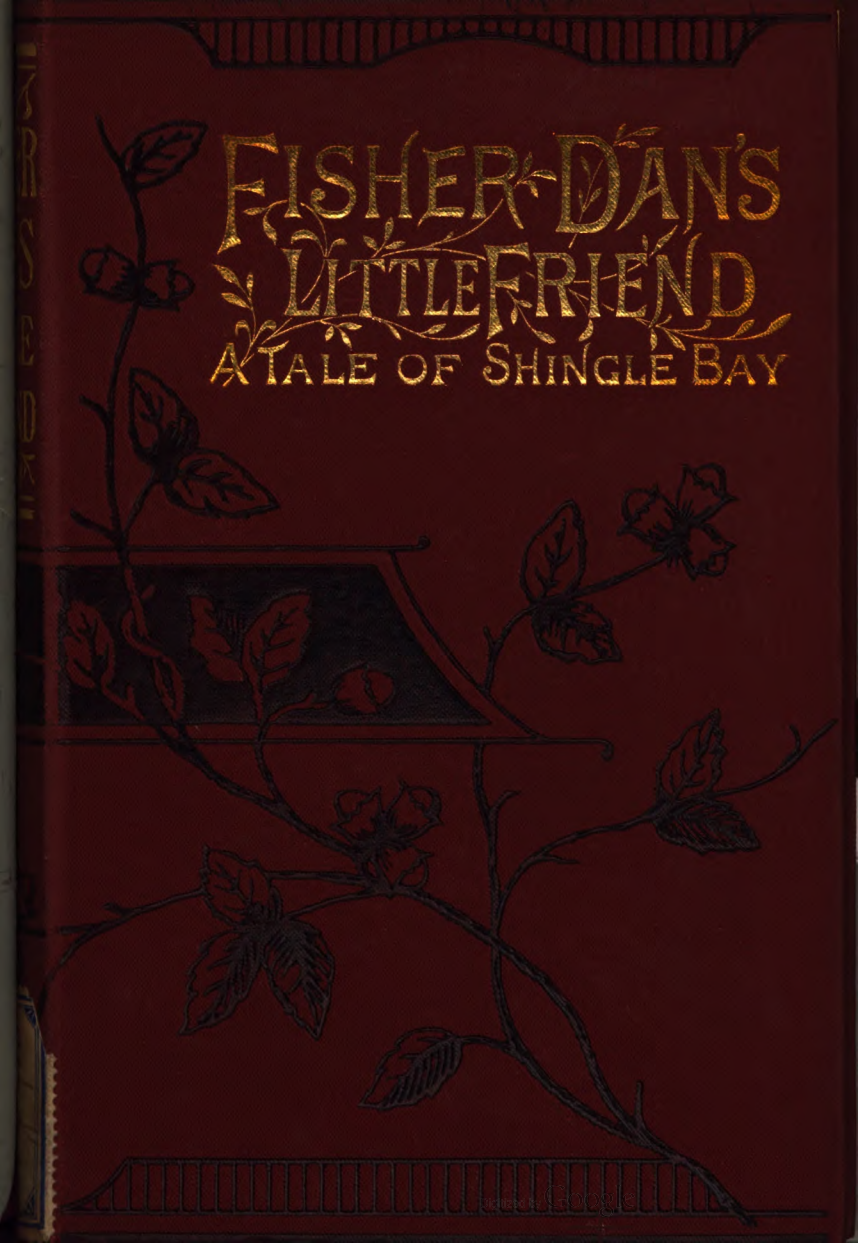

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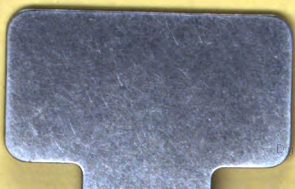


FISHER-DAN'S
LITTLE FRIEND
A TALE OF SHINGLE BAY





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FISHER DAN'S LITTLE FRIEND:

A TALE OF SHINGLE BAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BEN AND KIT," "GRACIE AND GRANT,"
"HAZEL GLEN," "LITTLE JOE," ETC.



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FISHER DAN'S LITTLE FRIEND:

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CHAPTER I.

NEAR THE WILLOW POND.



DELIGHTFULLY warm and sunny was the afternoon of a day in August; light and fleecy-looking clouds hung in fantastic shapes overhead, and the breeze, that so gently swayed the lightest branches of the trees, was mild and balmy. Insects were skimming about in the air or touching the surface of the large willow pond, making tiny circles here and there; the branches of some old

willow trees dipped into the water, forming a snug retreat for several fat ducks who sat lazily snapping at the flies ; pretty wild flowers blossomed round the edge of the pond, which was fringed with slender reeds and long grasses ; and as little Bridget swayed herself to and fro on the trunk of one of the willows, her dusty feet touched the cool water.

She heaved a very deep sigh as she dived at one of the ducks with a willow branch.

"It's fine and quiet now," she said to herself. "No one would have thought there could have been such a storm the other day. Poor Dan, if he *is* drowned, what will I do ? I'll just have to make off to the big town and earn a living for myself." And then Bridget leaned her black curly head on her hand, and peeped through the branches at a little boy who was coming along the road from school.

He was a fair-haired little fellow, with rosy cheeks and dark brown eyes, and was skipping merrily along the road, singing to himself. His straw hat was tossed back, and he was swinging

his bag of books at arm's length, while he kept time with his nimble little feet to the song about "The River," which he had been learning in his class that day. Suddenly he stopped his song, lowered his bag, and pulled on his hat, not far from the tree where Bridget was seated, and his brown eyes opened very wide as he looked down the road.

Bridget turned her head and looked in the same direction, and she saw a large herd of bullocks coming along. A low hedge separated the road from the meadow land and the willow pond, but there were several gaps in it, and through one of these Bridget had made her way to her present seat in the tree. Davie was not afraid of *cows*. He often helped to drive their own from the farm to the meadow; but great big bullocks, and such a number of them, *did* frighten him, for they were crowding along on the footpath.

What should he do?

Two little black eyes had seen his dilemma, and in a moment Bridget had swung herself down

from the willow branch, had squeezed through the nearest gap in the hedge, and presented herself before Davie Duncan.

"If you're afraid of them bullocks, jest come with me," she said, eagerly.

Davie gave a quick look at her flushed, earnest face, then away at the beasts down the road, and decided at once.

"Where can we go?" he asked.

"In here," she answered; and seizing his hand she pulled him through the little gap in the hedge. His hat went off behind, and his "knickers" caught on the bushes; but after a good pull from energetic Bridget he found himself in the meadow.

"Aren't you glad I was here?" she asked.

"Yes, I am; you *are* a kind sort of girl," Davie answered simply, as soon as he could get breath. "See what a lot of bullocks!"

They came striding along the road, great black and white, and brown creatures, and Davie flinched, as he peeped through the hedge, to find them so close to him. When they were past, he turned again to Bridget.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I'm Bridget," she answered, "and I'm very miserable."

"Are you? You don't look like it. What is it for?"

"You know the bad storm that came the other day?"

"Yes," nodded Davie, as he sank down on the grass, and put a hand on each knee.

"Well, Dan was out in the storm, and he's never come back."

"I know a lot of poor fellows was drowned that live down at the shore. But who is Dan?" asked Davie.

"Dan's been good to me; he and my father was chums, and my father went out to catch herrin's one winter night, and he was caught in the awfulest storm, and his boat sank and he was drowned. And how old do you think I was then?" asked Bridget, balancing herself on one foot and catching hold of a branch to steady herself, while she watched Davie narrowly to see the effect of the story she knew by heart.

"As small as our Polly?" inquired Davie, with great interest.

"Four years old," slowly answered Bridget.

Davie heaved a great sigh.

"Poor little thing, what did you do?"

"I did nothing; but my mother fretted herself a long while till she died, and I was left alone with old grannie."

"Well, it's a good thing you've got *her*," said Davie, in a tone of relief.

"But I haven't; she's gone and died too," replied Bridget.

"Who have you got, then?" asked Davie, rising to his feet.

"Nobody, if Dan is drowned. Mrs. Scott don't care for me. Dan has paid her a whole shilling a week to give me a bed on the floor and a bite of bread, and he gives me fish when it's a good haul, for helping him with his nets and his boat. I like Dan—he's the only person that I do like, and if he is drowned there'll be *nobody*."

"Oh—what's your name, little girl?" asked Davie, patronisingly.

“Bridget.”

“Oh, Bridget, it’s dreadful not to like anybody but him ; why, I like lots of people.”

“That’s because they is kind to you,” returned the little girl. “I daresay you have heaps of kind folks and good things. Look at your claes, as Mrs. Robertson calls them. What nice knickers you’ve got on, and shiny boots,” she added, stroking his knee.

“I must go home now, if the bullocks are quite out of sight,” said Davie, as he thought of the father and mother who provided him with good things. “I’m sorry for *you*,” he added, looking at her shabby frock and bare feet, “and I hope your Dan is not drowned.”

“Never mind ; if he is, I shall go to the big town and make a living for myself. Now I’ll help you through this gap in the hedge, but I must go first ; be steady now, or you’ll tear your good coat. I wish I had a little brother with a coat like that, but I shan’t never have one.”

Davie’s kind little heart felt very sad, and a big tear came into his eye. He almost wished he

could be her little brother, and as he put up his hand to wipe away the tear, Bridget said quickly,

"Never mind, I'll come and meet you sometimes as you come back from school, if you'll let me, and I'll carry your bag."

Davie smiled a slow, half-amused smile at her as she said this, and he answered,

"I'll ask mother, because she tells me *not* to stop and talk to anybody ; but you were so kind to take care of me when those bullocks passed, I know she wouldn't mind this time."

The two children walked on a few steps in silence, then Bridget asked,

"How old is your little Polly?"

"Three years old next month, and Aunt Dora is coming to help keep her birthday. It will be such fun!" and David clapped his hands ; then he suddenly stopped and asked, "What do you get on your birthdays, now you haven't got any mother?"

"I generally get a beating and go without my dinner," said Bridget, in a "don't care" tone, but there were tears in her eyes, and Davie would

have seen them only she turned to pick up a stone and throw it at a bird. The stone fell far short of the little songster, as Bridget meant it should.

