in the morning and find herself in life; that was forty-five years since, and it lasted undimmed till she laid her second baby in the grave.

Others again can never say, "My day is past," for the little time of earthly joy undimmed by sorrow sinks into insignificance beside a bright and glorious hope we have of a day that is

coming and that will never fade away, where we shall be in the midst of a scene in which sorrow and parting shall never come. It will be a glad day of reunion, a day when we shall gaze on the face of One who loved us unto death, and when we shall be like Him and never grieve Him again. But all have not this hope, and so they look back and mourn over the little earthly "day" that is past.

There *are* some who cannot remember any bright earthly day, and who have a longing for something good and bright and happy, they hardly know what, and such an one was Hanne* Poulsen, who lived in the little village which lay a quarter of a mile from Nielsen's cottage. She had been brought up in Copenhagen as a charity child, and now had come to help in a large family of small children near to her grandmother's cottage. She slept with and gave her earnings to her grannie, but the old woman did not love her, and Hanne often thought to herself, "Nobody *ever* loved me; nobody was ever kind to me."

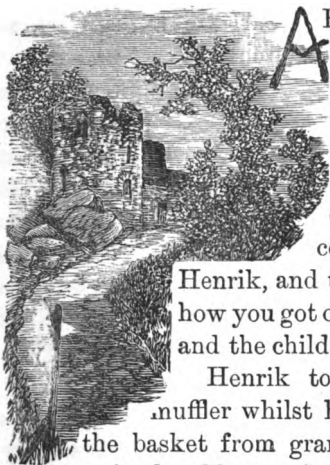
Now I must go back to Henrik and *his* grandmother, and hope my young readers have not "skipped over" the greater part of the last two pages.

* Pronounced as our English "Hannah."



CHAPTER II.

TWO STORMY NIGHTS.



AH! my boy, I am glad to see you back; it blows so hard, and the wind is bitter cold. Before you go to Lauritz you must drink a cup of hot coffee, just for a treat, Henrik, and then you will tell me how you got on, and how Charlotte and the children are."

Henrik took off his cap and snuffler whilst he carefully screened the basket from grannie's view; then he sat down in the old arm chair covered with dark red cloth, and pulled a letter from his pocket, and handing it to her said, "Aunt Charlotte gave this to me for you. I went up to her house first. She seemed so sad; I never saw her look sad before. You know she has always a smile, but to-day I believe I saw a tear-drop in her eye."

"Did she say how your Uncle Carl is?" replied grannie, as she hastily put on her "specs," and then poured out Henrik's coffee while she held the letter in her left hand.

"She only said, 'He was down at the harbour,' and then she nearly cried, and asked me to give you the letter. She says Marie has such a cough and looks so white she is going to take her to the doctor. Hans and Carl are well. Carl, as usual, had been up to mischief; aunt had found him standing on the top of the chimney of the little washing-house, and if he had fallen, she said, he would have broken his neck. As soon as he gets out of one piece of mischief he gets into another. You would never think Hans was his twin brother, would you, Grannie? he is so timid and gentle. Little Dagmar was as busy as ever, 'the busiest little woman in the house,' as uncle says; but, Grannie dear, I am keeping you from reading your letter."

"No, no, my boy; I like to hear of them all, as I am not able to get to them often in this stormy weather. But I wonder so much what your uncle says," and grannie opened the letter in much excitement, though she tried to keep calm.

Her hand was not very steady, and after reading the words, "Dear Mother," she passed it to Henrik, saying, "Read it, lad, you are a better scholar than your grannie," and he read:—

"Dear Mother—You will be surprised at what I tell you, but I am sorry to say my little business does not prosper. I am getting behind and I cannot pay all I owe. I have determined to sell off, as I know some one who will take the shop and tools, &c. I can then meet everything, and it will be better for Charlotte and the children that I take a situation. I have had a good place offered me as ship's carpenter to New Zealand. I shall get some money in advance to give to Charlotte, and by the time I get back something better may turn up. I know you will be sorry, but it's the best I can do, and you've no idea what I have gone through lately. Think it over, and if you could take them all into the cottage till I come back, I would try and make it worth your while. Marie is not well; she wants better food than I could give her lately. Love from Carl."

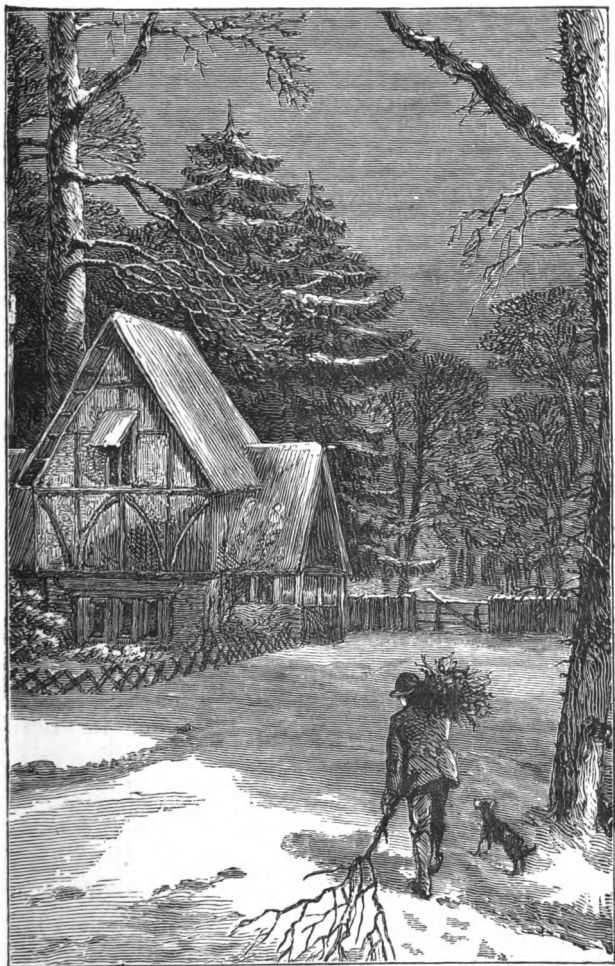
When Henrik had finished he looked at his grandmother; she sat perfectly still, the little twinkle died out of her eye, and she pressed her lips very firmly together. Henrik knew her well, and he said nothing. There were times when he could joke with her and treat her almost as a grown-up son would, and there were times when he knew it was best to be silent.

After a minute he said, as he put on his muffler again, "What do you think of it, Grandmother?"

She did not answer his question; she only said, "Another son to go out upon the dreadful cruel sea! He has settled it. He will go. Carl was always rash. But *you* must go to your work, my boy; Lauritz will want you. Say no more now. Ah! Henrik, you will never go to sea. You will be wiser. *Farvel*."

"*Farvel*, Grandmother, I shall be back in two hours. Don't fret about it," and he went out into the storm, taking the basket with him; then running round to the back, he ascended the staircase to the upper rooms and put his flowers in water, and placed them in the cupboard out of sight.

When he had found Lauritz, and had finished chopping and sawing up some large planks into nice square pieces of wood, and had piled them up in rows in a thinly-wooded place in the forest, he said, "Good night," and proceeded to look for a slender branch to form his wreath. Henrik knew the best places in the forest for anything he wanted. He knew where the birds built their nests, and where the prettiest grasses grew. He knew where the lilies of the valley flourished, and the best wild raspberries were to be found. He could get the long brown seed-vessels in the autumn that felt like velvet, and bring home baskets full of blackberries and *tylte bær* to grannie. The *tylte bær* is a little berry some-



THE FOREST COTTAGE.

(Page 20.)

thing like a cranberry, and makes delicious jam. It grows in abundance in the Swedish forests and also in Denmark, and the market women sit in the streets with hampers full, selling them from 12 öres a pound—that is 1½d. in English money.

Henrik was not long in forming two wreaths, and in finding ivy leaves and moss on his way home, although it blew so hard that he was glad when the cosy little cottage was reached. A small lamp was standing in the window as usual to cheer him up before he lifted the latch, and inside was grannie, he knew, bustling about and making everything as comfortable as possible. His slippers were placed near the stove to warm; the evening meal was on the table, of rye bread, butter and cheese, with a piece of smoked sausage, and the kettle was singing away on the fire ready to pour on the tea. Once a day they indulged in this beverage, which is more expensive in Denmark than in England; in the morning they supped *Ölle bröd*, that is the rye bread boiled with a sweet liquor and a little sugar, and then supped with milk, which forms a very pleasant and wholesome food. They were a very happy pair, in their love and care for one another, the old woman and the young boy. They had their little anxieties at times when they wanted new boots or warm

clothing, but lived rent free, and received two krone a week. Besides, they kept a pig in a sty at the back of the house, with a dozen hens, and Henrik earned a little every week. So it was not so very hard. Beside this, Madame Nielsen was busily employed through the summer, and was able generally to lay by 30 krone to help them through the winter. About five minutes' walk on the other side of the cottage was a very pleasant house, let only in the summer time to some family glad to escape from the heat of Copenhagen, and then grannie was busy enough. She was always ready to help in any way. She could wash or clean almost as well as ever; she would go and purchase provisions in the town, or when company was expected would help to cook. She supplied the family with potatoes, and generally managed to kill the pig just before they left, so that she could sell a good portion to them. Henrik fetched milk and water, and ran messages, and generally saved 10 or 12 krone for a new suit before September came.

It was a matter of great interest as to what family would take the house for the summer. The richer and freer the people the better for grannie and Henrik. How they always hoped the old bachelor, Herr Schröder, would never come again! The summer he was there they did not lay by one krone!

To go back to the evening meal.

"Will you have aunt and the children here?" asked the boy.

"How can we, Henrik? No, we are happy together, you and I. I don't want so many about. There is no room, besides—no, no," and she dismissed the subject with a sigh; and asked Henrik if he remembered that to-morrow morning he must rise early and get ivy and moss to add to her ferns for the wreaths.

"I shall go over early to the churchyard, and take a cup of tea with Carl and Charlotte on my way back. Lauritz will spare you, Henrik."

"O Grannie! now shall you see something," said the boy, bounding upstairs. He reappeared very soon with a tray upon which was spread the evergreens, the everlasting flowers, the white geraniums, and the ivy and moss. He almost forgot the sad occasion in the joy of surprising grandmother.

She lifted her hands, adjusted her spectacles, and asked what it meant. Henrik told her how he had saved his money to surprise her, as he knew she could not afford much this year; and then he gave her the ribbon from Herr Hansen, saying, "You will help me, Grannie, to make the wreaths, won't you?"

She was very pleased, and kissed his cheek as he stood beside her, and while she thanked him

two large tears rolled down her cheeks at Henrik's thoughtfulness and the remembrance of that dear son she had lost.

"Oh, what a gust of wind!" she cried, as she gathered up the pieces to commence the wreath, while Henrik tied them together. "It is just such a night that your father must have gone down. Ah! I remember it so well. Your poor mother had been down to the harbour twice to see if his ship had come in, but there was no news of it, and it was three days' overdue. It was blowing a strong gale just like to-night, but at four o'clock in the afternoon on the third day she said she would go again. We had had news in the morning from Peter, the postman, that he had not come, but she was so restless she said she must go, and I promised to stay and watch you. You were four years old then, you know." Henrik knew quite well; he had heard the story several times in the last three or four years, but he was never tired of it though it made him sad.

"She kissed you and she started; I asked her not to go, her health not being very good just then, but she said she must; so you and I stood at the door and watched and waved till we saw her no more. We put the lamp in the window at half-past five, but at six I heard the sound of strange voices outside, and as soon as I opened the door I saw two men and a woman helping

your mother in; she was as white as a sheet. I knew at once what it was, but I was so frightened for her I never asked a question; I seemed frozen. We laid her on the bed and gave her some brandy, and when she came round a little, the men told me, and I heard more afterwards. She had gone to the harbour and there saw the ship. On her way towards it one or two tried to stop her, but she pressed on, and all too soon for herself, poor creature, she learned that in the gale he had fallen overboard. They could not save him. Your mother nearly fainted away when she heard it, and the two men who were coming this way brought her out. Poor creature, she was never well again, and the little baby sister that came in the midst of the trouble was buried with her."

"Poor mother," said Henrik, "I remember her taking me by the hand and walking along the shore one day. I remember her lying in bed so white and still, and father I can remember a little. He slapped me once when I was a naughty boy, and another time he sat me up in the branches of the big oak tree."

"He was so fond of you, lad, and so was your mother, and she gave you to me before she died, and you comforted your old grannie's heart, and you will never go away and leave her. But I cannot forget your father. He was my first-

born, and such a handsome young man, only thirty when he went," and here the grandmother's voice broke into a low moan, and she went on with a wail, "Only thirty years—and when the sun shines and I hear the men singing at their work or going out to the forest on a *Fest* day, a great pain strikes into my heart still, and I think, 'Oh if I had *him* here once more'—my Henrik—my darling—my old heart aches for you as much as ever!"

She was tying up one of the wreaths as she spoke, and the tears coursed down her cheeks.

"We put up the little stone as a remembrance of him on your mother's grave, but I *never* gave him a last kiss or heard his last words."

"Now, Grannie, you must not talk that way. You often say how good father was, and how happy he is now; and I mean to try and always help you. We shall meet them again, Grannie."

"I hope so, for our Lord and Saviour's sake," she answered, bowing her head. "You are a good boy to grannie, Henrik."

When the wreaths were finished they were laid carefully away till the next day, and Madame Nielsen was up betimes getting ready for the little journey.



CHAPTER III.

MARIE'S HOME.



HENRIK also arose before daylight, fed the fowls, and attended to Gruntey and the little canary bird, and then dressed himself with unusual care. They locked the cottage at nine o'clock, and, carrying the two wreaths, grannie and Henrik proceeded to the churchyard. The wind had sunk during the night, and every bud and tree were frosted over.

Grannie's spirits had revived with the brisk morning air, and it was a melancholy pleasure to her to visit the grave of their dear ones and bring with her the little tribute of love. The ground was not very hard, and both set to work to rake and hoe, and make the little plot neat. Then they hung up the wreaths, one of which had the ribbon and the words, "Vi holde dig in godt minde;"* and then, as usual, the old lady

* "We keep thee in kind remembrance."

took out her clean handkerchief and had a good cry, while Henrik's eyes also filled with tears.

"Grannie, you must not stay any longer, you will get rheumatism," he said. "See, the clouds look heavy with snow, and Uncle Carl will soon come in for his dinner. Come, Grannie, and let's buy what we want in the town."

So they put up their handkerchiefs and turned away from the quiet little churchyard, where so many weary bodies had been laid away to rest.—some to rise all glorious on the resurrection morning when our Lord Jesus shall descend into the air *with a shout*. Yes, that shout of the once-crucified, now glorified, Son of God shall awake the sleeping *saints*—for "*they know his voice*." But, sad to say, there are some who know it not; they have never paused on earth to listen to it; they have never learned to love it, and such must slumber on till the second resurrection of death and judgment.

The words "We remember thee," "May you rest well," were written on many a tombstone, but few verses of Scripture. You, dear reader, may have to pass the river before long. Can you look up to Jesus and say—

But Thou wilt never leave me,
And though the waves roll high
I *know* Thou wilt be near me,
And whisper "It is I."?

After purchasing some groceries in the town, grannie and Henrik started for Charlotte's house. It lay a little to the left, outside the town, and upon knocking at the door they were greeted with delight by the children.

Marie was sitting on a low stool by the fire, with a little shawl round her shoulders. Hans was playing under the table with little Dagmar and their dog Jokum, and Carl was trying to mend his sleigh.

"Hooray, Henrik, I'm glad you've come; you can show me how to mend my sleigh; I expect it will snow to-night and then we shall have some fun."

Henrik very kindly put him in the way of setting it right again, whilst little Hans watched him with interest, and grandmother talked to Marie and Dagmar. They expected their father and mother in directly, they said.

Marie coughed a great deal, and said her chest hurt her, and she felt so weak. "Mother took me to the doctor yesterday, and he says 'I must have warm ale and plenty of milk, and not go out in the east winds.' But I feel so cold, Grandmother; I shiver so much though I sit by the fire, and I can do nothing. Why is it, Grandmother?"

"You are not well, *söde barn*" (sweet child), she answered. "You need some of grannie's

cordial to warm you up; Cousin Henrik shall bring you some."

We have no English word of endearment that answers to the Danish "*søde*";* it means at once good and gentle and sweet, and is more often used than dear.

"Thank you, Grannie," answered Marie, and then she burst into tears.

"What is the matter, little one?" asked her grandmother.

"I don't know; I often cry now," said the child. "I cannot help it. Don't tell mother."

Hans crept up to his sister and patted her cheek.

"Oh! Hans is such a good dear boy," said Marie. "He fetches me water when I want it; he reads to me as well as he can, and he plays with little Dagmar to keep her quiet."

"Ah! but when Marie was well, Grannie, she taught me the little psalms she learned in the school that they sing in the kirk at Easter, and she told me such pretty stories about the little creatures in the forests, and many other things. I must be good to her."

"God hear and bless them," answered grannie reverently. "Now we shall try and get you well quickly, *sød* Marie. You must come and get some beautiful air from the forests."

* Pronounced *Sue-tha*.

The door opened and the parents came in. Charlotte's face, generally all smiles and good temper, looked anxious and her husband's careworn. After a little talk about the sick child, the father and grannie retired into an inner room to have a chat, and then, after bidding good-bye, Henrik and Madame Nielsen set out for the cottage.

"Marie will not get well in the town, I fear," begun grandmother; "the doctor says her chest is very weak. Uncle has settled about the situation, and agreed to take it. I thought as much. Ah me! but boys are a deal of trouble."

"When will uncle go?" asked Henrik.

"Likely not till April. I think we must take Marie with us, Henrik; as for the others it would be too much. I am not as young as I was, and the noise of the children all day long would tire me out."





CHAPTER IV.

HENRIK TAKES MARIE TO THE COTTAGE IN THE FOREST.



IT was now the end of April, and the beginning of the sweet spring days. The birds were singing blithely in the yet bare bushes and among the trees of the forests. The sand insects were beginning to fly about the shore, and the clear blue sky was reflected beautifully in the calm sea.

Carl Nielsen was about to start on his long voyage, and if his heart misgave him as he looked at his wife and children, especially his little sick daughter, he did not say so, for he had a proud spirit and kept up an appearance of cheerfulness to the last. He put some money into his wife's hand before he left, and promised to send more when he reached his destination. She was very clever at getting up fine linen,

and hoped by sewing and washing to make ends meet till the money came.

The one great drawback to him was leaving Marie in such delicate health. He was very fond of her, and would not spare her to his mother the few last weeks he was at home. She had rallied a little as the spring weather commenced, but her strength failed visibly, and it was now agreed she should go to the cottage in the forest for the summer months. "And the fresh air will make you quite strong by the time I return, little one," he said.

"Perhaps," answered Marie doubtfully, "it seems as if something has gone out of me that could *never* come back." Then, seeing her father's anxious look, she pressed her pale cheek to his, and, nestling in his arms, added, "The good God can make me strong, father, and His beautiful sea-air is the very best thing, and it makes me so glad to think of the tall trees and the sweet birds, and grannie's starlings that build close beside her every year; and you will not be long, father, you will come back as soon as you can."

Ah! that moment he would have given anything to stay at home, but he had given his word and received money in advance, and it was impossible to withdraw.

Carl Nielsen was a man who had more than once acted on impulse in a rash manner, and

he had had to repent his steps many times afterwards.

As he was about to reply the doctor entered. After he had spoken to the little girl, and made a few inquiries, he turned to the father.

"You are going away," he said.

"To-morrow morning early," was the reply.

"For how long?"

"I cannot say exactly. Not less than four months, doctor."

"H'm! it is a pity you go while the child is sick."

"There is not much wrong, doctor; the forest air will soon set her up; is it not so?"

"We must hope for it; go and fetch a glass of water, little one," he said, turning to Marie, and as she left the room he added, "Her chest is very weak, and the fall of the leaf will try her, but children pull through a great deal," he said, with the air of one who was saying the best thing under the circumstances. "I shall do my best for her while you are away," and then he said "good bye!" and when little Marie brought the water he was gone.

"If he was thirsty it is strange he did not wait for the drink," she said.

She had a bright colour in the evening, and her spirits were so good that her father was re-assured, and in the morning he was away

before the children were up, for he could not trust himself to bid them good bye again.

As soon as breakfast was over Henrik came for Marie, and after they had walked to the outside of the town he hired a little hand cart, and gave her short rides whenever she was tired. He had always been fond of Marie, she was so sweet tempered and so intelligent; she would listen to his stories about the forest and the trees almost with awe. She loved to hear about the owls that screeched around the cottage on a summer's night, and the starlings that built every year in the boxes put up for them in the tall trees. There was that in her wistful eyes, with the far-away look in them, that spoke of something beyond the daily life they were living, and Henrik often felt that she enjoyed a sense of God's love that he knew little about, for the beauty of the sea and forest were always connected in the mind of little Marie with the greatness and love of God.

"See the buds are beginning to come," she cried with delight, as they went along. "God never forgets, does He? There never *was* a springtime yet, I suppose, without the leaves and flowers; it is so wonderful that He never gets tired of thinking about us. How His Son Jesus must have loved to see all the beautiful trees and flowers when He was a

child on earth, because God, His Father, had made them."

"You always are thinking of things that never come into my mind, Marie. I enjoy all the good things, and there is an end of it," answered Henrik.

"When I can't run about much I must think," said Marie. "I dare say if I were as strong as you, and had so many things to see after, my head wouldn't be so busy."

Grannie had cooked a little dinner for them by the time they came in, and gave Marie as hearty a welcome as it was possible to give. After the warm soup was disposed of Henrik went to his work, and Marie's grandmother showed her the little room in the attic which was now to be hers.

Wearied out with her journey Marie lay down on the little bed and soon fell asleep, whilst grannie prepared some wonderful cough mixture for her. When she woke she found "Miss," the cat, purring beside her, and being quite refreshed from her sleep she jumped up, and carrying pussie down asked grannie if she might go and find out where Henrik was working in the forest. "It is only a little way, and he told me exactly where to find him," she said.

"Be sure you don't lose your way, child; he is close against the little pond where the tall

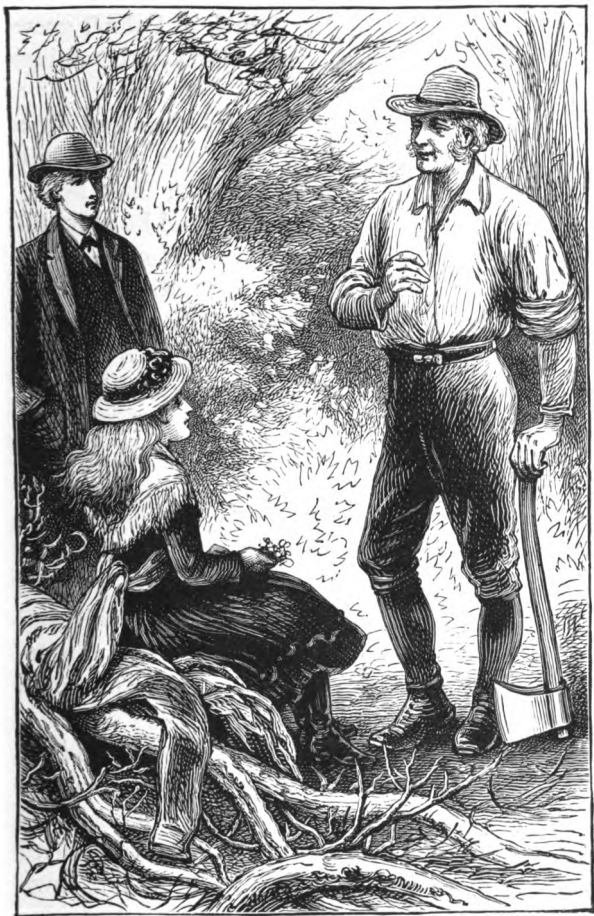
reeds grow, and if you find any of the early green Bukar bring it home, and we will make it up into little wreaths to-night. I go to the town to-morrow to buy the week's provisions, and perhaps I may sell a few in the market." Marie gladly assented and started forth.

She gave a little sigh of pleasure as she looked around. The sun was warm, and already there was a tinge of pale green upon some of the trees, which contrasted so beautifully with the dark firs and pines, whilst the Baltic waves reflected the blue sky above. The little girl was not long in finding Henrik and Lauritz, who were busy with the timber which Henrik had been piling up in neat rows.

"Good-day, little one," he said, in his kindly tones, to the child as she approached and returned his greetings. "So Henrik tells me you have come to the forest to get back the roses to your cheeks. That's good; you couldn't do a better thing. Why you will soon be helping us with the wood, and getting such an appetite that the good wife, Madame Nielsen, will not know how to satisfy you."

Marie laughed. "Then I will come and visit you and Madame Harder, and taste your 'ölle bröd,'" she answered.

"You shall receive a hearty welcome, and get an apple cake into the bargain," he replied.



"DEAR, KIND LAURITZ."

(Page 38.)

"Well, *I* shall not forget, and if I don't grow strong very, very quick you will let me come just the same."

"Just exactly the same," he answered in a deeper tone as he took another look at the frail child, and noticed the short cough; then laying down the wood he had in his hand he took his coat from the branch of a tree, and spread it on a pile of timber, and lifted little Marie up and sat her upon it. As he did so he kissed her forehead.