"You shouldn't hurt the birds; we throw crumbs out to them, me and Polly," said Davie, gravely, and he thought to himself, "I am afraid she is a bad girl. How shall I get away from her?"

"I haven't got any crumbs to throw; I'm only too glad when folks throw 'em to me," answered Bridget. Then she added, in rather a softer tone, "I don't want to hurt nothin'. I know well enough what it is to get hurt myself."

"That's a pity; but are you *quite* sure you don't deserve a whipping?" asked her companion, in a doubtful manner.

"I do lots of bad things, but I'm sorry after; and if you'll let me go with you sometimes, I won't do nothing you don't like."



CHAPTER II.

BRIDGET SEES WITHOUT BEING SEEN.

“**I** MUST go now,” said Davie, with a resolute air; “father will be wanting me, and mother will have my tea ready. Hooray! there’s dear old Rover come to meet me,” he cried, as a large curly-coated black dog turned the corner of the road, and bounded towards the children.

“Is that your dog?” asked Bridget.

“Yes; and if I’m late from school he always comes to meet me.”

“There’ll be nobody to meet me, now that Dan’s drowned; nor there never was *before*, only I used to go and meet *him*, and sometimes, when he’d had good luck at fishing, he’d pat my head—twice he did!”

Davie looked at her in surprise.

"Why, my father pats mine every day, whether he's had good luck or not," he answered, as Rover overpowered him with caresses, jumping up to lick his face, and leaping round him in the greatest glee. "I am going this way now, so good-bye," he added, as they reached the corner of the road.

He had begun to wonder what they would say at home to his new acquaintance, and as he eyed her from head to foot he noticed for the first time how poor and untidy her frock was, and that her bare feet were very dusty.

"Rover and I *must* go now," he said decidedly, as she turned the corner to follow him.

Bridget had become very interested in her companion, and had determined to follow him home, and, if possible, get a peep at Polly, and Davie's father and mother. She was quite aware she would get a scolding when she returned to Mother Scott's cottage for having been absent so long; not that she was really needed there (and it would make very little difference after all), for had she been loitering about the doors, or looking

after Sally (Mother Scott's little dumpling of a grandchild, who was left to her care those days that her mother was out at work), Bridget would have been scolded just the same. She never *could* do the right thing, so she might just as well do the wrong, she thought, and therefore generally took her own way, and suffered for it. She did not suffer so much when Dan was at home. He never let Mrs. Scott beat her, for he was a quiet, peaceable fellow himself, and had protected Bridget for the last two or three years since her old grandmother had died, and left her a little friendless child in Shingle Bay.

The shilling a week Dan paid Mother Scott for Bridget's corner was very acceptable when it came in, and though she made it a duty to groan over the burden of housing the little girl, she would have been sorry to lose the money, which nearly paid her rent.

This afternoon Bridget was fully determined, as she faced Davie, to get a sight of his home, and, if possible, of his friends. She had been very miserable half-an-hour before, feeling that

if Dan was drowned there would be no one to care for, and no one to care for her. She dreaded to go home in case of hearing bad tidings, and was thankful to find some one to speak to, and something to do.

"I'll come along with you, and see you safe home," she said.

"You don't need to ; Rover will take care of me, and you had better go to your own home ; father might not like it," and Davie gave a side glance at the poor thin frock and dusty feet.

Rover hearing his name and the words "Go home," gave a low growl. Bridget put her hands behind her, pressed her lips tightly together, and knitted her brows, then turning very red, she said,

"It's because of your good clothes, and your fine house, and my old frock and bare feet, I s'pose. Well, I didn't think you *was* so mean ; you didn't say 'no' when I dragged you through the hedge away from them bullocks, did you ?"

Davie's handsome face flushed, and he stood irresolute. "What do you want me to *do* ?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing, never mind *me*," said Bridget, "but I did think you'd have let me see Polly!"

Davie had no time to reply, for a gig that moment turned the corner of the road, with an old white-haired man in it, and a fresh sweet-looking girl of about fifteen years of age.

"Grandfather! Aunt Dora!" he cried, while the old gentleman pulled up his horse, and called out,

"Hallo, Davie, my lad, how are you? Come up, we are on our way to the farm."

He needed no second invitation, but with Aunt Dora's help scrambled up, whilst Rover barked and leaped about, hardly knowing which of his legs to spring on.

Just as Grandfather touched up "*Gipsey*," Davie remembered Bridget, and looking back, cried out, "Thank you about those bullocks; it *was* very kind of you."

He felt so safe and happy in the gig, and was relieved at getting rid of the difficulty of parting from Bridget.

She stood in the middle of the road watching

the happy party till they turned another corner and were out of sight; then, feeling sad and lonely, contrasting her own lot with Davie's, she cried,

"Oh, I wish I was him, with kind folks to love me like that. I wish I *could* be him; but it's no use wishin'; the only thing I can do is to foller up," and suiting the action to the word, Bridget took to her heels and fled along the road.

She sped along like a little rabbit, and seemed scarcely to touch the ground with her dusky feet. When she reached the corner she drew up and peered into the distance. There stood the gig before a green wooden gate, and Davie was just being lifted out by his grandfather, while his aunt Dora was preparing to follow.

Bridget did not allow her small person to be seen, but peeped from behind a bush which grew on the wayside, and did not come forward till the grandfather and a farm labourer led the horse off to the stable. Then she ran along the road again for a short distance, and scrambling through the

hedge, quickly made her way across a little piece of meadow land till she reached a thicket which separated the garden from the pasture. Here she halted, and kept a sharp look-out while she watched the different members of the Duncan family, carefully hiding herself from view.





CHAPTER III.

THE DUNCANS.

DORA waited at the gate with Davie till her father appeared again, and then they began to walk leisurely towards the house up the winding pathway between the laurel bushes ; sweet-scented blossoms waved in the breeze, and the happy little songsters on every hand poured forth their songs of welcome.

“ Come, Davie, you have not given me any kisses,” said Dora. “ Are you glad I’ve come, and can you guess the reason why ? ”

She lifted him up as she spoke, and he clung to her neck as loving children will, with such a strong, vigorous grasp, that he nearly choked her, and clasped his little knickerbockered legs round her waist. In this manner they proceeded up

the garden path, watched by two wistful black eyes, while Davie answered his aunt's questions.

"I'm more gladder to see you, 'Auntie Dore,' than anybody in this big world which I've been learning about in school till I'm sick of it, and I suppose you have come to see me and Polly, and father and mother."

"I think we must leave father to tell the good news," put in Grandfather as he laid his silver-headed cane lightly across Davie's back; "There he is himself, with my little milkmaid on his shoulder," he added, with a kindly gleam of loving sympathy in his eyes, as Mr. Duncan strode out of the farmhouse door with Polly in his arms, crying, "Welcome to Beechwood!" After a cordial greeting all round—

"Is all going on well?" asked Davie's grandfather.

"Yes, thank God. Does Davie know?"

"Not a word, except there *is* good news," answered Dora, giving his rosy cheek another kiss; "I *am* so glad, David."

"What for? tell me, father," cried the little



boy, springing down from his favourite position and grasping his father's hand.

"You's dot a dear, little new sister, littler than Polly, but you must love I best," lisped the baby girl as she looked eagerly down at her brother's upturned face.

"Really; do you mean it?" cried he, all excitement.

"Yes, it is quite true," replied the father cheerily; "there is another dear little sister for you to love."

"Can I see her? Why doesn't mamma bring her out? When did she come?" urged Davie.

"This morning, when you were at school; but she is too tiny and too young to come out yet. You must be quiet, for mamma is taking care of her upstairs; but if you are a good boy you shall see her after tea." And, as if the new treasure had brought new love to the rest, he kissed Polly's rosebud lips and cheeks all over before he put her into Aunt Dora's arms, and lifting up Davie, who was the very light of his eyes, embraced him tenderly; then David Duncan

walked on to the house with his father-in-law, while Dora followed with the children.

Bridget crept stealthily out from her hiding-place as the little group passed on, and glided from one shrub to another till she reached two large laurel bushes which stood so close to one another that she could slip between them. Bridget was a very determined little character and had made up her mind that she would see as much of the Duncan family as possible.

"Does Polly love her little sister?" asked Dora.

"Yes, me loves her, all that," exclaimed the little girl, opening her arms as wide as she could, "but she's such a tiny, dolly sister, only so long," and she measured the length on her fat little arm up to the shoulder.

"Bigger than that surely, Polly," said Dora, laughing, while Davie listened with wondering, brown eyes wide open.

Then they entered the front door, and were lost to Bridget's sight, but the door remained unclosed, and she could see into the parlour,

where the early tea was set. She saw the tray, on which were placed cups and saucers and two little mugs; she saw the snowy table-cloth, piles of bread and butter, a large ham, and a plate of farmhouse cakes. In the middle was a dish of rosy apples, and another beside it of stewed fruit. After a few minutes Dora and the children entered the room, and they were smiling and talking in happy whispers, as if of the new treasure in the little white night-gown upstairs.

Dora had on a pretty dark-blue dress, with clean laces in the neck and sleeves; her hair was bright and wavy, and her face so good-tempered and pleasant looking, that there was no wonder the children seemed so fond of her.

Polly had very fair hair and blue eyes, and Bridget thought she must look like an angel in her pink lama frock and white pinafore.

The pleasant vision was suddenly interrupted by Martha, the servant, coming to the front door and looking keenly round while she spoke in a loud voice. She knitted her brows and compressed her lips, looking just what she was—a

hard, unbending woman. She had heavy, dark eyebrows, small piercing eyes, and a large, straight mouth.

"Peter says he saw a little scamp of a child hanging about the garden. She be after pickin' the flowers, no doubt. I've had several trampin' folks round the house to-day. Did you see anybody, Miss Dora?"

"No, Martha, I did not, did you, Davie?"

"No," replied the little boy, who had not given another thought to Bridget.

"No, me didn't, me only see my baby," chimed in Polly.

Martha took a step or two outside the door and scanned the garden; she always vowed vengeance on beggars, and was never so delighted as when she drove tramps from the door. Many a time she had had wicked words flung after her, and this confirmed her in the opinion that they were a bad lot.

Dora's father and brother-in-law returned to the parlour after a short visit to mother and babe, just as Martha's voice was raised again, or

most likely the young people would have run outside to see what was going on.

"There she goes, the little thief," cried Martha, as Bridget darted from the bushes, and ran across the shrubbery towards the thicket in which she had hidden a quarter of an hour before, "you've been plucking flowers, have you? I'll get you put in the police office," she screamed. A few primroses and lilac flowers were strewn on the ground behind the laurel bush just where Bridget had stood, and Martha's indignation knew no bounds, but the object of her wrath was soon out of her sight, and she turned into the house muttering words of anger against the "tiresome brats."





CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW TREASURE.



VERY brisk conversation was kept up at the tea table at Beechwood that evening. Everyone was happy, and no one gave greater evidence of it than Rover, who went from one to another, licking their hands, wagging his tail and receiving little bits of bread and sugar from each. Grandfather petted his little grandchildren in a most dangerous fashion; Polly sat on his knee and got sips of tea, and nibbles of ham, while he stroked her fair hair and said, "Never mind, David, it's only once in a while."

He was very fond of his eldest daughter, Louisa, and very glad to find her and baby so well.

Mr. Duncan was a young-looking man, with the clear brown eyes that Davie's so much

resembled, and as usual he talked to his little son, asking about the school and his daily lessons. Dora poured out the tea as she often did at home when her sister Annie was away, and kept them all lively with her merry words.

Soon the comfortable, self-satisfied looking nurse came in, with lilac-coloured gown and snowy apron, for a cup of tea for the mother who sent down love and good wishes to them all, and she hoped to see Dora, Davie and Polly for two or three minutes after tea.

"But you will none of you speak a word," said nurse; "you may just look at my baby: I don't allow any more than that to-day."

"Me'll tiss her," lisped Polly, pouting her rosy lips, and raising her brows and nodding her head.

Davie covered his face all but his eyes, and smothered a laugh at Polly's funny look.

"If you are quiet, little miss, but I never allow my ladies or babies to be disturbed," she remarked in such a solemn manner that Polly and Davie subsided.

"Quite right, nurse," said grandpapa.

"I hope you will see that rule carried out," put in the father encouragingly.

After tea the visit was made; the two little children entered the shaded room on tiptoe and peered anxiously round for the new comer, while nurse stood at one side of the bed raising a warning finger alike for mother and children.

"My three treasures," murmured the former, as first Polly, and then Davie, were lifted up to see the warm cosy bit of humanity lying on their mother's arm.

"Do you like our little Daisy?" asked Mrs. Duncan.

"Yes," nodded both the children with long drawn sighs. "Where are her hands? Where are her toes?" they asked.

"Now a kiss and that will do for to-day," put in nurse, after Louisa and Dora had exchanged a loving greeting.

'You *will* look after the little ones, will you not, Dora dear? I am so glad you are here," said her sister with a sigh of relief. "Tell father to be sure and come up, and bid me good-

bye before he leaves ; she is such a good baby," added the mother with a contented smile.

"She is very bonny, and just another little Polly," replied Dora. Then the three visitors withdrew, and nurse was left in her glory to sing her lullaby songs to baby, and administer gruel to her heart's content.

Grandfather Gray soon after said "Good-bye," leaving Dora at Beechwood to help look after the little ones till the mother was about again.





CHAPTER V.

A POOR LITTLE GIRL.

BRIDGET had been terrified at the sound of Martha's angry voice, and judged it best to make a speedy escape back to the place she had called home. She did not stop running till she reached the corner of the road where Davie had met his grandfather. Then she paused and looked back, and seeing that no one was following her up, she started again at a more leisurely pace for Shingle Bay.

As she neared the fishing village she halted again at the top of the hill, from whence she could distinctly see the row of fishermen's cottages, with their little plots of garden at the back. She could see at that moment Mrs. Scott hanging out some clothes on the green; she

could see the fishermen's nets on the beach, and some of their boats lying high and dry on the shingle. Then she looked across the sea beyond the little wooden pier, to the green waves that moved restlessly towards the shore. She sighed heavily, and murmured to herself:

"What a grand place Davie do live in! Polly is as pretty as an angel, and they've got a new baby too. Well, some folks get all the good things, and poor little girls like me get hunted like pigs. That was the crossest, ugliest lass of a servant I ever saw; I wish I could pay her out, I do! But I won't, because she lives with Davie and Polly, and I mightn't get another chance to look in. I'll foller him up from school to-morrow; see if I don't! I wonder if Dan is home," she said to herself, moving slowly down the hill. "Oh, if he is drowned, what shall I do!" After a few minutes she presented herself at Mrs. Scott's door, with a determined "don't-care" look on her face.

"So you're come back, are you? What have you been doing with yourself all the afternoon?"

Mischief, I'll be bound, while I've been slaving between Sally and the wash-tub!"

"Is Dan back?" asked Bridget, looking out at the sea.

"Dan is all you think about! No, he is not back, and never will be, I reckon; and I should like to know who will burden themselves with such a do-nothing as you. What have you been up to, I say?"

"I went to gather up sticks and wood for Dan's fire, if he came back."

"And where are the sticks, pray?" asked Mrs. Scott, standing with arms akimbo, and looking hard at Bridget.

The child turned red, and answered defiantly, "I hadn't no time to get them; the bullocks would ha' run over Davie Duncan."

"Don't tell me any stories! If you've fetched no wood, you'll get no supper. I should be ashamed to be such a burden, if I was you!"

Bridget was accustomed to hear herself called a burden, and in the general way it did not trouble her much; she had Dan to fall back upon,

but to-night it was different. Dan was away, and would most likely never return, and she had just left such a happy, cheerful scene (indeed, she had just been *thrust* from it); therefore, when Mrs. Scott met her with hard, bitter words, she turned from her saying, with gleaming eyes, "I don't want any of your supper; I wish I was drowned too!" and made off to the shore as fast as her legs would carry her.

She pattered along on the wet sand, while wave after wave rolled up to her feet, cleaning them from the dust they had gathered on the highway. The sun was sinking behind some dark clouds, while the sky overhead was clear, and a chill breeze had sprung up from the sea, making Bridget shiver and shake. Still she went on till she reached the little pier from which the fishermen put out their boats, or to which they brought them laden with fish. She crept underneath, and lay down beside the wooden posts, and then sobbed bitterly.

"I do wish I was drowned with father and Dan. I've got no one to love me like Davie's aunt; no mother—no, *no* one."

After a few minutes of crying Bridget wiped her eyes, and her thoughts took another channel.

"I'm glad I saved Davie from being runned over by them bullocks; he seemed to take it awful kind, the way he says, "Thank you" to me in that gig. I wonder what he'd say if he knew I had lost my supper, and was so hungry. I could a'most eat seaweed," she murmured, and suiting the action to the word she put a fragrant red bunch to her lips, but the flavour was decidedly too salt, so she threw it away, and lay still in a kind of despair.





CHAPTER VI.

DAN'S RETURN.

BRIDGET dared not go back to Mrs. Scott's till dark, when she might slip into her corner unperceived, and she had no other place to which she could go ; for old Jack, who sometimes stood her friend, because she helped him with his nets, was away from home for a few days. He had many a time given her a crust of bread when he guessed she was hungry, and if it came to the worst, there were others who might do the same if she asked it. But they would tell Mrs. Scott, and then she would get a whipping.

At last, just as she was getting bitterly cold and thinking of finding a better shelter, she heard the sound of loud voices, and turning round saw a fishing-boat making for the shore. She listened

for one or two seconds, and then, with a half-uttered cry of delight, sprang to her feet, scrambled from under the pier and ran along the shore. As the keel of the boat grated upon the pebbles, Bridget ran forward with a shrill cry of joy.

"Dan, O Dan, is it yerself that's come back? I thought you was gone for good this time. I thought you was drowned!"

"Well, I'm all right, you see," he said in a kindly tone, as he sprang out of the boat and helped the other man to pull it up on the beach.

Bridget seized hold of the side of the little craft eagerly, and used her small strength also with hearty good will. When the work was accomplished and the boat lay high and dry on the shingly beach, Dan lifted his fisher's hat and wiped the moisture from his forehead, while he gave a quick look out to sea, then round at the cliffs and green sward behind him, and then down at Bridget's wistful inquiring face. He saw more real feeling and affection depicted there than he

had ever noticed before, and he gave her again one of those pats on the head she never forgot.

"I'm so glad, Dan," she said, as a response to his kindly welcome. "If you had been drowned I should have made off to the town; there'd have been no one left. Mrs. Scott would soon have turned me out," she added in a whisper.

"Tut, tut," replied Dan, with a laugh, as he helped his companion to arrange the sails of the boat; "what would the like of you do in the big town? Better bide here, and be a good lass, Bridget. Now we'll go home," and saying, "Good night" to his mate, they started across the sward for Mrs. Scott's hut.

As they went Dan told his little companion (who was obliged to trot at his side to keep up with his long strides) how he and Bill Brown had been caught in the gale, and after battling with it for some hours were quite exhausted and unable to make way; they had given up all hope of reaching land when a large smack appeared on the horizon, and catching sight of their signals rescued them, and towed the little boat behind.



"We had to go along' with them for they were bound to a place a good way off, and after the gale was over we got a lift back part of the way while the *Nellie* was towed along. I never thought to see you again, Bridget, and I couldn't help wonderin' what you'd do! So you are glad, are you?"

"I never *was* so glad afore. You see I haven't so much to be glad about as the likes of Davie Duncan. It's nice to be glad, ain't it?" she asked simply.

"Yes, it is; and here's something to help it on," said Dan as he put his hand in his pocket and gave Bridget a little silver coin—a threepenny bit.

Her eyes danced with joy as she thanked him and added, "I'm not so bad off after all!"

"Can you read this?" asked Dan abruptly, stopping short before entering the house, "no, it's too dark," he added as he held a little card up to his face, "you can't see it now; it's a verse out of the Book I suppose; I had it give me on the pier before we started. They's strange words, Bridget,

and I wondered if ever you had come across them while you were at the school."

"Can you mind them ;" she asked feeling very important at being asked such a question by Dan.