"Dear, kind Lauritz," she answered, looking up with her loving eyes.

The old man was much beloved by the young folks. Never was a child or an animal known to shrink from him, and there was no wonder. His clear brown eyes and pleasant mouth, and kindly words, gave confidence and drew forth love, while his short curly iron grey hair and ruddy cheek added to the charm of his appearance. He was not so very old either, for he would be just sixty-seven years in the coming week.

As soon as Marie was rested she began to look for the pretty little green plant her grandmother had asked her to gather. It is one of the first signs of spring life in the forests, and small bunches or wreaths obtain a ready sale in town for a few öres.* She found a good handful after

* Eight Öres are equal to one English Penny.

a short search, and then Henrik called to her to come with him, for he wanted to show her a pretty nook near by where he intended to make her a summer seat. Three fine beeches grew so near to one another that while two would form sides the third would make a support from behind.

"I mean to make a little summer house here, and train some ivy and creeping things over, Marie, and you shall have a nice little seat underneath; then when you want to rest from the sun you can come here while Lauritz and I work."

Marie was delighted, and during the coming week she watched Henrik while he devoted his spare minutes in putting up the seat. The fresh air revived her, and she seemed to gain strength each day. Grannie had received a little money from Marie's father before he started, to help her in maintaining the child, but she knew well enough that it would not last long, and that she must try to earn a little extra if possible. Madame Nielsen had some forebodings of trouble to come, and often as she sat inside the cottage door knitting socks for Henrik she was turning over in her mind the best way to make a little money. She was getting very anxious about the letting of the Red House, for at present no one had hired it, when one morning in the

month of May she received a letter from the owner, Herr Brun, asking her to go and help clean and set it in order as a party would be coming from Copenhagen to look over it, and he expected that the house would be let in the course of a week. Grannie was only too glad of the work, and begun with one or two others to scour, and air, and clean the house.

A few mornings after a load of goods arrived; there were curtains, and rugs, and ornaments, and all sort of things to make the house comfortable and complete for the summer; and when a carriage drove up the next day, containing Herr Brun and a lady and gentleman, everything was in good order, and Madame Nielsen in her best gown and cap stood at the door to receive them.

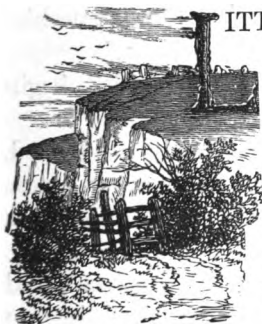
The lady looked very delicate, and was helped out of the carriage by a young girl clad in mourning. The gentleman was of elderly appearance, and seemed very anxious about his wife, as he wrapped a warm shawl around her. They walked through the house and out into the verandah, which was covered with vine leaves in the summer, and were very particular in inquiring about the healthiness of the house.

Grannie was very glad when the visitors left to receive a krone, and to hear them say they were quite satisfied with the house, and might be expected in a few days.



CHAPTER V.

A TALK WITH LAURITZ ABOUT THE "BETTER SPRING TIME."



LITTLE Marie had been up to gather anemones in the forest, and while Henrik was sent on a message she had been talking to Lauritz. He was standing viewing a fallen tree which was lying in the midst of the pretty white blossoms, so frail, so pure and delicate. Thousands upon thousands of them covered the bank or hill which rose up at one side of the footpath, and which we have already spoken of ; many also grew all over the forest itself, making some parts look as if sprinkled with fallen snow. Large wild violets also contrasted sweetly with the pure white and pale pink flowers.

"It gives me a little sorrow to see such a fine tree cut down," he said, lifting his cap. "What

does it say in the Bible, little one, 'As the tree falls so it lies,' eh? It's true enough it will never get the chance to bear fruit again, it is all up with it now."

"Was it a *good* tree, Lauritz?" asked the child.

"Pretty fair, but we saw well enough it would soon be a 'cumberer of the ground'—see here," and he pointed to a large growth of fungus, of a reddish-brown colour, attached to the side of the tree. "It showed there was mischief beginning, so we have brought it down."

"Do you only cut down the trees that begin to grow bad?" asked Marie.

"No, no; sometimes we specially need good, sound ones: we send lots of them away across the seas to other lands. No, no; the good trees must come down too."

"They look so grand waving overhead, and they look so helpless down there; what did you say about the Bible and the trees?" asked Marie.

"It seems to me that when the good Lord looks at some of us, and sees we shall only cumber the ground, He cuts us down and takes us away. He can see right into our hearts. He sees the evil; nothing is hid from Him. It would be a dreadful thing to be cut down *because* we have borne no fruit," said Lauritz, as if talking to himself.

"But good people die," murmured Marie.

"Yes, yes, little one; and as our Lord *needs* His own to form a part in His temple above He takes them. He calls them away one after another. That's a glorious thought. He needs them. I hope He will call me like that, suddenly."

"Would you *like* to go away and leave the beautiful forest?" asked the child, creeping close to him.

"When our Lord God wills it, child, I am ready. I hope it will please Him to spare me a long sickness when my time comes. As to the forest, it is fair and grand enough, but it too must cast its leaves and through the long winter speak of death, only we know there *is* life behind; and when the beautiful spring comes how gladly it bursts out in its new green clothing. Yes, little one, we too must put off our earthly dress at His word; but, thank God, through Jesus Christ a 'better springtime comes' for us, and as our little psalm says, 'we, like new and glorious trees, shall strike our roots deep in everlasting summer.'"

Lauritz loved to speak thus, and went on, almost forgetting little Marie at his side, who was entering more fully into his words than he would have thought, till he glanced down and saw her blue eyes gazing up, with all their soul in them, right into his face.

"That's beautiful," she said, "I never heard it in those words, but I often feel when I'm tired to want something better, something that won't get spoilt. You see, Lauritz, in the winter the wind is so cold, and it makes me shiver and cough, and when it is very warm I get tired. Nothing keeps quite right here very long, does it?"

Lauritz began sawing the tree; he could see his little listener understood him, or, at least, wanted to understand him.

"No, that it don't, and God does not mean it should."

"Why? He is so good and loving," exclaimed the child.

"*That He is*, that's truth; but when He has some things so much better for His children up there He does not want them to settle here. The swallows go off willingly enough to a warmer land in the autumn when the leaves fall and the storms blow, and the good Lord knows best how to shake our nests down when He wants us to flit and think about the better country."

"Ah! I see, I see," cried Marie. "I often wondered, dear Lauritz, why He let troubles come. He is in the better land, and sees how good it is, and so"—she stopped, for the words would not come quick enough.

"And so," added Lauritz, looking at the fallen

tree, "He lets some little gnawing worm or other do its work, and we get uncomfortable and find we cannot settle down as well as we meant to; then, if we will only listen, we hear Him saying, 'Come unto Me and I will give you rest.' These words are simple enough for you, Marie."

Henrik came bounding up to them at this moment all full of health and life. "Hulloa," he said, "there is good news, the house is let."

For a minute the interruption seemed a jar; how often such a jar comes in life! Henrik looked at the one and the other, and stopped.

"Is anything wrong?" he asked.

"Nothing at all; we were only taking a look ahead at the 'everlasting summer.' So now give us your news, lad," he answered, cheerily, and Henrik told all he knew.

For two or three days Marie was busy helping her grandmother to weed the garden at the Red House, while Lauritz and Henrik had much to do in the forest. The little girl thought a great deal about the old man's words as she followed grannie; she could not do much as her strength was but feeble, and very often she rested for ten minutes at a time. Some days she felt better and more able to go about, and then again she could only sit outside the cottage door on the good, fine days, and the least exertion seemed too much. In the garden at the Red House the

lilacs, and laburnums, and almond blossoms were coming out, while the birds sung in an ecstasy of delight. All around the trees were bursting into full bloom—some of a bright golden colour, others with a dark red tinge, and the fir trees also enlivened their sombre winter attire with bright upward sprigs of light green.

Goldfinches, bullfinches, magpies, and starlings abounded; and the little girl had enough to do to watch both sea and land. Sometimes after a calm as many as eighty or a hundred sailing vessels would pass by in one hour, when a breeze had sprung up; and then when Henrik was at home he used to point out the difference between the barque, the frigate, and the schooner.

Marie took every opportunity she could to talk to Lauritz, and the old man in his quaint way taught her many lessons from the trees and flowers. One day he took her home to his wife, and she got one of the apple cakes he had promised her, and he let her look at the pictures in the big Bible.

She gazed long at one of our Saviour on the cross, and with a deep sigh she said, "I am so glad it is all over, Lauritz; that day will never come again."

"Never again," echoed the old man. "Long Friday was a bitter day; but bright was '*Paaskemorgen*'" (resurrection morning).

"It is good to look at the picture on the other side and see the dear Saviour risen, and know He will *never* die again."

"That reminds me of Schoref, the man that came from Russia. He says that on the Sunday after Long Friday, when they first meet a friend, they cry out, 'The Lord is risen,' and he answers, 'He is risen indeed,' and then they kiss each other; I wish folk here thought more about it."

Henrik was standing by. "That sounds grand," he said, "it makes one feel it is all so *true*; I wish people said it here, don't you, Marie? But I never hear anyone but Lauritz and you talk of these things, and grannie a little."

"Yes, and I wish Easter came more than once a year, it's such a blessed time," said little Marie as they walked home; "it all seems so real in the churches then."

Little reader, we need not wait for a day or a season set apart by *man* to remember the death of Jesus. Every day, and specially the first day of the week, we may have the glad sense in our hearts that "He is risen."

Our glorious, glorified Saviour! God is satisfied that He has put away sin and borne the penalty due to us, and has raised Him from the dead. Are you a believer in Him?



CHAPTER VI.

WILFUL LAURA.



THE garden of the Red House ran back to the edge of the forest, and the Nielsens' cottage was within sight of it, a little winding path leading up to it. When the family had been settled about a week, little Laura Mortensen found her way out of the back gate and along the path to the cottage, where Marie was watering some flowers, which she had carried from the kitchen, outside the door.

Laura was not at all shy, and after returning her greeting of "good day," she asked, "Are you Kristina's little girl?" (They called the grandmother Kristina at the Red House.)

"I am her grandchild," answered Marie; "and you are little Miss Mortensen, are you not?"

"Yes; and I've run away from tiresome Miss Jensen, she won't let me do anything; I wish mother would send her away. Here she

comes, but she can't catch me," and off darted the naughty little girl.

Marie was quite surprised, and looked from one to the other.

"Good morning, dear; can you tell me which way the young lady went," asked Miss Jensen of Marie, as she approached, looking both tired and warm. "It is nearly time for breakfast, and I must find her at once."

"She is there behind the big oak tree. See!" she exclaimed, as Laura's face peeped out.

"Come, Laura, come; breakfast is ready," cried Miss Jensen; but the wilful child ran further into the forest.

"I will help you; I will run for you," said Marie. "When Miss Laura knows you want her she will surely come."

"I wish that it were true. She knows quite well I want her. Dear, dear, what shall I do? There is the first bell. Her mamma will be so angry;" and, beginning to run, Miss Jensen surprised Laura by her energetic efforts, and after a minute's quick chase she captured the child. It was one thing to capture and another to half-drag, half-carry her towards home.

"You have been very naughty, Laura," panted poor Miss Jensen. "The first bell has rung, and your mamma will be very displeased."

Laura put on a defiant air, but ceased her

struggles as they neared the garden gate, and began to whine and cry—"You have hurt my arm, see how red it is; I shall tell mamma."

Marie stood watching them till they disappeared within doors, wondering how it would end, and how a little girl could be so naughty.

Laura was nine years of age, and the only other child was the much-longed-after baby boy, now three months old. Her mother was a French lady, and being in delicate health, had given her little girl up to the care of Miss Jensen. Had she upheld Miss Jensen's authority, Laura would have been a better child; but the little girl, naturally self-willed, had been spoiled by over-indulgence, and her teacher's life was anything but an easy one. An hour after they entered the house, Miss Jensen again approached the cottage to ask if Marie had seen a piece of ribbon Laura had dropped. Her eyes showed signs of recent tears, and her cheeks were flushed. They found the ribbon under the oak tree, and as they turned again saw Laura looking rather guilty and ashamed at the garden gate.

"Was her mamma very angry with her?" asked grannie of Miss Jensen.

"No, indeed, the blame fell on me, as usual," she replied, with fast-filling eyes. "Laura cried about her arm, which you know I did not hurt, and she got kissed and petted. Another day I

shall leave her alone. It is very difficult to manage her; but I must not stay. We are going to bathe, and after that for a drive. Farvel!"

"Farvel, Miss! I shall try and talk to the little one. Perhaps an old woman's words may help."

Madam Mortensen could not contend with her strong willed little daughter, and generally tried to soothe matters over the easiest way possible, instead of finding out the root of the mischief.

"You must never use force," she had said to Miss Jensen as she saw the slight redness on Laura's arm, "and Laura must always be at the table in proper time. I am sure if you called her kindly she would come in. Now, I cannot be troubled any more about it. Take your breakfast." And Laura's triumphant look, as long as she was in her mother's presence, was only heeded by Miss Jensen.

The little girl knew full well how to please her mamma, and brought her a rose with a kiss as soon as breakfast was over.

"What a kind heart the child has," she remarked in her teacher's presence.

Miss Jensen sighed, and went away and shed a few bitter tears. Had she possessed a little more firmness and less sensitiveness it would have been better for both her little charge and herself'

The next morning was a very busy one, as they were all to prepare for a picnic to the forest. Two carriages were to take them and their expected guests two or three miles up the country, and after partaking of luncheon and fruit in the forest close to the sea, were to ramble about, bathe, and collect flowers, and then take tea at one of the many refreshment gardens near the shore. Laura was to go; and she was full of excitement at the thought, and she ran up to the cottage to tell Marie and Kristina about it. Henrik was there, and he was asking Marie if she would come up to her summer seat as the air was so fine, and she looked so pale and tired.

"I will come, too. I will ask mamma; they will be glad to get rid of me, they are all so busy. Do, Miss Jensen, dear, ask mamma," urged the child in her most winning way.

Little Laura could be very pleasant when she tried. So they went both together, and her mamma gave leave, saying, if grannie would take her knitting and sit with the children for an hour, she would be glad as Miss Jensen was needed in the house, and grannie could make up the half-day's work in the house afterwards.

So the children reached the summer-seat and began to play making gardens, while Madam Nielsen knitted her stockings. After a few minutes Lauritz came to look at some young



"RAMBLE ABOUT AND COLLECT FLOWERS." (Page 52.)

trees he was going to pull up and others he meant to transplant, and he stood and spoke to the children. He could not help contrasting their faces. One reminded him of a June rose, the other of a frail anemone.

"Show us the trees you are going to transplant, Lauritz," asked Marie.

"Well, it is too late to do it now, but if they struggle on till September we'll see about it. The soil doesn't suit them. Firs would do better here; they are only getting weak and sickly. The soil on the other side of the ravine is best suited to them. I wonder John set them here. These three are quite dead; you may take them up, Henrik. I often think of our little son, Carl, when I look at those trees. He never thrived here. The soil didn't suit him; we did all we could, but it was no use. This world was too rough a place for such a tender plant, so the Lord took him up into His fair garden, and his 'roots will strike deep there, in everlasting summer.' No cold winds there!" and Lauritz drew his hand across his eyes and patted Marie's pale cheek, as her eyes filled, and she whispered:—

"That would suit me."

"Yes, little Marie; that glorious land where the inhabitant shall no more say he is sick suits just such little tender plants as you; and

He, who having purged our sins by His own blood has gone to prepare mansions for those who love and trust Him—He knows how much better such little ones can thrive in His Paradise above.”

After Lauritz went away, Laura asked grannie what he meant about his little boy, and she told her in her own matter-of-fact way :—

“Little Carl was never strong; he had a weak back, and when he was four years old the Lord took him to heaven. He was a good little boy, and could say his little psalm as well as any of the children; and he tried to please his father and mother, and be a dutiful boy,” went on grannie, hoping to impress Laura with a sense of her misconduct. “Little children like you, missie, who are well and strong, and have got everything to make them happy, should try and please, and make their teachers and friends a good return.”

Laura grew impatient. “I don’t much like being told about good little children; it makes me feel rather cross,” she said.

Marie looked very much surprised, and grannie shook her head. The little lecture she had hoped to impress Laura with, had fallen to the ground.

When Laura drew near again, she said :—

“I like good men like Lauritz though, and I shall ask my mamma to get him for our gardener.”



CHAPTER VII.

A SUDDEN CALL.



EARLY next morning Henrik took his breakfast, gave the animals theirs, and chopped some wood for his grandmother. He then gathered some beautiful branches off the beech trees, with their pale yellow-green, satiny leaves, and put them over the stove in the little parlour to cheer Marie up when she came down stairs, and then with a light step he bounded through the forest. Grannie watched him with pride, saying to herself, "He will be the comfort of my old age."

How often a bright April morning is suddenly overcast with dark clouds! An hour after, Henrik dashed to the cottage door.

"Grannie, Grannie!" he cried, "come to poor Madam Harder as soon as you can."

"What is the matter?" she asked, regarding his white face and frightened eyes.

"It is Lauritz," gasped the boy. "Poor Lauritz, he has fallen, and we have taken him home. O Grannie!" and, sinking in a chair, the boy covered his face and cried.

His grandmother hastily fetched her shawl, and bidding him come with her and try not to awake Marie, opened the cottage door without another word.

"Tell me about it, Henrik; is he dead? How did it happen, lad?"

"We were up carting wood. Christian Hansen was with us," he went on with shaking voice, "and Lauritz climbed up the high pile of wood, and threw down pieces to Christian, who stood by his cart. Suddenly his foot slipped, and he fell as he was throwing down a piece. He fell backward on to his head, and I think it struck the root of a tree. We helped him up, and at first he did not speak; then we asked him if he was hurt much, and he turned very white, and said 'I'm giddy; take me home; has it come? has it come?' We did not know what he meant, and he would not let us try and carry him. He walked slowly, and we held him up. As he got near home he said, 'Put me in my own bed. Don't frighten my old wife.'" Here Henrik's voice choked. "Oh, she turned so white when

she saw him, and we set him in a chair, and she bade me run for you. Here we are now !”

They entered quietly. Lauritz was leaning back in his arm chair white as death, while his wife and Christian were loosing his clothes and giving him water.

“ O Kristina !” was all the poor wife could say to Madam Nielsen ; and then, as she saw that her friend understood all that had happened, she asked of her, “ Can Henrik go for the doctor ?”

“ Put me to bed—to rest,” said Lauritz ; and, while the boy again dashed off for the nearest doctor, the three, with trembling hands, took off his coat as gently as possible. The poor fellow seemed partly stunned, and did not appear in much pain.

“ Maria !” he murmured, as Madam Harder kissed his forehead, while her tears fell fast.

In a few minutes they managed to get him in his bed, where he lay with closed eyes, and they waited for the doctor. Oh, that waiting when anxious friends hang upon the doctor's word, which so often brings either overwhelming sorrow or bright gleams of hope !

When the doctor came, he gave a quick, searching glance at his patient's face and felt his pulse ; and as he looked and examined the bruise upon the grey head his own look grew more solemn—more sad. Lauritz answered the doctor with a

few words as he asked him how he felt, but they were not quite coherent, and at last he closed his eyes and lay perfectly still.

"I cannot hold out much hope," said the doctor to the poor, trembling wife when she went with him to the door. "He must be kept perfectly quiet till I come again in half-an-hour with some medicine. If he wakes, do not let him see you crying."

So with a bursting heart the old woman went and sat beside her husband, while Kristina kept her company, and Henrik went home to tell Marie.

"Tell her gently, and don't tell too much, she is so set on Lauritz, and she isn't strong," whispered grannie, and the boy went with a heavy heart.

"O Henrik, can it be that he will die?" she asked in solemn, half-whispered tones.

"I do not know," he replied, "but he seems very bad," and then Marie put her head down on the table and burst into tears.

Henrik tried to speak cheerfully, and asked the little girl to help him get the cottage ready for grannie.

"How sorry we should be if Lauritz died, but he wouldn't be sorry; he is ready—he is like one of the good trees that is wanted up above," said Marie; and then, while Henrik listened atten-

tively, she told him what Lauritz had said about the Lord taking home His people when He wanted them, and about the everlasting summer there. "He said he wished to go suddenly."

"That's strange enough," exclaimed Henrik.

"Do you mean it is strange for God to give us what we want," she asked, looking up inquiringly into Henrik's face.

"Well, no—yes—no—I mean it is strange he said that to you; but, Marie, I hope he wont die. I hope he will be like my oak tree, and live long and be of use to people down here, like the trees which give shade and shelter from the rain, you know." After an hour and half Henrik said, "Now, if you will wait out here in the sunshine, I will run up and hear how he is; grannie told me to come, and I will be back as quick as I can."

As Marie sat or stood about near the cottage, Miss Jensen and Laura came up to ask Kristina's help for a little while; they were busy getting ready for the picnic, and Laura was full of excitement. She was prettily dressed in a white frock and blue ribbons, for the weather promised to be very warm. Marie told them why her grannie could not come. They were very sorry, and the little girl was struck with awe at the thought that perhaps Lauritz would die, but she said, "What a pity it has happened on our picnic day;

I shall be unhappy when I think of it!’ And then they went away, and soon after Marie saw carriages and guests arrive, and heard laughter and talking going on, but to her it all seemed of so little importance that day, for might not Lauritz’s soul be even then going home to God?

It is so every day. In one house is joy and gladness, in another feasting and mirth, and in another sorrow and death.

Yes, Lauritz’s soul was going home to God; his little earthly day was closing; but to the believer in Jesus, to the one who has put his hand into the pierced hand of Christ by faith, and who loves that Saviour as a blessed Friend, the closing of the earthly day is the beginning of an endless and glorious life for ever.

When Henrik went back again he found Lauritz’s son had come, and Madam Nielsen told him to go and fetch Marie, as her husband had twice mentioned her name and looked for her. “She need not be afraid, he is as sweet as a child,” she moaned.

He lay quite still with wide open eyes, but one could see at a glance that the sight was leaving them, and his face was very pale; occasionally he cast a glance round and smiled faintly.

He had asked the doctor on his return, “Am I going, doctor?” and his answer was, “I think

so." He spoke once or twice in endearing terms to his old wife who tried to bear up bravely, and then lay still with a look of great content and murmured the Saviour's name.

The doctor said nothing could save him; the brain was injured, and it might be that he would pass away very soon, or he might linger a day or two. When little Marie came and stood beside him he *looked* at her—such a look—it was as if he knew something about her that no one else knew, and then he smiled at her and raised his hand. He tried to say "Farvel," and then he spoke no more, only lay very quiet till he became unconscious to all around him.

As evening drew on grannie went home for a little to comfort the children and bid them go to bed if she were not home before ten. But at ten she came in quietly, and sitting down, she took Marie on her knee, and said, "Don't fret for him, little one, we might envy him now." And they knew Lauritz was happy with God.





CHAPTER VIII.

"HIS LEAF SHALL NOT WITHER."



A WEEK after Lauritz's death more than fifty people gathered to follow his body to the grave. Six of his relations, among whom was his son Emil, bore the coffin, covered with wreaths, from the little cottage at the edge of the forest down to the hearse which stood on the roadway, and then the little procession wended its way to the churchyard, while Maria Harder and Kristina and a few friends drove in a mourning coach. Henrik and Marie also went to the funeral, and they never forgot the simple but impressive service. The sun shone gaily, and all around was bright and beautiful, but the hearts of many were very heavy for they felt they had lost a friend. Little Marie did not cry with sorrow then; she could only think of Lauritz as rejoicing in

the fair and beautiful city with the One who had been dead and was now alive—our risen Saviour. When she thought of him the picture of a beautiful tree would rise before her mind, of everlasting green, a tree that would never wither and would never be cut down.

There is a verse which says the man blessed of the Lord “shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water—his leaf shall not wither.” (Ps. i.)

When the chapel was reached, and before the burial took place, the minister addressed the people; he spoke of the departed as a good husband and father, as one who was known in the village as a true and kind-hearted neighbour, but above all, as one who trusted in his Saviour and was rich in faith. Then they sang a little hymn or psalm—very simple, very touching it was; and while it was sung in subdued tones little Marie sobbed with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow, and Henrik buried his face on his arm. I will give the literal translation of the hymn in prose or blank verse. It loses of course, for the soft rhyme makes its sweetness:—

Teach me, O forest, to wither joyfully,
As late in harvest does thy yellow leaf;
 A better spring-time cometh.
Then green my tree shall glorious stand,
And strike deep roots in the fair land,
Of everlasting summer.

Teach me, O little swallow, thou,
To soar away in dauntless mood
To unknown strand afar.
When all is winter here, and ice,
There shall a lasting paradise
Stand open wide for me.

Teach me, thou buoyant butterfly,
Gladly this heavy shell to burst
Which now my freedom hinders.
A worm I creep down here on earth;
Soon to fly high with buoyant mirth,
And wings of gold and purple.

Thou who from heaven smil'st here,
Jesus the Christ, our Lord most dear,
Teach me to bear my sorrow;
Wave for me now Hope's greenest flag.
Good Friday was a bitter day,
But bright was paaskemorgen (resurrection day).

Lauritz had been very fond of the words of the little psalm as it is called, and many tears fell as it was sung.