"Its about the 'book of life' and getting your name written there. It says you must get your name written in it, as far as I can make out. Your father once said something about it; he was a good feller, and I was by him when he was washed overboard. It might have been the same with me the other night. You can have a look at the ticket to-morrow morning, Bridget."

"All right," she answered, and that night as she lay in her corner she pondered Dan's words.

Every one was glad to see him back ; he was generally looked up to as a quiet steady man who went about his own business and did not interfere with other people. Broad of shoulder, strong of limb, and straight as a dart, he was a fine manly fellow, his features were marked, his hair and eyes dark and his sunburnt cheeks glowed with health.



CHAPTER VII.

"THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE."

THE next morning Bridget rose very early from her dark corner and ran out to the spring to wash. She had no soap but she did her best to polish up her face and make it look clean and fresh ; her hands and feet, however, were a more difficult task, and after one or two unsuccessful attempts to make them clean she slipped into the kitchen and made off with a piece of soap.

Bridget had been forbidden to touch anything in the house, but she hoped that as Mrs. Scott was not yet up she would never be found out. Having made herself unusually clean for two particular reasons of her own, she was just laying the piece of soap back in the little wooden dish when Mrs. Scott opened the kitchen door ; stormy

words ensued and Dan came upon the scene just as Bridget was twisting and kicking in Mrs. Scott's grasp.

"I wanted to be clean, I wanted my face to be like yours and Davie's," was her only answer to Dan's questions.

"She's been stealing soap, she's getting a bold hussy," replied the woman turning very red.

"Come with me, Bridget," answered Dan. "I want her to help me with the boat," said he, turning to Mrs. Scott. He was a quiet man and rarely interfered between the two, unless indeed Mrs. Scott was very hard on the little girl.

As Bridget ran from the door, Dan turned and said, "If you're tired of the child and she grows naughty, say so, and I'll find another place for her."

"I'd like to know where you'll get another place for her at a shilling a week," retorted Mrs. Scott sulkily. She did not want to lose the shilling, and she did not want to quarrel with Dan, who turned away, and soon overtook Bridget.

"You shouldn't touch what aint your own," said he to the little girl, who looked stealthily up into his face.

"Other folks can wash themselves," murmured she.

"Well, to be sure, it's puzzling to know what to do with ye. There's mostly a bit of soap lying in my quarters; if you promise to put it back you can use it sometimes."

"Thankee," faltered Bridget, "but I could buy a bit *now*, you mind what you gave me last night."

Dan laughed.

"No, no, use it for biscuits or such like. Where do you keep it?"

"I've hid it," she answered shrewdly.

It was a beautiful morning, clear and fresh; a smell of seaweed greeted them as they crossed the sands to the spot where the *Nellie* lay; little rippling limpid waves broke idly upon the shore, and as they rolled back drew with them tiny pebbles, which rattled and jingled with a pleasant musical sound. Several fishermen were busy

with their nets, and Dan set Bridget to dry the boat and get it ready for him to start again. When all was finished, he called out to her—

"This is the ticket," he said. "Do you remember learning anything in the school about it?"

Bridget took it, and knitting her brows, she spelt out, with Dan's help, the words—

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life;" then with a puzzled air she looked up to the sky, and away over the sea. Evidently Dan was much in earnest, for he stood watching her keenly.

"Do you remember?" he asked.

"Don't it mean the Bible, the good book they talks about in the school?"

"I thought of that," he answered slowly, "but I don't see *how*—it can't be; there's your father's Bible I'm taking care of for you, it might help if we turned it up. I've never looked at it for months—we'll see."

"Where did the ticket come from?"

"A lady gave it me as I sat on the pier over in B——, and she said, 'I hope your name will be written there, if not, you can never enter.' It keeps risin' in my mind ever since, and it made me dream of being 'shut out.' But I must go now; perhaps we'll find out the meaning yet. Take care of yerself, and pick up wood for the fires, like a good lass. Here's your breakfast," and he threw her a captain's biscuit.

"I'll be watchin' for you," she said, giving him a nod by way of thanks.

After helping him to launch the boat she stood still, following it with her eyes for some minutes, till Dan's figure looked like a mere speck in the distance, then she turned away and ran off to the woods, where she spent an hour or two gathering sticks and carrying them home in bundles.

She very much wanted to please Dan, he had been so good to her, so she piled them up neatly in his little shed to be ready when he wanted them, for Dan often lighted his own fire and boiled water for his tea.



CHAPTER VIII.

DAN WANTS HIS NAME WRITTEN IN THE BOOK.

BRIDGET was very careful not to come in Mrs. Scott's way, for she was very much afraid that Sally might be sent for her "to mind," and she was anxious to meet Davie on his way back from school. She took up her old position on the trunk of the willow tree at three o'clock and sat watching the fat lazy ducks till she heard the bark of a dog in the distance. On turning her head she saw the figure of little Davie coming down the road ; he was skipping along as usual, and Rover was capering beside him. Bridget slid down from the tree and stood beside the gap in the hedge ; as he came up to her she handed him a straight smooth stick, with a good imitation of a handle—such a stick as boys love, peeled clean and white.

"Here's a stick for you," she said bluntly.

Davie stopped and looked at her curiously, snapping his eyes.

"For me?" he asked, slowly putting out his hand for the prize. "It *is* a jolly stick. Do you always stay here?"

"No-o; I have been gathering sticks for Dan. He's come back; he didn't get drowned, and I'm so glad."

"So you must be; and I'm glad too. It *is* very good of God not to let him get drowned."

Davie's words reminded her of the ticket; indeed, it had been uppermost in her thoughts all day, and she had a pretty distinct idea that the reason Dan was so glad he had not been drowned was, that he did not feel sure that his name was written in that "Book of Life," and he feared he would be shut out of "glory" on that account. But what kind of a book it was, or how he or anyone else could get their names written there, Bridget had no idea. She had listened outside the door to the little children singing "glory" in the school, and she knew that glory had to do

with heaven, where she thought all good people went; but, as far as she was concerned, she felt it was a mere chance if she could ever reach the place. It was more than a year since she had attended the school, for the little money her mother had left had all been spent, and no one had troubled about her education, but while there she had learned to read pretty well.

"You are learning a heap of things out of them books," she said, as she walked at Davie's side in spite of Rover's low growl; "and I daresay you've learned what the 'Book of Life' is, ain't yer?"

"The 'Book—of—Life?'" answered Davie, wonderingly. "I think I've heard people speak of it, but not in the school."

"Where does the book keep?" asked Bridget.

Davie would have very much liked to be able to communicate to her all she wanted to know, but he did not feel very sure of his ground.

"In heaven, I 'spose," he answered.

"Then it ain't the Bible," replied Bridget. "How can folks get their names writed in it? Me and Dan wants ours put in."

"I don't know *'xactly*, but I think God writes people's names in when they are good ; but I don't feel *sure*. If you really want to know, Aunt Dora can tell you ; she teaches some little girls on Sundays all about those things. I'll ask her. She often talks to Polly and me about Jesus and heaven."

"You might ask her, and if you do I'll get you lots of sticks and shells. Ask her all what it means. Remember the 'Book o' Life.'"

Davie promised, and then he told her that Rover was always to accompany him to school ; that his father did not like him going so far alone, and had made Rover understand that he was to take care of the little boy, and wait at the school-house till he was ready to return.





CHAPTER IX.

DRIVING THE COWS.

“**I** TOLD father about the bullocks, and he said it was very kind of you, and he didn't tell me not to speak to you. You look nicer, and not so dusty to-day ; but it *is* a pity you don't wear better frocks.”

“I can't *now*, but I shall soon, when I *work* for myself. The reason I look so clean is, I'm beginning to wash with soap.”

Davie had only time to open his eyes very wide at this revelation, when Bridget cried—

“More bullocks, I do declare.”

“They're no such things. Why, they are our own cows, and they are coming the wrong way and there's no one with them,” exclaimed Davie.

Rover started forward to the rescue, but Davie called him back. The cows most determinedly

crossed the road, and pushed their way one after another into a pasture field close by.

"Why, they were in the South meadow when I started for school; they've got out their own selves; they are so fond of this field—there's more water here."

"What will you do? Shall I drive 'em back for you? I've often driven old Curry Byers' cow home for him."

"Well, I think we must," replied Davie, feeling the importance of his position, "or Jerry might think they was lost; you go that side and I'll go this, and turn 'em round."

The two children entered into the work with great zest, and, amidst shouts and laughter, and with Rover's help, they got the poor creatures on to the road.

"Don't make 'em run; it's near milking time," said Bridget gravely; she remembered one or two thrashings she had received for forgetting that.

"They've trampled down the hedge," said Davie, as they reached the South meadow and

drove the cows in. "Will you stay here and I'll run in and tell father, or they may get out again."

"All right," answered Bridget. Davie ran into the house full of excitement, with his story about the cows, and nearly forgot all about the new baby sister who had to be kept so quiet. His father listened to it all, and then he said—

"I must get some one to drive them home regularly. Jerry is so busy just now; and Martha won't do it. I wonder if I could find a boy in the village to see to them. It is near milking time now, and Martha will soon be ready. I wonder they did not come home instead of going to the field."

"It's because there's more water there, father, and they were thirsty."

"True, Davie, you'll be a clever little farmer one of these days. Now, I must call Jerry. Oh! here he comes." But Jerry was going an errand for one of the men, and, as it was important, he could not go after the cows just then.

"We will go, David, and fetch them; it will be

fun," said Dora, who had come up in the meantime, and who had lifted Davie up into his favourite position with his arms round her neck.

"Yes, you may," answered Mr. Duncan, "and we must inquire after another boy. I must be off now!"

"Aunt Dora," exclaimed Davie gleefully as they went along, "I have thought of a plan! You heard me tell father about that little girl who helped me yesterday, and who is minding the cows. I believe *she'd* drive them back and forward all right."

"Well, we will see, Davie."

"And she does want to get better clothes, and, oh, Auntie Dore, I nearly forgot, she wants to know about the Book of Life. She says she wants her name *writed* in it; she has heard something about it, and she doesn't know what to do. I said I would ask you."

Dora was very young, but she had learned to know the way of Truth, and she loved it; and very simply she had begun to tell others, younger than herself, about the love of Jesus, and the way

to heaven. She was rather timid, but when once she began to speak, her fear vanished. She had a little class of children in the village school at home who came on Sunday to hear about the Word of God, and learn some little texts and hymns.