Numerous beautiful wreaths were cast into the grave, and the coffin was covered with the tributes of love and respect. Many people sent them out of sympathy upon hearing of the old man's sudden death, and as the earth was now bursting into bloom and brightness, it was no difficult matter to obtain sweet floral tokens of sunshine and summer.

Little Marie had woven one with her own

hands, and had gathered all the prettiest flowers she could find in the forest; anemones and violets and moss were blended together tastefully, and with a great sob she laid it on the coffin before it was lowered into the grave.

"Look up, my child!" said the minister kindly to her afterwards; "he is not here: he is with our Lord."

"I know it, sir," was her earnest answer; "Lauritz is more happy than we are."

Henrik and Marie did not return with the others; they lingered long in the little churchyard—until the grave was filled up—and then they visited the resting-place of Henrik's mother and baby sister. The child was very tired that evening when she reached home, and for several days her strength seemed well nigh to have left her.

True and living faith is founded on the Word of the Lord. He says: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whosoever believeth in me shall never die;" and if we cling to Jesus in simple faith we shall never see death—for *death* is really separation from God—and when the spirit of a believer leaves the body it is "present with the Lord."

Young reader, is Jesus your Saviour? Have you cast yourself into His arms, and given yourself to Him just as you were, with your heart of

sin? If you have done so in faith, believing His Word, which says He will not cast you out, but cleanse you from sin, then *you* are saved, and shall *never* see death. It is very beautiful, I think, to look around and see how God in Nature points us to a life beyond death. The forest, the butterfly, and the swallow teach us this lesson, and speak of a glad bright day to come after this long dark night. May our faith be strengthened by these signs around us, for they are from God. All have not the same light and knowledge; but we should rejoice whenever the name of Christ is owned, for many are very true in their love to Him who have not the courage to speak boldly of their faith to others. Joy fills the soul when we confess His blest name.





CHAPTER IX.

A NEEDED PUNISHMENT.



BEAUTIFUL June was now come. Marie's mother had been many times to see her, and once or twice gentle little Hans had come and high-spirited Carl. Marie had also spent two days at home, but she flagged so much and longed to go back to the forest that they were obliged to take her again to her grandmother. Henrik and grannie liked to have Marie, she was so sweet and gentle in her ways, and her quaint, solemn words had a charm for them.

Madam Nielsen was believed by all who knew her to be a very "good" woman, but she never confessed her personal faith in Christ, neither did she speak to her grandchildren of Him as of One to be loved and trusted as a Friend and Saviour. It is true she hoped to find mercy

before she died, but God was to her as a Judge rather than as One who so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for it. Little Marie felt He was hers all day long. She did not doubt the Saviour's love for her, for had He not said to the little ones, "Come unto me?" and she loved Him so.

Henrik and Marie both felt a great blank after Lauritz left them; there was no one to speak to them as he had done; the world seemed very empty for a little while. Marie's father had sent them a letter by a passing vessel, and it spoke of him as well and tolerably happy. He had had good weather, and hoped to make a quick passage out.

But things were not going well at home. Charlotte, the mother, who had been far from well for two or three weeks, fell suddenly and sprained her wrist severely. It was impossible for her to do all the work necessary for the three children; and after consulting with grannie, they decided that, as their money was fast dwindling away, the only thing to be done was for Charlotte to give a month's notice, and leave the house in town and come to the forest with the children. "We will take Carl till the month is up," said grannie with a little sigh; "Hans is more quiet, and he will stay and help you with Dagmar."

When Henrik heard that Carl was to join them at the cottage he was sorry. He felt sure their peace would be disturbed. He liked his own little room to himself in the attic; he liked the quiet evenings with grannie and Marie, and he had always been just a little jealous of Carl, for the boy was clever and daring: and one day grannie had said, "He is very much what Henrik's father was as a little boy." Henrik did not wish anyone else but himself to be like his father!

Grannie said little, but she dreaded the prospect of the whole family coming; yet she had a brave spirit, and determined to make the best of it till her son came home.

It was June now. The sea often looked like a big lake: it was so smooth and calm, and little Marie used to sit upon the shore and enjoy the sea breezes. Laura often joined her for a little while, and sometimes they spoke of Lauritz; and Marie's gentle, solemn words awed the child into quietness for a time, but often her disobedience and wilfulness surprised and shocked Marie.

Laura did not mind her governess's word, and would run into the water with her boots on, or remain in too long when she was being bathed, and poor Miss Jensen led anything but a happy life. But little children never act so without suffering for it. Laura was not happy;



GRANNIE AND MARIE.

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her conscience told her she was wrong, and Marie's sweet, yielding ways caused her to feel at times how different she was, although she did not alter.

One day, however, Laura received the correction she needed. Her mamma had company in the house, and seeing a beautiful rosebud on one of the trees, said to Miss Jensen, "Do not let that get pulled till to-morrow, please, for it will then be just the size for me to wear in my hair."

It so happened that the same afternoon Laura ran to the bush, saying, "Lift me up to smell that, Miss Jensen!"

"Indeed, Laura, you must not touch it," she replied.

"But I must smell it," said the self-willed child, and she pulled at the bough and caught the bud in her fingers. Miss Jensen laid her hand on Laura's shoulder, saying, "Let go, dear; your mamma wants it." But Laura pulled it still lower, when snap went the bud, and it fell to the ground without any stalk. "*You should not have touched me!*" exclaimed Laura, half-angry, half-frightened.

"I did not cause you to break off the rosebud," answered Miss Jensen. "Now how vexed your mamma will be, all through your naughtiness!"

"Don't tell. Say it dropped of itself," cried Laura.

“That would be an untruth. No; I cannot say that,” she replied.

At this moment Herr and Mrs. Mortensen appeared upon the verandah and saw the broken bud in Miss Jensen’s hand, whilst Herr Brun, who was visiting at the house, sauntered towards them from a seat under the trees.

“Who has done that?” asked Laura’s mamma in a tone of vexation.

“I was only smelling it, and Miss Jensen pulled me and it came off.”

“O Laura!” was all the answer her teacher gave.

“Well, you *did*,” answered the child, colouring with fear as Herr Brun drew near.

“It is extremely annoying. I wish you could manage Laura without using force, Miss Jensen. I cannot blame the child if you caused her to break the bud.”

“I only laid my hand on her shoulder, Madam; indeed, I used no force.”

“No, indeed,” put in Herr Brun, who had not heard Laura’s words. “Little Laura will, I am sure, tell you that Miss Jensen asked her not to touch the bud, and that she pulled down the branch and broke it herself—that is only fair.”

Laura hung her head, but muttered again, “She shouldn’t have touched me.”

Laura’s father heard her words and also her

mamma's reply, "I told you not to touch the bud, Laura; and if you have been a naughty girl you shall go to bed half-an-hour earlier to-night."

But her papa was not satisfied, and demanded that Laura should beg pardon of Miss Jensen. The next few minutes was an uncomfortable time for all parties. Herr Brun was sorry he had been obliged to speak. Mrs. Mortensen was annoyed that Laura had behaved so before him, and poor Miss Jensen felt that she had been the indirect cause of Laura's correction.

Laura was obstinate, and would not speak; so her papa lifted her in his arms and carried her into the house, and refused to allow her to come into the dining-room or drawing-room any more that day, and he said no one was to speak to her until she begged her teacher's pardon.

He went into town soon after dinner with her mamma and Herr Brun, and the servants adhered strictly to his wishes and took no notice of Laura, so that she found herself very unhappy and lonely. Of course, Miss Jensen attended to her, but she did not speak, as Laura maintained an obstinate silence.



CHAPTER X.

A LITTLE PEACEMAKER.



DIRECTLY after dinner they went down to the shore, Laura walking with down-cast face and pouting lips. Her teacher sat down and began to crotchet, and Laura threw stones in the water. This seemed to relieve her feelings, for she flung herself on the beach and covered her face.

Marie and Carl, who had just come from school, also came down to the shore, and the little boy began to make houses of the sand while his sister asked Miss Jensen what was the matter with Laura.

"She has been naughty, and so she is unhappy," she replied.

Marie's heart was drawn at once to the child; she never could see sorrow without being

unhappy herself. She drew nearer and nearer to Laura, and sat down a little way off. Her cough attracted the little girl's notice; she peeped at her through her fingers, and then covered her face again, while she kicked the sand with her feet. Then she said, as if to herself, but she knew all the while Marie could hear, "I am very miserable to-day; my papa and mamma don't love me, and they have gone away and left me; the servants are cross, and so is Miss Jensen. I wish I could fly away to another country."

"God would be there," said the clear voice of Marie.

There was silence for a minute and then Laura went on:—

"I would never, *never* come back if I could get away."

"Our Lord would see you there, and if He was not pleased with you I don't think you *could* be happy," said Marie again.

Laura looked up and frowned slightly, "How do you know?" she asked.

"I know when I am naughty. I am not happy," answered Marie; "and I know we ought to obey God and try to please Him."

"Are you naughty sometimes?" asked Laura with great interest, raising herself up.

"Yes, I am," answered the child, meditatively,

"What do you do?" asked Laura.

"Well, there is not *much* to make me naughty at grandmother's, but at home I get cross sometimes with the children, and vex mother sometimes, and I feel I am not as good as I should be. I often wish Lauritz was here, he was so good and he helped me. He is so safe and happy now. Would not you like to be good like him, Laura?"

"It is *no* use trying; I shall *never* grow like him. God does not love me either, because He only loves good people."

"Ah! but that's wrong. God *does* loves you, really He does. He loved *sinner*s. I have a little card which Lauritz gave me, and it says, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' I cannot understand it as I should, but I know He loves us, and He showed He did by dying on the cross for us. I like to feel He loves me. I am often tired, and I feel as if something was drawing me up, up. I wish I could get into His arms and have a good rest."

All Laura's temper was gone now, as she saw two large tears roll down Marie's cheeks, and she came closer.

"Don't cry; I like you very much. I will get my mamma to give you some good medicine she has. You mustn't be ill," she said. "I wonder if *I* should be good if I was ill like you. I

daresay it is easier to be good when you are ill !"

"I shouldn't cry ; I am very happy," answered Marie, "and I am glad you like me, little Miss. I wish you would try to please our Lord, then you would be happy. Lauritz said it was the same with us as the trees of the forest—some are wanted for cutting down and going to other lands ; some won't grow where they are planted, so they are taken up and put in other places ; and some grow so fine and flourish, and have large branches, and folk come and sit under them and get shelter when the sun is hot, and shelter when it rains, and little birds build in the branches. I think Henrik will be like that when he grows up ; he is so strong and kind and helps grannie, and perhaps our Lord will use him so. I think I am like one of those little trees up where the timber lies that won't grow. The ground doesn't suit them."

"What will happen then ?" asked Laura, much interested.

"Why, those little trees must go to another place, where the cold winds don't blow so hard, and where the ground is softer and better. Perhaps some day I shall go where 'a better spring-time comes' up to heaven."

"Wouldn't you be afraid ?"

"Afraid of Jesus ? No ! I love Him."

Laura's little baby brother now made his

appearance with nurse, who said it was time to come home, as the children's tea was ready.

"Go and tell Miss Jensen you will try to be good. You will be so happy," urged the little peacemaker.

Laura jumped up and ran quickly to her teacher before nurse could get near enough to hear her words.

"I am going to try and be good, Miss Jensen," she said.

"I am glad of that, Laura. You're sorry you were naughty, aren't you?"

"Yes. Marie has made me feel sorry. It is rather nice to be sorry, Miss Jensen. You'll tell papa, won't you?"

Her teacher promised, quite surprised that so much impression could be made on Laura. She began to wonder what Marie had said to her, and if she could not try the same plan.

Laura looked forward with pleasure to her papa's return that evening; it was quite a new feeling that she experienced. She felt she had done what was right and had overcome her temper, perhaps for the first time in her life. She thought of what Marie said as she waited for her papa—that if God was not pleased with her she could not be really happy, and then she thought, "But I have said I was sorry, and He is not angry with me now." She did not know

much about God. No one had taught her, but she had taken a little step on the way to Him—she had owned she had been naughty to her teacher.

She had not learned, however, that she was a little sinner in *His* sight, and that she must be cleansed from her sin by the blood of Christ before she could stand in His presence. How patient God is with us! How often He teaches us one thing at a time!

When her father returned she ran out to meet him. He looked at her gravely. "Are you a good girl?" he asked.

"Ask Miss Jensen," murmured Laura.

"Oh yes; Laura has said she is sorry," exclaimed her teacher.

"Well, I am glad to hear it. We will say no more about it," replied her father.

"Will Laura accept a little present from me?" asked Herr Brun putting a parcel into her arms.

It was a pretty doll, and of course the little girl was delighted with the gift, while the gentleman was glad to efface the unpleasantness of the morning.





CHAPTER XI.

A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE.



WHEN Marie and Carl reached home Henrik joined them. He looked rather dissatisfied. He was not very happy at his work with his new master, Larsen. He missed Lauritz very much, for Larsen was quite a different character—one who thought nothing of taking the Lord's name in vain and of indulging at times in drink.

"Grannie has gone to town to buy some meal, and bread, and other things," said Marie as he came in. "I think I will get tea ready if I can before she comes home. I wish I wasn't so tired; I always feel tired now."

"I'll get down the cups and plates," exclaimed Carl, jumping on a chair.

"No, you don't need. I will help Marie. I often do it for grandmother," answered Henrik hastily.

"A big boy like you shouldn't get tea ready," answered Carl, persisting in lifting a saucer down.

Henrik turned very red as he replied—

"Don't be cheeky, Carl, and give me that saucer; you will break it.

Carl raised his arm to prevent Henrik from touching it, and as he did so the saucer slipped, and fell, and broke.

"You naughty boy, you have no business to behave so," cried Henrik. "Grandmother will be sorry."

Carl gazed at the pieces for a moment in bewilderment, then he answered quite coolly, for he rarely went into a temper, "Never mind; I have ten öres of my own, I shall buy grannie another. I know the shop; you needn't say anything about it till the new one comes," and he dived into his pocket for the little piece of money.

"It is all very well to say that, but you will not do it," returned Henrik, who was much annoyed. He did not so well like having Carl in the house.

"It's all you know about it; you don't know everything," said Carl.

"Look here, Carl, you have made Marie ill behaving in this way, she is quite white; and let me tell you, once for all, you are not to speak so to me."

"You shouldn't get angry because I said you don't know everything; I dare say it is true what mother said the other day, that you think a great deal of yourself."

"O Carl! mother did not say that," said Marie in a vexed tone.

"Yes; she did," persisted Carl.

"I don't take any notice of what rude little boys say; never mind him, Marie," said Henrik.

But Henrik himself did mind very much; he bit his lip to keep quiet as Carl began coolly to play with the cat, but his heart was stirred with mingled feelings of vexation and anger. After a minute he turned to Marie.

"Sit down," he said kindly, "you look so pale; you don't feel well."

Marie burst into tears, and it was a minute or two before she could check her sobs—the scene between the boys had been too much for her.

Henrik gave her a drink of water, casting reproachful glances at Carl as he did so, saying to Marie, "You have never had anything to trouble you before, since you came to us."

At this moment grannie came in, and taking her kerchief from her head, sat down to get breath, "I have come so quick to get back in time for tea," she exclaimed, "and it is so warm." The first thing she did was to feel in her pocket for her purse, then as she dived after it she

turned very red and cried, "Oh, where is it? surely I cannot have lost it!

The children crowded round, as she examined her basket and her pocket.

"Oh, it's gone! and there's a two kroner in it I got for selling the chicken. Ah, what shall I do? Run, boys, and look along the pathway, I—"

They darted out in a minute, Carl going straight on, and Henrik dashing over the field to avoid Carl and so run ahead of him.

Grannie had taken out her pocket-handkerchief only fifty yards from the cottage door, and so Carl pounced upon the purse first; for there it lay, right by the side of the little path, where it had fallen when Madame Nielsen had pulled out her ample pocket-handkerchief.

The little fellow raised a shout of joy, and flourished the prize above his head, then turned and dashed towards the cottage. Henrik looked back, saw Carl's success, and then slowly followed him. He had not recovered from his former vexation, and therefore he could not feel as glad at Carl's finding of the purse as he would otherwise have done. A pang of jealousy shot through his heart as he saw grannie pat Carl's head and call him her brave boy. "But there is a ten öre piece in the purse which I know nothing about," she exclaimed as she looked to see if her precious money were safe.

"Oh, that's yours, Grannie," cried Carl. "I broke a saucer when you was gone to market, so I slipped it in to buy another."

Grannie took his face between her hands and kissed it. "Nay, nay, little one," she exclaimed, "grannie won't take your money!" She was so glad to get the purse again that the broken saucer did not trouble her.

Carl pocketed his money, but the next day when he came from school he brought a white saucer with him. Henrik hated himself for feeling jealous of his little cousin, and yet he still felt jealous; and Marie, who had never seen Henrik angry before, was much troubled to find that the two boys did not agree when they were alone. Carl was not a boy that brooded over anything. Often naughty, often in danger, he was corrected, and forgot almost directly all about his naughtiness.

Next day Henrik brought home the glad news that he was to have a holiday on Tuesday, and grannie proposed that Hans and Dagmar should join them in a little picnic in the forest.





CHAPTER XII.

COFFEE DRINKING IN THE FOREST.



AFTER a little consultation it was decided that Henrik should go early on Tuesday and bring the two children—little Dagmar would ride in her perambulator. Henrik was a very kind-hearted boy, and very fond of Hans and Dagmar, they suited him better than independent little Carl, so that he readily agreed to fetch them.

“I have been wondering if we could not make a little money this summer by supplying the pleasuring folk with coffee, and cakes, and milk,” said grannie. “True enough, we are a little out of the way, but lots of them pass by, and would be glad, I believe, to have it served to them in the dingle, as they do at the White Cottage on the road. See, now, there’s a ‘vogn’* full of folk! Last year several asked if we could get them coffee.”

* Open carriage or waggonette.



"A CAPITAL PLAN, GRANNIE."

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"A capital plan, Grannie; and when I am in the way I could carry it out to the people," said Henrik. "And if Carl were only careful he could help you when I am not here, if he only did not break things."

"I can buy new ones if I do," replied little Carl.

"I could help you wash the cups and make the coffee," put in Marie.

"Well, we will see. I must try and find out some way to make more money this summer. What shall we do if father does not come home before winter?"

"I wish he *would* come. It gives me a pain when I think of him so far away," answered Marie with fast-filling eyes. "I pray God to bring him back safely."

Strangely enough, the "vogn full of folk" stopped a short way from the cottage on the main road, and after a little while the occupants rambled into the forest and approached the cottage.

"Can you tell us where we can get tea or coffee," asked a youth with a straw hat at the back of his head, of Marie as she stood at the door. "There are half-a-dozen of us as thirsty as anything."

Marie appealed to Henrik, and Henrik said to grannie, "Say *we can*, Grannie. You know we

have half a pound of coffee, and I'll run and get cream and sugar from Madame Sorel in ten minutes. It's a good beginning."

"Well, we might try," said grannie, doubtfully.

Henrik stepped quickly forward and made a bow. "If you can wait twenty minutes, we will bring it to you to that seat under the large oak tree yonder. How many cups will you want."

"Well, a good lot of coffee for six thirsty people, say twelve cups," answered the young gentlemen. "Here mother," he cried to a lady who had strolled up and was speaking to Marie, "if we encamp under that delightful shady oak tree these good people will supply us with the delicious beverage called *coffee*."

Hereupon the speaker who had been trying all day to make himself as pleasant as he could, made a run for the oak tree, and spread out a shawl upon the ground, and tried to prevail upon the other members of the party to take a seat.

There was a little wooden bench fixed there, with a small table close by, where the occupants of the Red House sometimes came to read in summer, and in a few minutes Henrik placed another table and two or three chairs beside it. Marie brought a little white tablecloth to spread over, and then after answering one or two

questions she went back for cups, and saucers, and plates, while Henrik ran off for sugar, and cream, and biscuits to Madame Sorel who kept a small supply of such things.

In ten minutes he returned panting for breath; and grannie busied herself with the coffee which was nearly ready. She had dusted up her brass urn of which she was always proud, since it had been a wedding gift, and having laid some small pieces of burning turf into the little box to keep the water boiling, she carried it out and placed it on the table.

The coffee pot and biscuits followed with cream and sugar, and while the thirsty party collected around it, the children retired to the cottage, where they watched their proceedings through the white blind.

Grannie was very pleased and praised Henrik's cleverness and courage.

"You will be a great help to me in my old age, lad, I've always said it; you will never go to sea and leave me, I know?" she exclaimed.

"No fear of that," he replied, casting rather a longing eye across the blue waters, "I shall always stay by you, Grannie."

Grannie went out to fetch a piece more turf; and Marie, with a wistful look into Henrik's face, said, "And I know you will be like one of those beautiful trees in the forest that are so

useful, such a help to people, like the oak there. I cannot tell what I mean exactly, but it is what Lauritz said; the ivy clings up against it, and rests upon it, and people get shelter and shade when it is hot. *I shall never be like that, but, O Henrik! it is so beautiful to think of being a help to grandmother,*" and Marie's cheeks grew pink as she spoke and her eyes shone.

"You think too well of me, you don't know, little Marie," he answered half sadly; "I wish I *could* be like that, anyhow I shall try and always help grannie; and you, why, if you aren't like an *oak*," he added laughing, "you are like an anemone or a 'forest star,' they are the sweetest little flowers, just like wax, and make everyone glad. See, the young gentleman is coming after something!"

"Have you any more cream or milk?" asked the wearer of the straw hat.

"No more cream to-day, but plenty of milk," said Henrik.

"Give us a little, will you?" he asked again, and returned to the tree while Marie carried the milk.

The lady who had spoken to her before was sitting on the shawl a little way off from the rest, and she called the child to her. Marie's head was bare, and her fair curly hair fell around her shoulders; she looked so sweet and pretty

that the lady bade her sit down beside her a minute.

"You do not look very strong, little one," she said; "this fine air ought to give you rosy cheeks."

"I know," nodded Marie, "it makes the other children strong, but it doesn't make *me*; I don't think the air suits me, I get more tired every day," and she coughed her sharp hacking cough.

"How long have you had that cough?" asked the lady kindly.

"Three or four months, before father went away; it hurts me sometimes when I cough—a little—but don't tell grannie, she wants me to get strong by the time father comes home. I try, but it is no use. You know there *is* a place where little children never feel tired or ill; Lauritz's little boy went there. It was too cold for him in this world, and I often wish I could go."

"Dear child, you mustn't want to go away and leave your friends; you must try and get strong. Tell me, who is Lauritz?"

"Lauritz was one of the workers in the forest. Everyone loved him; but he has gone to God. He loved God and His beautiful heaven, and he used to tell me wonderful things. Oh, I am so sorry he is away!"

"And so you have learned about our Heavenly

Father! Do you love Him, little Marie; and have you heard of the Saviour and how He died for us, and is in heaven now, and loves us still?"

"Yes; I like to think about Him, and I like to hear about all those beautiful things; but you see, lady, there is no one to talk to me as Lauritz did."

"Well, I shall be very glad to help you a little. Now, I am coming again next week with a great many ladies and gentlemen, and I shall bring you some little books, if you can read."

"Yes, I can read," said Marie, with delight, "and Henrik and I love books."

"Then we will take coffee here again, and you must look out for me. I cannot stay now, as we must go back to the 'vogn,' said the lady, taking out her watch. "Good-bye, dear Marie. You must lean hard on the strong and mighty One, Jesus our Lord. He loves little ones like you, and when the way is rough *remember* He is the good Shepherd, and can carry His little lambs right over it. He will give a robe of white another day to those who are washed from their sins in His blood."





CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHILDREN'S "FEST."



HENRIK, it was beautiful—beautiful to hear her speak," said Marie an hour or two after, when she was telling him what the lady had said. "I wonder how she knew what to say—just the words I wanted. She told me to 'lean hard,' and it is just the very best thing for me to do."

The sun was sinking away in the west, and from where they stood the two children could see the glow cast over the eastern sky and reflected again upon the sea. The heat of the day was exchanged for a cool evening breeze. The large trees on their right hand cast long shadows on the grass, and all was still but for the murmurs of the sea and the birds' evening songs.

"I wish I could enjoy those things as you do," said Henrik, as he looked into her face, "but I have an uncomfortable load here of late:" and he

laid his hand on his heart. "I don't quite know what it is, but I am not growing any better, Marie, for the last week. No end of wrong thoughts have come into my mind. I was much happier when we were alone."

Marie understood what he meant, and was silent. She did not know how to help him. "When I am naughty or unhappy I go and tell our Lord," she said at last, "and I cast it all down at His feet, as the hymn says."

"And I carry it about with me," said Henrik; "I am made of different stuff from you, Marie."

"But Jesus loves sinners, and we are all sinners. I wish you would go *close* up to Him, Henrik, and tell Him all that you feel. I shall never forget what the lady said: "He gives a robe of white to all that are washed in His blood."

Henrik did not answer; he looked the other way and drew his coat sleeve across his eyes. After a minute, he said, pointing away to the glowing sky, "That's beautiful."

"It looks like the door into heaven," said Marie.

"Come in, children," cried grannie; "it is getting cool;" and she wrapped a shawl round the little girl. "I am afraid these small cheeks are not getting any fatter for my good fresh air," she added.

"No, they cannot. Oh, they *cannot*, Grannie. It is no use trying," answered the child.

"Tut ; but what will father say ? I must take you to the doctor next week," replied grannie.