“Did she ask you, Davie? what made her, I wonder; if she wants to know, I would like to tell her,” and the colour rose in Dora’s cheeks, and a sweet, solemn light filled her eyes, which caused Davie to look up wonderingly.

“Here she is,” he cried, as the little curly-haired, dark-eyed girl came shyly forward from the hedge; then, gaining courage as she saw Dora’s kind, interested look, she said—

“I’ve kept ’em safe; they’s been *bellaring* to get oot, but I didn’t let ’em.”

“Thank you,” said Dora, “we are going to drive them home.”

“I’ll do it, it ain’t for you to do; I’m used to cows,” and she sped through the meadow gathering the animals together, while Davie watched her with his amused smile, and then, looking up at Aunt Dora, said—

"She does it *well*, doesn't she?"

"Yes, if she is trustworthy, she might suit your father, instead of a boy; but wait, Davie dear, till I have asked her some questions."

"What will you ask her, Auntie Dore?"

"Well, I shall talk a little with her, and try and find out if she speaks nicely, and seems well behaved. Your father would not like to have a rude, idle, little girl about the farm. When you are old enough to go to business, Davie, your employers will want to know that you are truthful, and honest, and clever. The best way is to begin to serve God while you are young."

"If the people come to *you*, Aunt Dora, will you speak up for me?" asked Davie, with that sweet smile of his.


"That I will," she answered, kissing him.





CHAPTER X.

BLACK, RED, WHITE, AND GOLD.

“ KNOW yer farm; I'll put 'em in safe,” said Bridget, as they followed the cows along the road.

As they walked, Dora asked her several questions as to where she lived, and what she did all day; and then she said—

“Davie says you want to ask me something; perhaps I can help you. I do not know a great deal about the Bible; but I know Jesus is my Saviour, and I wish every one else knew it too. I want to help little boys and girls,” added Dora simply, “because I once used to wonder where I should go to when I died and I think other children must want to know. Now I am sure I shall go to live with Jesus because He says, ‘My sheep shall never perish, I give unto them eternal life.’”

Bridget looked up and said shyly,

"I think that's what Dan means."

"Does he want to know the way to heaven?"

"Ay," nodded Bridget, "that's it; but he says folks must get their names writed in a book first—the Book o' Life."

"Oh yes; that's quite true," replied Dora, with a "far away" look in her eyes, "none *can* enter but those whose names are 'written in the Lamb's Book of Life.'"

"Can you tell me about it, and I'll let Dan know?" asked Bridget eagerly.

"I will very gladly, but I think we will see the cows safely into the barn first. You open the gate. Now Betsey and Brindle gently," said Dora, as the eager creatures pushed through into the yard. They knew the way, and Martha being ready to receive them, the young folks passed through a little side gate into the garden, where Mr. Duncan was speaking to one of the men.

"David," said Dora to her brother-in-law, "this is the little girl who helped Davie yester-

day when the bullocks came along the road. She says she has often driven cows, and she has been bringing ours home just now. Would she be any use to you since Jerry is so busy?"

"Well," said Mr. Duncan, smiling at the little group, "she is rather small to be a driver. Who does she belong to, and would she like to try?"

Bridget nodded vigorously, and began twisting the corner of her shawl in great agitation.

"She lives down at the shore with a woman called Scott, and she says a fisherman called Dan looks after her."

"She hasn't got any father; he was drowned, and her mother is dead," put in Davie.

"Poor child!" said his father looking kindly at her. "But who will give you a character, little maid? Who will say that you are truthful and trustworthy?"

Bridget looked up and something like tears stood in her eyes, but she did not answer for a minute, then fearing to lose a good opportunity, she spoke up for herself.

"Nobody never takes care of me but Dan; he

could tell ye I gathers wood and sticks as quick as anybody, and I drives Curry Byers cow home, and I never let it run much at milkin' time."

"Well done," said Mr. Duncan, with a good tempered laugh, "what else can you do?"

"I could weed yer garden and dig potatoes, and mind Polly," said Bridget energetically.

"I do believe she might help a bit," answered Davie's father. "Well we'll inquire about you, and you can call up to-morrow about this time. Here's a penny, now what will you buy with it?"

"I'll buy a slice of cheese for me and Dan's supper," she answered, "but if you ask anybody about me," she added, looking to Dora as Mr. Duncan turned to lift up Polly, "ask Dan, he knows best. Mrs. Scott hates me.

"Very well, we will, and you will come to-morrow."

"Ain't you going to tell me now what you promised?" asked Bridget.

"Oh yes, of course. I will walk back part of the way with you, and Davie will take care of Polly a few minutes."

"Oh, let me come," pleaded Davie, and Dora never could refuse Davie. He was her especial pet, so Polly was handed over to Martha.

Dora asked the children to wait a minute, while she fetched something. She soon returned with two pieces of bread and jam in her hand, and a little book. The jam pieces were quickly disposed of, and when they had reached the road Dora said,

"I have a little book here, Bridget, which I will give to you. It may help you and Dan to understand how your names can get written in the Book of Life. See!" and Dora showed the children a little cardboard book with two stiff leaves inside. When she opened it she saw that the first page was entirely black—not one white spot upon it. It was as black as ink. The second page was red, like scarlet; the third was as white as snow; the fourth gilded as yellow as gold.

"Is that the book?" asked Bridget, in an awe-struck voice.

"This is only a little book to help us to under-

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stand how we may be made fit to live for ever with the Lord in heaven. It is not the book you are asking about. See the first page! it is all black, and it shows us a picture of what we are before we are all washed and forgiven. God says our hearts are deceitful, and this little text at the back of the book says, "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" We cannot change ourselves."

"What *will* we do, Aunt Dora?" asked Davie.

"See; the next red page reminds us of the precious blood which Jesus shed for us; it can wash us though we are so sinful, and make us"—and here Dora turned over the leaf—"whiter than snow; much whiter than this paper, so that God cannot see a spot or stain on us, and after that, comes the glory which is shown by the gilded page, when we shall live in the golden city and be happy for ever."

"That is a wonderful kind o' book!" exclaimed Bridget.

"Yes, it is beautiful, is it not? and when we are washed and made white, God writes our names

in the Book of Life. No one has seen it, but God says He keeps it. It is a book of His remembrance. We do not know what it is *like*, but when we trust Jesus, and are washed from our sins, He puts our names there, and nobody can alter it. Oh, Davie, darling, I want to be sure your name is there ; and yours, too, Bridget," and Dora's eyes filled with tears.

Davie squeezed her hand in both of his.

"Aunt Dora, I'll pray to God," he said.

"Ask Him to help you to trust in Jesus, and do you ask Him, too, Bridget. He always hears us, and He will help you to understand it all—how we were all lost—deserved to be punished for ever ; but Jesus loved us, and died on the cross instead of us, and bore our sins away, so that we may go free, and directly we come to Him and take Him for our own Saviour, He washes away our sins and writes our names in His book of life. There are two or three texts about it. What was the one you read, Bridget?"

"I don't know it all, but I am sure it said you

couldn't 'enter' into some place—'the glory,' I think—if your name wasn't there."

"Well, I will look it up and tell you the verses about it. Do you think you understand it a little better now?" and once more Dora told her what she had said before.

"Yes, I can tell Dan lots about it," she answered.

"Good-bye, then, and come up to-morrow afternoon," exclaimed Dora, with an encouraging smile. "You may take the little book and show it to Dan."





CHAPTER XI.

THE CHILDREN'S PIC-NIC; OR, TWO TEA PARTIES.

DORA made Polly and Davie very happy that evening. When Davie and she returned to the farm, she took them with her to the cool, clean larder, and bidding them sit down on little stools till she was ready, she began cutting slices of bread and sweet fresh butter, and pieces spread with strawberry jam. Then she put them into a basket with a clean cloth, and cups and plates, and added half-a-dozen seed buns. The children asked what she was doing it for, but she would only say "Trust," and every now and then kiss the sweet lips that looked so tempting. Davie was devoted to little Polly, and he sat with his arm round her as they watched Dora.

"Now, see, here's goes a bottle of milk and

another of tea," she said as she filled them up. "Watch, Polly, what Auntie Dora will put in next."

Polly's eyes grew big as some beautiful yellow plums were laid on the top. Nurse popped her head into the kitchen, and nodded approvingly.

"That's right, Miss—my lady is asleep, and it will keep the house quiet."

"How is baby," asked Davie.

"She is just as good and as thriving as can be but we must keep her quiet;" so the children stepped softly through the clean sanded kitchen, while the big clock ticked solemnly in the corner, and Dora, with her finger on her lips, carried the basket out through the yard into the road.

"What are you going to do with *all* those *boofull* things?" asked Polly.

Then Dora told them that the men were cutting corn in one of the fields, and they were going to have a little pic-nic there, and perhaps father would join them.

They chose a pretty spot under an oak tree,



where primroses and violets grew in the spring, and which was covered with the softest turf. Here they could watch the reapers; and Dora spread the cloth and set out the tea while she told them stories, and they sang songs and rolled about, full of fun and joy.

By and bye the father joined them for a little while; played with the children and talked about Bridget. It was decided that Dora and Davie and Rover should walk to the shore when Polly was in bed, and learn all they could about her.

Meanwhile Bridget had run home with her treasure, and had seen that the *Nellie* was high and dry on the shore. She, therefore, made for Mother Scott's hut as quickly as possible, and pattered up to Dan's room. He had kindled a fire, and put on some fish to boil.

"Oh, Dan, I meant to be here fust, but I've had to stop and see about a character. Praps I've got a place; to drive cows up at farmer Duncan's, on'y they wants some one to speak for me, to say as I'll be smart and trusty."

"Who'll do that?" asked Dan, with a comical smile.

"Could you?" asked Bridget, anxiously; "I would, honour bright, I would; and, Dan, it would be fine if I could get a new frock sometimes, and my meat reg'lar."

Dan's eyes grew watery; he was thinking he might have done more for Bridget.

"If you don't speak for me, there ain't nobody as will, and I shall never be like other folk."

"I'll do what I can; I can say you've always helped me well with the *Nellie*; you've never took anything belonging to me. You *could* drive cows, if you didn't get playing and forget 'em."

"I wouldn't no, I wouldn't; and I'd get seeing Davie and the young lady. I nearly forgot; I've summat to show you, Dan—it's about that card of yourn."

"How did you get it?" he asked as he turned over the leaves.

Then Bridget told him all about it, and ended by saying—

"She told us we was all *that*," pointing to the black sheet, "but we must be made white like this one; and she said Jesus could make us like that, and wash us clean, and then let us into the glory all like that gold page."

"There is nothing about my card here, but it sounds beautiful," said Dan.

"Ah, but if you're washed clean He'll put yer name in the Book of Life, and it's up in heaven, God keeps it there."

"You've learned it well," he said, beating his hand on his breast. "Was that all?"

"It is the blood of Jesus that makes us white," added Bridget, looking at the scarlet page.

"It is a wonderful little book, certainly, and it is a help to the card. There is readin' at the back, so we'll spell 'em out both together after we've had supper. You can take it with me to-night. This fish is splendid!"

So Bridget sat at Dan's table and enjoyed her supper amazingly, while they talked about the fishing and the storm, the card and the book, and Bridget's future prospects.

"I must mend one of my nets while it is light," he said, "and I have to speak to Jim about the fish; I've had a good haul, and he wants to buy the lot. You can come down and help, after you've put up the dishes. Mrs. Scott won't be home till late."

Dan walked briskly to where the *Nellie* was lying. Strange thoughts filled his mind. He had been restless and uneasy for the last three days. He had been so nearly drowned, and while the tempest raged around him he had seemed to be in the presence of an angry God. Bridget's father had spoken to him about his soul several times, but Dan had not thought much about it. In that dreadful storm the words rung in his ears, "You *must* live for ever, you know;" and afterwards, when the lady handed him the card with those words written on it, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," and said to him, "I hope your name will be written there, if not, you can never enter," he could not forget the word nor the impressions

made by that stormy night on the ocean, when the thunder roared continually, and the sky was lighted up by the vivid flashes, which followed one another in quick succession.

As he walked and thought of it all, the words, "God grant my name may get written there," dropped from his lips, and he said to himself, "If I *only* knew the way to get made as white as that little book shows up, it would be all right; I should get marked down sure and certain, but it beats me how it is to be done!"





CHAPTER XII.

SWEET WORDS AT SUNSET.

BY the time Dan had finished mending his nets Jim and Bridget came up, and he struck a bargain over the fish. Many of the poor things were still alive, floundering about as they were handed over to their purchaser, and slipping out of Bridget's hands as she tried to pick them up.

The sun was slowly sinking in the west, and beautiful bright clouds were dotted over the sky, while the sea, which had been so wild and stormy a few days before, was now smooth and clear. Dan leaned against his boat, and lifting Bridget up on to a seat on the edge of it took out his card. He read it slowly over again, and then asked for the book.

The little girl unpinned her old frock and

took it from her bosom wrapped in a bit of cloth.

Dan smiled, and after carefully looking at the black, the red, the white, and the golden pages, he began to read the four verses written on the back:—

1st. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

2nd. "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

3rd. "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

4th. "And whom he justified them he also glorified."

Whilst he was spelling out the words a little childish voice called "Bridget," and looking up they saw Dora and Davie.

"Good evening," she said, as Dan raised his cap, "I am glad we have found you. Mrs. Scott was out, but another person directed us here. We have come to ask about Bridget. You know her well, I think, and Mr. Duncan at Beechwood wants a little boy or girl to drive the cows and run messages sometimes."

Dan drew himself up, and told in a simple, honest way, all he knew of Bridget, and ended by saying, "Poor lass, she's got no father or mother to teach her, but I think she'll do well, and she's a smart bit of a thing, and can give me a help with the *Nellie* here fine. A few coppers a week will not come amiss, I'm sure."

"She will get one shilling and sixpence a week for the cows, and she must be up by six in the morning, and bring them home by four in the afternoon, and take two little cans of milk down to the village.

Bridget's eyes grew very bright at the thought of earning so much money, and after a few more words had passed between them, it was decided that she should be up at Beechwood by six in the morning.

Dora had seen the little book she gave Bridget in Dan's hand, and she wanted very much to speak about it. Her heart beat quickly, and the colour rose to her cheeks, but she could not turn away without saying something.

"Do you understand the little book?" she asked.

"We was spelling out the words, Miss, for I can't boast of much eddication, and there's a thing or two I should like well to know. I had this card give me, Miss, the other day ; perhaps you can make it out better nor I," he replied, passing it to Dora.

She read the words aloud, "And there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

"It is a verse in the Bible," replied Dora, gently, "and it means we cannot enter heaven unless our names are written in the book of life. But God wants us to be saved, and live with Him for ever, and so He has sent Jesus to be our Saviour, and it says, 'Whosoever believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' When we get everlasting life, our names are written in heaven."

Dan dropped his eyes for a moment, and looked earnestly down at the pebbly beach, then he raised them up to the bright earnest young face before him, and blurted out the words as if he could not help it:

"The question is, Miss, how the like of us is to get it?"

Dora was silent for a moment, and then she answered,

"It is such a happy thing that Jesus did the work for us. He paid the debt we could not pay. He shed the blood that makes us clean, and He has promised (and He cannot lie) that whoever believes this and trusts Him shall be saved, and have everlasting life. I believe it, and it makes *me* happy."

"If I felt that too I'd be the happiest man in Shingle Bay," answered Dan sturdily.

"And you *may* be it then," urged Dora, "for if you are a sinner, Jesus is such a *great* Saviour and will not cast away any that come to Him."

She took the little book and pointing to the black page first and then to the scarlet, said, "Though we are full of sin, and as black as that, the blood which Jesus shed will make us as white as snow if we trust to it. Then God puts our names in the Book of Life, and we shall live in the

glory for ever. Those texts will show you that this is true," and she read them over to him.

"Thank you, Miss; I haven't heard such good words for many a day," he said, as Dora bade them good-night. "I'll think it over, Miss; good-bye, and thank you."

Dora's heart felt as light as a feather as she walked home that night. She had "confessed *His* name," and a blessing rested upon her.

Davie felt happy and solemn, too, as he walked along, and said, "It was good of Jesus to be our Saviour, Aunt Dora. I hope He'll put my name in His book."

"He will, Davie, if you really want it, because He loves you so. He did all that could be done. Just rest in His love."





CHAPTER XIII.

DAN FINDS REST.

IT was long before Bridget fell asleep that night, and she rose very early next morning, and presented herself at Beechwood in good time. Dan promised always to call her at half-past five, and he began to take a much greater interest in the little girl than he had ever done before. When his day's work was over, he would reach down her father's Bible and read portions out of it aloud. He was in real earnest, and the truth was slowly but surely dawning upon his mind.

"I am black and full of sin; but God says, the blood cleanseth and can make me white. I *must* just believe it, for He *did* shed it. I wish I could say, I *do* believe it." He often murmured these words; so that Bridget would look up and

say, "Did ye speak, Dan?" and he would answer, "It's nothing new," with a weary sigh.

The traveller that toils on the high road, longing for a draught of fresh water, finds it all the more delightful because he has waited awhile for it. The labourer that does a good day's work finds rest all the more sweetly because of his long hours. The captive rejoices in his liberty because of the weary days he has spent. Good news is hailed with great delight when we have watched for it day after day. And so, when Dan found peace and rest *in Jesus*, it seemed to him, indeed, "to pass all understanding."

He knelt alone in his little room, and, being filled with the thought of the love of Christ, *gave Him thanks* for His life and for His death, and in doing this he lost sight of himself and accepted his Substitute.

Bridget was too much wrapped up in her new friends and in her new occupation to think of these things as Dan did. These beautiful truths did not pierce *deep* down into her soul as yet.

She always contrived to get a peep at Davie

in the afternoon, and she admired him with all her heart. He and Dan and Miss Dora and Polly filled her mind.

At the end of a fortnight she begged Dan to buy her a second-hand frock at the town, where he sometimes went to dispose of his fish, and for eighteenpence he procured a tidy one, made of linsey. It was not a first-rate fit, but Bridget was proud enough.

Mrs. Scott did not grow more friendly to the little girl. She would have liked to get possession of the extra money, but this Dan would not hear of, and he took Bridget more than ever under his protection, and spent her wages for her to the best of his ability.

That first month was a very happy one for her. She managed the cows very well, and she helped to weed the garden, and sometimes she had the great joy of watching Polly for half an hour. For return she received many a piece of bread and butter or cheese, and Mr. Duncan rather enjoyed a few minutes' chat with the sharp, bright-eyed little girl.

Mrs. Duncan had not gained her strength very fast, and when baby was a month old she was still obliged to rest, and the nurse was engaged to stay a week or two longer.

Martha, the servant, never had liked Bridget ; she had spoken against her from the first, and had tried to find fault with her on every occasion. She was always averse to the poor, and recognised Bridget as the child who had been trespassing in the garden the day baby Daisy was born.

By the time Bridget's first month was up, the weather suddenly changed from being clear and warm, and became misty and wet. She had driven the cows regularly backwards and forwards, and on the whole had been punctual and attentive. Davie trotted backwards and forwards to school with faithful Rover by his side, who carried in his mouth Davie's little school bag, and well he protected his young master.

No one dared interfere with the bag while Rover was beside him. He was a powerful dog, and a favourite with Davie's master. He always put him in the kennel till afternoon school was

over, and many a bit of biscuit and many a bone was saved up by the village children to feed him with.

There were three other little children who had to walk more than a mile to the school, and their parents followed Mr. Duncan's example and sent a watch-dog with them; so that, as the little ones went through the village with "Rover" and "Nelson," many mothers would come to their cottage doors to look at and smile upon them as they passed.

But not a boy dared call out a rude word, or stoop to lift a stone, while those faithful dogs were near.





CHAPTER XIV.

BRIDGET'S TROUBLES INCREASE.