"Father will be sorry ; but he is so kind, he would like me to be where there are no cold winds ; if this land doesn't suit me, there is a better one. I am always glad to think of that, Grannie ; and the last week or two I often feel as if I were going up, up. Perhaps our Lord wants me ; if so, I am quite willing to go."

The grandmother stood for a moment as if paralysed, she had never heard Marie speak so before ; then a deep pang entered her heart such as she had felt when she heard of her Henrik's death, and as she gazed at the child she read the whole truth for the first time in the transparent little face before her. All she could say was, "I shall take you to the doctor's to-morrow, little one ;" and as she stumbled up the narrow staircase after some dried leaves which hung in the garret to prepare the child more cough medicine, she murmured, with clasped hands, "It is no use, no use. Wilt Thou always have the fairest and the best, O Lord ?"

Tuesday was a warm and sunny day, and by ten o'clock the five children were all bidding grannie good-bye before starting for the spot where they had decided to hold their little feast. It was only five minutes' walk on the other side of the cottage, and an easy distance to carry

little Dagmar home to grannie if she were very tired.

The beech trees round there were so fine and tall, and one or two large logs made capital seats and play places for the children. There was also a swing between two high poles near by, and at no great distance, among the thicket and blackberry bushes, there were many wild raspberry canes with some show of fruit upon them.

Henrik was to take charge of the four children, and after some advice from grannie the little group started, bearing a basket of eatables. The doctor had seen Marie, and sounded her chest the Saturday before. He gave her some medicine to soothe her cough, and told her grandmother to let her live in the open air and take good nourishment; that was all the advice he gave.

"Is there any danger of her not getting over it?" asked Madame Nielsen.

"We must see how the autumn affects her," answered the doctor; "but I cannot hide from you that it is a serious case."

So grannie determined to keep her little granddaughter almost all day in the fresh air, and as she saw the little ones troop off so happily together she felt all might yet be well.

Laura Mortensen joined them after a little while with her teacher, and she was much amused at seeing the three boys climb the trees,

run races, and swing high into the air. All were very good tempered at the outset, and Marie, under the excitement and fresh morning air felt stronger than usual, and joined them in a game of hide-and-seek for a time. Quickly, however, her strength left her, and she was obliged to stop running for it made her cough. The tears flew into her eyes as she sat with little Dagmar on her lap watching the others, and she felt for a few minutes almost to envy them.

"Poor Marie! it is very hard for you," said Miss Jensen; "it seems such a shame that you cannot run like the rest, doesn't it?"

"Oh! no indeed, I shouldn't be sorry. I am quite happy. I think I am happier than they are."

Miss Jensen looked wonderingly at her, and Marie, looking up in her face, felt she could not explain to *her* what she meant. But when Miss Jensen asked her "What makes you happy?" she answered "Jesus."

"Dagmar can sing 'Jesus, Saviour, high in heaven.' Marie learnt me," said the chubby little one hearing the word "Jesus."

"You are Marie's sweet one," answered her sister, kissing her. "And you have fine red cheeks, not like my poor thin ones; and now you will sing Marie's little song to cheer her up, won't you?"

"Me vill," answered the baby, and knitting her brows she sang without tune or time some of the

words of the hymn ; but Marie was charmed, and the boys came up to listen.

"Go 'vay, you naughter boys. Dagmar sings nussing to you," she cried, waving them off. But Carl wouldn't go, and they all laughed, and first came within reach of her little hand as she tried to whip them, and then darted off again ; so it ended in her chasing them all, and in them rolling over and over down a grassy hill, full of fun and frolic.

"Shall I spread the cloth for breakfast," said Marie to Henrik.

"Yes," he answered ; "and I will help you while Hans and Carl go and get pretty green leaves and flowers to decorate our table, and perhaps Miss Laura will help them."

All started off eagerly enough, and came back with their hands full of moss, and pretty blossoms, and bright green leaves.

They laid them round about their table-cloth in large pieces of bark, with here and there a nest of large pine cones.

"Is that all you have for your picnic," asked Laura as she viewed the bread and butter, and cheese, and plain buns.

"That's all for breakfast," answered Henrik, a little annoyed. "We are not rich like you, little Miss, and we think this is very good."

"What would you have?" asked Hans.

"Oh, chicken, and ham, and eggs, and cakes, and pies, and coffee, and all sorts of good things."

"Laura, it is not good of you to speak so; it is not polite," said Miss Jensen.

But in the same breath Carl had replied, half in joke, "Well, go fetch some, and bring to us."

"Carl!" said Henrik severely.

"O Carl!" chimed Marie reproachfully.

"Naughter boy!" scolded Dagmar.

"So I will. I will bring some this minute," cried Laura, and away she and Miss Jensen went.

"For shame, Carl!" said Henrik, "what will they think of us? See the nice cakes grannie has been baking for us; it is too bad of you."

"She shouldn't *boast* like that then," said Carl, feeling a little uncomfortable, "but I never thought she would do it. You don't want to be cross about that; if grannie is angry, I'll tell her I said it; I am used to a scolding."

This little affair well nigh spoiled the meal; for Henrik maintained a dignified silence toward Carl. After a few minutes, Carl having satisfied the pangs of hunger rose up from the ground, and springing up the nearest tree, cried, "Farvel, I think I will find pleasanter company with the crows, and you will get on better without me. Good pleasure to you, little Dagmar. Farvel."

Carl could climb like a squirrel, and he was soon nearly hidden from them by the luxuriant

foliage. At this moment Laura returned with Miss Jensen, who carried a basket.

"There, I have brought some cold meat and eggs and cakes; mamma said cook was to give them to me, but where is Carl?"

"Oh, he is up in that tree; I wish he wouldn't go so high, he might fall," answered Marie; "but we have had enough to eat, Miss Laura; you should not have troubled your mamma."

"It was no trouble; we will keep them a little while, you will soon be hungry again. We will fetch more flowers and things to be ready for dinner. Come, Carl!" and off she ran with Hans.

Carl had descended the tree by the time the cloth was folded away, and to his vexation, and Henrik's and Marie's annoyance, had torn his jacket.

"What a pity!" said his sister. "Why do you do such things? it is so troublesome of you to give mother more work."

"It is just like him."

"I shall mend it," replied Carl, running off.

At twelve o'clock they all went to the shore, and the boys paddled in the water; after which they ate their dinner, and Laura's contribution was very much enjoyed by them all. Then she bade them good-bye, and whispered to Marie, "I am not so naughty as I was; I want to please God. I remember what you said." Marie's pleased look little Laura never forgot.



CHAPTER XIV.

MISSING.



BY four o'clock it began to blow a little, and they were all glad to go back to grannie, who had a cup of tea and kind welcomes ready for them. Then Henrik started for a walk through the forest. He said he wanted to find an owl's nest, and he believed he knew where one was ; and, bidding them good-bye, he went off, crying out, "I will bring you back a bag of pine cones for your fires, Grannie." He had not gone many yards from the cottage when Carl came running after him.

"Let me go with you ; I will help you gather the cones."

"No, thank you," answered Henrik. "I don't want you, Carl."

"Oh, you might let me !"

"I don't want you," was all Henrik said, and Carl turned away disconsolately.

The shades of evening were falling as Henrik returned home. He had been unsuccessful as regards the owl's nest, but he had gathered a bagful of cones, and he threw them down with an exclamation of relief by the side of the stove when he came in. Grannie had taken the two children home, and was now busy knitting her stocking, while Marie lay quietly on the little sofa. "Where's Carl?" they asked, after a few minutes.

"I don't know. I have not seen him."

"Bless me, I thought he went with you," said grannie. "He asked leave, and I said he might, if you would take him."

"I did not know that. I told him not to come. I"—. Henrik did not like to say, "I didn't want him."

"That's a pity; you might have taken him, Henrik. Where can he be?"

"Perhaps he has gone home."

"No; for I took the two little ones back to their mother, and I have only left them an hour. He wasn't there then."

An uncomfortable feeling took possession of Henrik at once, and drawing on his boots, he said, "I will see if I can find him."

"Look well, and try and bring him back," said grannie, who stood at the door as he started. A group of dark firs at a little distance looked gloomy in the twilight; the owls had begun to

screech around, and the bats to dart here and there as Henrik proceeded on his way. He hardly knew where to go, but searched round about the cottage, calling Carl by name. After a quarter of an hour, he started off with a quick run to his aunt's house, and found her locking up for the night.

It was only nine o'clock, but she was not feeling well she said. He saw at a glance Carl was not there, so he made an excuse for coming in by saying that he was taking a run to town, and came to wish them good night.

"Are the children in bed?" he asked.

"Yes," answered his aunt, "and fast asleep."

"Did Carl come with grandmother?" he asked, "for I was not at home when she started."

"No; I haven't seen Carl for nearly a week. I hope he is a good boy and does not trouble you, Henrik. If you are kind to him you will find him very good-natured."

"I must be off now," replied the boy in a hesitating manner. "Oh, yes, he gets on very well, Aunt. Farvel."

Off he started again with a strange load at his heart, and away round the harbour he ran. A few people were taking a stroll after the heat of the day, but no Carl was to be seen. Henrik came home by the shore, and visited the place where they had waded in the morning. By this

time a brisk breeze was blowing, and the waves were dashing upon the beach. There, behind a large stone, lay a pair of boots and socks he knew in a moment; they were Carl's. He seized them, and looked up and down the shore, but no one was to be seen but a lady and gentleman walking along. He ran to them and asked if they had seen a little boy wading there. No, they replied, they had not.

Poor Henrik waited till they had passed, and then he threw himself down and covered his face and cried like a child.

"He is drowned," he said, "and it has been my fault. I have been a selfish, cowardly fellow to such a little boy. I never knew before that I could be so hard, so disagreeable."

He saw his fault in its true and its worst light, and at the same time he remembered many a good-natured act of Carl's, and before him rose the disappointed little face as he had turned away.

There was nothing to do but to go and tell grannie, and consult with her. As he carried the boots along some flowers and moss fell out of one and some green birds' food out of the other. He gathered them up, and a large tear fell among the blossoms.

Marie had gone to bed, and grannie was waiting at the door. She heard Henrik's story in

great dismay. "Woe is me that anything should have happened to the boy while here!" she cried, wringing her hands. "Henrik, lad, if you had only taken him with you! But he cannot be drowned. We must find him. I will put on my shawl. Take some coffee, lad; how bad you look!" she said.

Henrik swallowed the coffee; he *was* tired enough, but he must go out again with grannie to the shore. Marie's pale face appeared at the head of the little staircase, and Henrik went up to her. "He has been walking in the water, Marie. We are going to get him," faltered Henrik. "O Marie! pray to our great and good Father to help us. Oh, ask Him to forgive me for my wicked sins!" and without waiting to answer any questions he ran off again.

There was only one cottage near the shore, and on rapping at the door they received no answer—the inmates were out; so Henrik and grannie proceeded to Lauritz' cottage. Maria and her son were just going to bed, but Christian at once offered to help them in the search. The village lay fully a mile and a half away to the left, and it seemed useless to go there, as what could have taken the little fellow so far?

They searched the shore and every place round, and inquired of all they met, but no one knew anything about the boy, and at last they

were obliged to give up looking and go home in great distress, although they hoped that by the morning they might get tidings of little Carl, for he was a very adventurous little fellow.

The night that Henrik spent he never forgot. He considered himself to blame for it all, and he cried out in great earnestness to God. He felt the sinfulness of his heart, how jealous he had been, and how far he was from the Lord; and the only peace he got was when he remembered Marie's words, "I cast it all down at His feet." He slept as morning dawned, but up to that time he feared that Marie had not slept, for he heard her cough very often, and he heard his grandmother walking about the little room. Before five o'clock grannie looked in at Henrik, and seeing he was sleeping she would not disturb him, but lighted the fire and began to prepare the ölle bröd for breakfast, intending to resume the search at once. Suddenly there was a rap-tap at the door, and a pleasant-faced elderly man in working clothes stood there.

"Have you missed a boy?" he said.

"Oh, yes, good sir! we have," cried grannie. "Have you seen him—is he alive?"

"Both safe and alive, and there's not much wrong with him."

At this moment Henrik hastened down stairs, the knock having waked him, and both he and

grandmother cried, "Oh! thank God. Sit down, master, and tell us about it, and take a drop ölle bröd."

"Well, I'll not say no, for I am hungry and have had a good hunt after this same cottage. I tried to find it last night, but I couldn't. Well, I was coming home with my horse and cart last evening about eight o'clock, and drivin' along that lonely part of the road near the sea, about half a mile from here, when a lad shrieks out, 'Come, master, and save a little boy, he's drownin'.' I jumps out of the cart and down the bank, and there was a youngster flounderin' in the water. I can swim, so it wasn't a minute before I was after him; but he was quite over dead like when I got him out, for the waves wasn't so gentle. Well, he couldn't speak, but I tried to shake the water out of him and bring him to. I carried him to the cart, and I saw he wasn't dead; but in his arms was a little cat, with a string round its neck, and it wasn't dead neither. I asked the boys where he lived, but they said they didn't know, and they looked frightened and ran off, so I guessed they'd been up to mischief with him. Well, I didn't know what to do. I rubbed him but he didn't speak; so I wraps him up in my big coat and drove away as quick as I could till I got home, and he begun to come to. He said he didn't live in the



"ETERNAL PEACE WAS VERY NEAR." (Page 111.)

village but up in the forest, and he couldn't tell where; so my missus and I put him to bed, and some of the neighbours came in but they didn't know him at all. He said his grannie hadn't any other name but grannie, and his name was Nielsen, and that's a common name enough. So we did the best we could for him; and I rose up at three o'clock, and it has taken me all this time to find you."

Oh! how they thanked the good man, and only wished they had something to give to show their gratitude.

"I'll take your ölle bröd and say nothing more; it's only a turn we should all be willing to do. He seems a nice little lad, and awfully fond of that cat."

"What cat can it be?" asked Marie, who had come down to hear the good news.

"Well, it seems the boy went into the sea to save the kitten these cruel fellows were tormenting. He had gone in beyond his depth to save it, and it is alive and well and sticks to the little fellow. Now, you can get him when you like, if you bring dry clothes. By-the-bye, he had no shoes on!"

They told the man how they had found the boots and stockings, and after giving them the address he went off to his work followed by their grateful thanks.

In three hours little Carl was sitting at grannie's fireside with his cat on his knee, a trifle pale, but none the worse for his dip.

"I thought I was going to drown and never see you again, Grannie," he said. "I remembered climbing the tree and tearing my clothes and being cross to Henrik and Marie, while I was under the water. Now God has saved me, I'll *try* and be a better boy."

"Carl, I wish I had let you go with me," said Henrik. "I haven't been as kind as I ought, but I shall try to in the future."

Grannie looked up quite surprised, and after gazing keenly at the two boys she seemed to understand, for she drew out her red pocket-handkerchief, and was very busy with it for a while. Henrik went off to work, and Marie said, "It seems like peace after a storm!"

Eternal peace was very near for little Marie—nearer than she thought. Only a few more waves, one or two more billows, and the storm of life would be past, and the fair haven reached.





CHAPTER XV.

THE FAIR HAVEN REACHED.



IT was evening again, and all was intensely quiet. Carl had gone home, and Charlotte the mother had come. Marie was lying upstairs in Henrik's room in his bed; she was very ill. White as a lily, she scarcely seemed to breathe, for that morning she had ruptured a blood vessel while coughing, and the doctor said he feared the end was near. They were sitting round her bed when she opened her eyes and said: "Don't cry for me; I am quite happy."

"What makes you happy, Marie darling?" asked her mother.

"Why? Jesus!" she answered. It is much better *there*, 'always spring,' you know."

"Speak to me, Marie," said Henrik.

"She must not speak except in a whisper," sobbed grannie.

Marie smiled. "It does not hurt me—Henrik, cast them all down at His feet (the sins)—and He will give a white robe—*you know*."

"Yes; I know, I will remember; but must you leave us?"

"I must—I have tried to get strong—and I *cannot*."

"You must not speak any more," said her mother, with tearful eyes.

"It does—not hurt me," she whispered; "poor mother, don't cry; you will come too; and father, he will be sorry at first, but I shall watch for him—Jesus is so loving, He can make us all fit for—His—beautiful land."

After lying quite quiet for a time she seemed to gain a little strength, and slept at times through the night. Next day the lady and her party, who had visited the forest before, came again. At first grannie said she could not supply them with coffee; but they seemed disappointed, and as little Marie lay perfectly quiet and her mother was with her, the coffee was carried out to a further distance, with Henrik's help. Expenses were thickening, and they could not well afford to lose the money, but all seemed to them so unimportant, so trifling, beside the thoughts of eternity and heaven which filled their minds.

The lady expressed great sorrow at hearing of

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little Marie's serious illness, and asked if she might see her for a few minutes. "The doctor has forbidden any one to speak to her or excite her," said grannie.

"Then you will take the little books I brought her," said the lady, giving them to Madame Nielsen, who thanked her warmly.

But a few minutes after Marie's mother came down, and said Marie had begged that if the lady came she might see her; so promising not to stay more than a minute the visitor went up. She kissed the pale forehead, as Marie's wistful eyes were fixed on her face with a sweet smile, and the child whispered, "I remember what you said."

"I am glad, dear. The Good Shepherd has His little lamb in His arms, and He will carry you right over the rough places up to the fold above."

"Yes," answered Marie.

"I promised not to stay; but I am so glad I have seen you and know you are so happy."

"Yes; quite happy—only tired. Jesus keeps me."

"Farvel, little one. I have given the books to grannie that you cannot read now. I trust, through our Lord's mercy, we shall all meet above in that glorious home where Jesus dwells," and much affected the lady took a warm farewell of the poor mother and grannie.

At evening the cough returned, and as Henrik and her mother sat beside her she said, "I cannot cough much more, I am so tired. I shall see Lauritz and your father, but Jesus is——" She said no more, but panted for breath.

Grannie came at once at Henrik's call, and they saw the end was near. A light suffused her face, she gazed up and was gone—only the frail earthen vessel left—the happy spirit free. Jesus, who loved our *souls* and has redeemed them at such a cost, has promised those who believe that where *He* is there shall they be also. Three days after, little Laura brought a beautiful wreath of flowers, and moss, and ivy, with the words, "Farvel, little Marie," woven in.

"*She* was good; she has gone to God," said Laura to Henrik.

"I told her she was good one day, and she said, 'No, Henrik, don't say it; I have a naughty heart, but Jesus has washed away my sins.'"

"Yes, she said that to me, too. I shan't ever forget Marie," said Laura with tearful eyes.

"Give her the little hymn-book Marie was so fond of," said grannie, and Henrik ran and brought it to her, and she carried it away with her to town when the summer was over.



CHAPTER XVI.

CARL'S THANKSGIVING.



FORGETFULNESS was certainly not a trait in Carl's character. The day after his adventure he had been peeping through the gate into their garden at the beautiful roses, when little Laura came up to him and asked what he was looking at.

"I was looking at them roses, and thinking I should like to give one to the man that saved me from being drowned."

"Well, you shall have one," and darting past Miss Jensen, Laura ran to ask her mamma for leave to pluck one, telling her the reason. Mrs. Mortensen came out from the verandah and plucked three or four beautiful roses and gave them to Carl herself, saying, "And you are the little boy that was lost and found again, and you want to give the kind man who saved you some flowers? So you shall." Carl's eyes glistened.

"We haven't much money, and we didn't know what to give him for being so kind; if I had had a lot of money I would have bought him something, but these will do fine. Many thanks." And Carl made a low bow as he had been taught.

The lady looked into her purse. "Here are 2 kroner," she said. "Take these; perhaps you can think of a small gift he would value from you."

Laura was very anxious to know what he would buy, but Carl, after again thanking Mrs. Mortensen, said he would consult grannie and Henrik.

"Let me put a krone to it; that will make three," said Henrik. "I *am* so glad you are safe, Carl, and that the man was so good to you; I should like to give it, and we will go together to town and buy something, if you like."

Carl was delighted to go anywhere with Henrik, and the two boys had become firm friends. The angry, jealous feeling seemed to have gone out of Henrik's heart, and a kind word from him now went a long way with wilful little Carl. Not but what as time went on he had to battle again with that worst of foes, jealousy, but he never forgot the dreadful night when he thought Carl had been drowned. So they bought a nice little inkstand as a present to Carl's deliverer, and he was quite surprised and pleased at the gift.

As they returned home a heavy shower of rain came on, and the two boys sheltered beneath the beautiful oak tree Marie had spoken of when she told Henrik she felt sure he would live to be a blessing to others—a shelter and a stay. He looked up into the thick branches where the birds built their nests, where the squirrels loved to play, where the ivy twined, and beneath which they were sheltering, and with a light and happy heart an unspoken prayer went up that he *might* be used by God to be a comfort and blessing to others.





CHAPTER XVII.

A MEETING ON THE ICE.



REAPING time and autumn had come; the leaves began to change colours, some were a beautiful golden brown, others a dark red, and some a light yellow. Little Marie's body had been laid to rest in the grave of Henrik's mother, and very near to the last resting-place of Lauritz. Marie's father had written from New Zealand to say that he had arrived safely, and should return before long. He also sent a little money, but it only paid the debts of the past three months. And now all the family were at the cottage, and a little sister had been given to cheer them up after the loss of little Marie, and they called her Lena Marie.

"It will comfort the father better if we name her Marie, but we will call her Lena."

Yes, she was very much like the little sister who had been so much beloved for her gentle

ways, whose little earthly day was over, and whose glorious, never-ending one had begun. She had not known *much* earthly joy, but she had caught a glimpse by faith of Jesus and His heavenly city, and this had drawn her little heart from earth and its greatest pleasures.

Autumn had come and cold winds whistled round the cottage, and one fire was all that they could afford, so that when the boys returned from school the little kitchen was full enough.

Henrik looked almost with reverence upon the placid little babe that bore Marie's name, but Dagmar was his pet and his darling, and she grew so fond of him that it consoled him very much for his cousin's loss. They were very busy in the month of September gathering blackberries and a kind of elderberry to sell in the town. Grannie and the two little boys spent all their spare time in the forest, and earned several kroner by it. They held on as best they could till January came, when it began to be hard work. They had looked every day for two or three weeks for a letter containing money, but none had come. The children's clothes were very shabby and their boots worn out. Grannie had begun to wear a very sad and anxious look, but she had also looked more and more often into God's Word, and the little books which had been left her by the lady were read again and again.



CARL NIELSEN'S RETURN.

(Page 119.)

"There is a reason for all this, Henrik," she said one day. "We just needed to feel that there was nothing here to cling to—our nice little cot, our cosy evenings, our little savings. We needed to *thirst* for something better—something that satisfied the child's heart. See here!"—and she showed him the words "If any man *thirst* let him come unto me and drink."

Henrik answered his grandmother by a hearty kiss which spoke plainer than words, and then he said: "Since I cast myself down at His feet I have wanted to serve Him oh so much, Grannie."

"We'll be happier than ever after uncle comes home. I feel it here, though it is a struggle now," she replied; "and somehow, though you are only a lad, Henrik, your old grannie feels a *wonderful* comfort in having you near her."

That was a proud minute for Henrik, and it helped him through the few dark days left. He spent all his spare time in the town for the next week, and one day when the snow was on the ground and it was freezing sharp, he came home with a very bright face.

"Grannie!" he said, "will you give me leave to start in Mr. Kemple's office? He will take me if you give leave. He has a large coal business, and he wants a lad to assist in the office. He has tried me at writing and accounts, and he says I will do, and I shall get six kroners a week to

begin with ; that's better than four. (Henrik's eyes sparkled.) I am sorry to leave the forest for some things, but it is not what it was in Lauritz' time !"

After consideration, she gave her consent, and was not a little proud that the boy had pushed for himself.

He was to begin in fourteen days. Meanwhile the weather got colder, the Sound began to freeze over, and the harbour was blocked with ice, and the little family had almost nothing but Henrik's wages left to live on.

"Come, I have an hour to spare ; we will go down to the shore and slide on a large bit of ice there," he said cheerily. "It will get the children out of your way, Aunt Charlotte ; you look tired. Come, Dagmar, let's put on your coat ; you shall come too. 'Rik will carry you." And away the four young folk went, and soon the frosty air made their cheeks glow. Half-an-hour had passed, and little Hans was saying, "How Dagmar does 'joy herself !" when they were attracted by a cry, "Halloa there !" Another minute, and with a glad shout of "Father !" Carl and Hans had dashed into the arms of the weather-beaten man who was close beside them. Little Dagmar was more shy, but it was not long before they were all seated round him in the little kitchen, hearing his tale of the far country.

Carl Nielsen had been to the cottage, spoken to his wife and mother, and then came in search of the children. How cheered they were when he turned out a good heap of golden coins. He said he was much in request abroad, and that carpenters made a lot of money there. He had waited to earn a little, and then thought it best to bring it home himself; but contrary winds had delayed them a month. As he heard the particulars of little Marie's illness and death, tears rolled down his cheeks, and he was much overcome; but the sweet little babe that smiled in his face comforted his heart.

In the course of a week grannie and Henrik were alone again, and the boy had much satisfaction in his new situation, and soon gained the esteem of his masters. He spent his spare time in reading and studying, and grannie predicted a successful future for him. They enjoyed reading God's Word together now, and the simple faith and trust of little Marie, with the remembrance of Lauritz' sudden but peaceful end, helped to draw off their thoughts from earth and centre them in "the hope that is laid up for us in heaven."

THE END.



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