DORA was still staying at Beechwood, for, as we have said, Mrs. Duncan was far from strong. She had spoken once or twice to Dan, and had grown quite fond of the kind-hearted fisherman who more than once sent a present of fresh fish to Beechwood. Bridget's money was always spent on her food and clothes, and she was feeling much more comfortable. But for Mrs. Scott's ill-nature, she might have had a happy home.

One morning it had been raining, and Bridget had run back after seeing the cows into the meadow. She was looking forward very eagerly to seeing Davie in the afternoon, for she had a surprise ready for him, and without thinking of anything else, she ran through the kitchen where

Mrs. Scott was scrubbing. Unfortunately she ran up against a tin basin which was standing on the floor half full of dirty water, and upset it.

The water streamed across the clean floor, and Bridget stood aghast, and as she turned her head she saw that she had left little muddy footprints also behind her.

It was very careless of Bridget, and very provoking for Mrs. Scott. She did not heed Bridget's "Oh dear," nor her offer of help, but seizing the child with her left hand, boxed her ears soundly with the right, and then thrust her from the house; catching up a large piece of stick (the wooden handle of the axe), Mrs. Scott flung it after her, and closed the door.

She did not wait to see the result of her hasty action, although she heard a cry from Bridget, for it had struck her forehead, but proceeded to wipe up the water, grumbling as she did so.

Poor Sally, who had been left by her mother with Mrs. Scott for the day, was seated on the table out of the way. She had been set down with a sudden jerk, and it made her cry. The

fact was, Mrs. Scott had intended Bridget to watch her through the morning, but now it was not likely that she would come within call.

Bridget, however, was determined to get upstairs to Dan's room and bring away a parcel which was safely hidden there. Her head ached from the blow she had received, and she was filled with angry, resentful thoughts of Mrs. Scott—but she must get her parcel.

While she waited about out of sight, and yet in view of the door, she put her hand to her forehead and found the blood was trickling from the wound. As she washed it at the spring, she saw Mrs. Scott carry Sally away to the coal shed, which was on the other side of the hut. Hastily dashing across the yard, she gained the door, and scrambled up the ladder to Dan's attic. Here she secured her parcel, but she was not able to cross the yard again unperceived. Mrs. Scott saw her, and asked what mischief she was up to now.

I am sorry to say Bridget so far forgot herself as to put on a scowling face as answer, while she tried to hide her parcel under her arm.

"What have you got there?" cried Mrs. Scott, suspiciously.

"This is what I've got, thanks to yourself," cried Bridget, pushing back her curly hair, and showing up the ugly cut on her forehead.

"Serves you right," muttered Mrs. Scott, not without a twinge of fear at what Dan would say.

"I'll make you remember it, Mrs. Scott," cried Bridget, growing bold, her black eyes flashing. "You are the cruelest woman in Shingle Bay."

Mrs. Scott made a run at her, and Bridget fled away up the hill. She sat for some time under the trees on the damp grass till she shivered, and her head ached badly, while she watched Mrs. Scott hanging out clothes on the green. She wanted to get her breakfast, for she had not taken it when she came back, and now it was nearly twelve o'clock, but she dared not go for it.

Dan had gone away the day before, and might not be back till the next day. He had left it uncertain; and Bridget felt very lonely and miserable.

"As soon as I can get my bread and cheese I'll be off to the farm," she said to herself; and she watched Mrs. Scott's movements eagerly.

Presently she saw her come out of the hut again with Sally, and this time she crossed the road and went some little distance. Bridget knew this was to Sally's mother's cottage, and she would be safe to run up now. As she loitered a few minutes on the green where the clothes hung, a woman passed by and spoke to her, and asked her what that was on her forehead.

"It's a present from Mrs. Scott," said Bridget, "but she'll repent of it."

After securing her breakfast she went off to the farm, but she felt so giddy and strange that she was glad to sit down and rest.

All was very quiet there; Mrs. Duncan had taken a shivering fit, and felt very unwell, so she was in bed, and Mr. Duncan and nurse were beside her. Davie was at school, and Dora had gone for the doctor, who lived some distance away. Martha was busy making butter, and

little Polly was trotting about beside her, having been left in her charge.

Bridget did not want to speak to Martha, so she began to weed the garden, hoping that she would soon catch sight of Miss Dora. She did not feel very able to stoop about, but she worked for a quarter of an hour, and then little Polly caught sight of her, and ran out to keep her company.

"Where's your aunt?" asked Bridget.

"Auntie Dore gone away to bring a doctor; poor mum-ma ill; Polly *must* be quiet," said the little girl, lowering her voice.

"That's a pity," replied Bridget; "what's wrong?"

"Dunno," answered Polly. "Perhaps baby's worried her—me go and see," and Polly trotted back to the kitchen, and disappeared inside.

"Hullo," cried a voice, and Sally's big brother looked over the hedge. "You're wanted very particular down on the shore; you'd better be quick; you should see the fish!"

"Is Dan in?" asked Bridget.

"Didn't I tell you you was wanted very particular, and you are to call at Mrs. Scott's for the news; don't waste no time, or somebody won't be pleased," and the boy ran off.

Bridget slowly laid down the trowel, and then thinking, "Dan may want me," she left her work and started for Shingle Bay. It took her about fifteen minutes to reach the hill that overlooked the shore, and she eagerly scanned the beach for signs of the *Nellie*, but she could see nothing of the boat, and instantly thought it was a trick of Bob's, for he and his mother shared somewhat of Mrs. Scott's ill-will for her.

"How stupid I was to believe him," she said. "Oh dear! I am tired; I wish Davie would come; it must be near his time for leaving the school."

For a few minutes she was undecided as to whether she should go to Mrs. Scott's or not, in case Dan wanted her; but after looking carefully along the shore she satisfied herself his boat was not there, and that it was a trick of Bob's.

Poor little Bridget hardly knew where to turn, or what to do, so she thought the best thing

was to go to her old seat on the willow and look for Davie. But there was a full hour to wait, for he would not return from afternoon school till three o'clock, and it was a different matter to sit there on a damp, chilly day in September from what it had been to do so in a warm, sunny day in August. She had been sitting too long already on the wet grass, and shivers ran down her back and limbs.

She tried to rest herself on the trunk of a tree while she held her precious parcel in her hands. "Davie *will* be so pleased to get it, and I'm so glad now I did not spend the money on goodies," she said to herself. "He is the nicest little boy in the world, I think. I wish I had a little brother like him!"

The hour passed slowly by and Davie did not come. Bridget had time for thinking as she sat there, and she felt desolate and unhappy, without being quite able to tell the reason why. She began to wonder what she should do if anything happened to Dan, and then she remembered his saying to her, a few days before—

"If anything happens to me now, Bridget, you need not to trouble for my sake. I am sure I shan't be shut out. The angels get their orders from the King, and He is my Saviour now. It is a grand thing to know your name is in the book."

Bridget thought it all over, and then the tears stole down her cheeks. "Dan's name is in the Book of Life now, and mine isn't, and if *I* die I shall be shut out—where? All alone in the dark, with no Jesus. That would be dreadful," she said to herself. "I will ask God to teach me the way to get in like Dan. I s'pose He wouldn't be angry if I asked Him to do it here out in the air with the little birds." And in very simple words, with tears in her eyes, Bridget asked God to put her name in the Book of Life.





CHAPTER XV.

MISSING.

WHEN she rose up and jumped down from the tree, Bridget cried out with the pain that darted through her head, and her back ached, as if she had taken cold. As she crawled through the hedge she heard the sound of voices, and saw Martha and Davie coming quickly from the house. As Martha caught sight of Bridget, she called out, "Come here, you! Have you seen our Polly?"

"No," said Bridget, "not since I was pullin' up weeds in the garden. You haven't lost her, have you?"

"We haven't seen her these two hours. What did you do with her when you left the garden? You ought to have looked after her, she was with you."

"She only came out to speak to me a few

minutes, and then she ran back into the kitchen, and Bob Simmons called me home, and I haven't seed her again."

"Patience me! Master is in a way, and Miss Dora, too; they are gone the other road to look for her. We've been searching all over the farm; and the doctor has come to see Missus, and she's not to know a word about it. Davie and me was coming down for you. We'd better go back now and see if she is found."

"Bridget," said Davie, with a tear-stained face, "you know all the places. Do try and find my little Polly. I shall never be happy any more if she is lost."

"Polly lost!" cried Bridget. "Oh, Davie! we must find her! I'll try with all my might. Where could she have gone? I hope no gipsies haven't got her! I've seen 'em about here sometimes."

"Don't talk nonsense!" exclaimed Martha, sharply. "You ought to have looked after her. It seems to me it was your fault."

"I never knew I *was* to mind her, or I wouldn't



have gone back to the Bay ; but she only went straight into the kitchen, and I thought you was there."

Martha didn't answer, and they reached the farm in a few minutes, to find it all quiet. Mr. Duncan and Dora had not returned. Davie's master had given him a half holiday, so he had started for home before Bridget reached the willow tree, and close to the gate of the farm met Bill, one of the men, who was going to town, a distance of seven miles, and who called Rover to follow him.

Davie and Bridget searched again every nook and corner, but they neither heard nor saw anything of Polly. Nurse called out and asked anxiously if she were found, and then telling them not to speak so loud lest Mrs. Duncan should hear, disappeared indoors. Davie began to cry, and Bridget tried to comfort him, saying,

"Never mind, don't fret yourself; if she is to be got, I'll get her. I'm just waiting a few minutes to see if your pa comes back."

In a quarter of an hour Mr. Duncan and Dora

returned, but without Polly. It was beginning to rain, and they were terribly anxious.

Mr. Duncan questioned Bridget very closely, and seemed annoyed that she had not followed little Polly into the kitchen, for Martha continued to lay all the blame upon Bridget.

It appeared that when Polly went into the garden Martha left the kitchen to go into the dairy, and when she returned ten minutes after no Polly or Bridget were to be seen ; but thinking they were together not far off she did not trouble herself further about the child. When half-an-hour passed and Dora returned and asked for Polly she began to look for her, and their anxiety was aroused by Jerry saying he had met Bridget all alone on the road near the willow pond.

“What shall we do now?” asked Mr. Duncan, with a grave, pale face. “Is there a pond or well near, she could have fallen into?” But most of the places had been searched.

“I’ll go and bring home the cows ; then I’ll search for her,” said Bridget.

She dared not say before Martha that she had

not been told to look after little Polly, and her heart felt ready to burst with grief at the thought of any harm befalling the little girl, for she loved her dearly. She forgot her aches and pains for the time, and ran as quickly as she could after the cows. Then finding that Mr. Duncan and Dora were again searching for Polly with two of the men belonging to the farm, she started off herself.

She put her treasured parcel into Davie's hands, saying, "That's for you, from me ; it will help to make you cheery till I come back."

Davie had no time to thank her, but he eagerly opened the parcel, and was greatly delighted to see a little wooden boat painted blue, with two sails. It had been for some time exhibited for sale in a little window at Shingle Bay, and many small boys had eyed it wistfully ; but as it was marked up "4d." it was beyond their power to obtain. Bridget, however, had laid by her three-penny piece on purpose to procure the boat for Davie, and when she was able to add the other penny became the happy purchaser. It was a

proud moment for her when she bought it, and came out of the shop followed by an admiring crowd.

When Bridget started forth to find Polly, her thought was to go first to an open field partially covered with furze bushes, about three miles away, where the gipsies encamped when they visited the neighbourhood, for she felt sure they had run off with Polly. She was not fit to walk as far as the common, but she did not think of that, for Bridget had a brave spirit for so young a child.

She toiled on, though out of breath, and was getting wet from the rain. Once she felt so faint and sick that she stopped at a small farmhouse and begged a bit of bread.

"Give me anything; I don't care what it is. I've had no dinner, for I'm looking after a little girl as is lost. I think the gipsies have got her. Have you seen any pass by?"

"No," said the woman, "but if you are hungry here's a piece for you; I don't grudge a bit of bread. Whose little girl are you looking for?"

Bridget told her, and the woman said she knew Mr. Duncan by sight, and as she stood she scanned the distant fields, while Bridget pushed on in quest of Polly.

When she arrived at the common there were no gipsies anywhere to be seen. She enquired timidly of several men whom she met if the gipsies had been there lately, or if they had seen a little girl wandering about, as she was looking for one who was lost. They stared at her, and began to laugh and joke; but only one answered her civilly. So poor little Bridget turned away again, feeling very unhappy.

"I must look about nearer the farm now I know she ain't here," she said, as she began her weary walk back, but it took her a long while, and she had to rest very often.

It was getting dark, and still raining, when she met a man carrying a lantern, whom she recognised as a labourer from Beechwood Farm.

"Ain't you got Polly?" she cried.

"No," said the man, "she isn't found yet," and he proceeded to throw his light along the road

and into the ditches. "We've been searching the meadows, and the master is nearly crazy."

Bridget's heart sank, and she felt she could do nothing more. Suddenly, like a flash of light, came the thought, "God can do everything. He loves Polly and Miss Dora; I'll ask Him to find her." And she did so with tears streaming down her pale face.

The man went one way and Bridget another, crying, "Polly! Polly!" About a quarter of a mile from the farm, on one side of the road, was a little grassy lane, and as Bridget passed along she heard the sound of a boy's voice. He seemed to be pumping, for she could hear the sound of water splashing into a bucket. He was calling out to someone, and Bridget turned up the lane towards him.

He was a little fellow, about Davie's size, and was trying to fill a pail at the pump.

"Have you seen a little girl?" asked Bridget. "We've lost Polly Duncan, who lives up at the farm."

"There's a little girl in our house to-day,"

replied the boy, "and we dunno where she lives ; but she calls herself Polly."

"Show me ! show me where she is !" cried poor Bridget ; and the little boy ran before her half the length of the short lane, where a small cottage stood half-hidden in a group of trees.

How Bridget's heart beat !

Could it be that God had heard her prayer ?

She had felt so tired and weary a few minutes before, but now fresh strength seemed given her, and she followed the little fellow as quickly as she could to the cottage door. She hardly waited for him to go in first, but pushing eagerly forward scanned the little group that were seated on the floor round the fire.


Sure enough, little Polly was there !





CHAPTER XVI.

SHE DID HER BEST.

KITTY BROWN, a sturdy little girl of ten years old, had been left that morning by her mother in charge of four little brothers and sisters, the youngest being a baby of three months old. Mrs. Brown had gone out for the day to wash, and her last words were—

“Be sure and not leave the children, Kitty. Promise me you won’t; and you are not to go farther than the upland meadow for a walk with baby. I shall look in at dinner time to see to him.”

So Kitty had been very faithful to her charge; had filled the baby’s bottle regularly, and taken the little ones for a run in the meadow in the afternoon. The upland meadow was just across

the lane, and lay between Beechwood Farm and the cottage. As the children were returning home they heard a cry, but could not see anyone. Another and another cry followed, till at last it was evident there was some little child near in great trouble.

Kitty's motherly little heart was distressed, and she looked anxiously around, and fancied the sound came from a ditch by the side of the meadow. Sure enough, on looking down, there sat a little girl, her face tear-stained, and frightened. Kitty laid the baby upon the ground for a minute, and scrambling down the steep bank, lifted little Polly up. She had evidently been asleep in the ditch, and looked as if she had been crying before she fell asleep. She clung to Kitty, and the only thing they could do was to take the little wanderer home with them, for it was beginning to rain. Fortunately it was a dry ditch into which Polly had fallen, and except having scratches on her face and hands, she did not seem hurt, although the poor little thing was cold and frightened.



When the children asked her name she said,
"I'se Polly."

"What else?" inquired Kitty.

"Unken," was all she could say.

Although she cried at first, after having eaten some bread and butter and drank some milk she became amused with watching the other children.

Kitty dared not leave her little charge, and as there was no other cottage near, she thought it best to keep the little stranger till her mother returned home.

Bridget was overjoyed when she saw Polly, and as Mrs. Brown returned at that minute it was decided that Kitty should help Bridget take the little one back to Beechwood Farm, with the promise that some one should see Kitty safe home again. Polly clung to Bridget and burst into tears, for she had evidently been much frightened, so they wrapped her round with a shawl of Kitty's, and taking hands the little party started out.

"Don't cry, Polly; we'll soon be home now,"

said Bridget faintly, "I promised Davie I'd bring you, and I never meant to lose you."

When they reached the farm, two or three men were standing about the doorway and lights were seen within. Polly had begun once more to cry, saying she was "so tired," and Bridget had tried with failing strength to carry her. As they reached the door, the men fell back crying out, "Here's the little lass, all safe and sound."

A glad cry burst from inside, as Polly's father rushed out and took his little girl from Bridget's arms.

Dora and Davie were close behind, and to their eager questions, "Oh Polly, darling, is it you? Who found you?" Bridget answered, "I promised you, Davie, I'd get her," and then stumbling forward to the parlour she fell to the ground.

Dora raised her and lifted her into an arm-chair, while Kitty was plied with questions. She told all she knew, and Polly went from one to another kissing them all round and chattering away in her usual style.

But first they attended to poor little Bridget.

She had nearly fainted, and could hardly speak. They gave her warm tea, and bathed her face and hands, coaxing her to eat; but she was too tired and faint to take much.

"She must be put to bed; her clothes are wet through," said Mr. Duncan, "she shall not go back to-night. Put her in Martha's room."

"No, no," gasped Bridget, "she's angry; she thinks I lost Polly, but I didn't. She never told me to watch her. I'll go home to Dan, now I've got her safe." She tried to get up but staggered forward.

"Put her in my room," said Davie. "She is the kindest, best little girl in the world. She has given me a boat and saved Polly—let her sleep in my bed."

"So she shall," said his father, "and we must get her a new frock and hat for what she has done."

Bridget smiled, and was unresistingly borne away to Davie's room, where Dora and Martha made her clean and comfortable. She fell quickly into a troubled sleep, and, as she tossed from side

to side, she kept saying, "I didn't lose her. I promised Davie I would bring her;" and then she would murmur, "I *have* asked God to write my name there."

"See the mark on her brow, and feel how hot her head is!" said Dora, as her brother-in-law came to look at Bridget.

And he answered, "I fear she is going to be ill. We must get the doctor to see her in the morning."





CHAPTER XVII.

"IT IS ALL RIGHT."

WHEN Dan reached his room at six o'clock the same evening, Mrs. Scott was in a very wrathful state. She had found, upon her return home in the morning, that a pair of stockings which had been hanging out to dry were all torn and mutilated, and so was a towel and a pocket handkerchief. Bridget had done it, she was sure, for she had called out threatening words. Mrs. Wyatt had heard her, and Mrs. Scott declared she would not keep her any longer.

"I don't believe she did it," said Dan, stoutly; "though I must say it looks queer."

Bridget did not come home, and he began to feel uneasy.

"It looks as if she were afraid to come back

certainly," he thought ; but he took out his Bible and read his favourite chapters (Revelation **xxi.** and **xxii.**), and then pondered over the verse, " Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." " Freely, freely, without money or price, for Jesus' sake. Because He died we get life. Blessed be His name. It must be a hard heart that turns away from Him. Those that turn away will repent it one day ; for the Book says, ' Every knee *shall* bow, and every tongue *shall* confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' "

As the clock struck nine, a labourer came from Beechwood farm to say that Bridget was there, and he told how she had been the one to find little Polly, adding, " She isn't well no ways, and they say she has had a bad blow on her forehead ; but she will be well taken care of at the farm."

" I'll be up early in the morning to see her, and thank ye," said Dan.

Mrs. Scott looked rather frightened ; but after the man was gone she commenced again to blame Bridget for the mischief done to the clothes, and

was talking about it to Dan, when a young girl tapped at the door.

"Mrs. Scott," she said, "I came to let you know that Curry Byers' cow was chewing away at your linen this morning on the green. I saw she had torn a pair of stockings badly. I drove her off, and I hope there ain't much mischief done."

Mrs. Scott was dumbfounded; and Dan turned on his heel, saying, "I told you I did *not* believe it was Bridget," and left her to make of her own story what she pleased.

When Dan stood next morning beside Bridget in Davie's little bed, the doctor was there too. Her hair was brushed off from her forehead, and the cut was plainly visible. Her face was flushed with excitement at seeing Dan, and she was trying to tell him what had happened, but every now and then she cried out with pain in her limbs. She said they ached so badly she did not know where to lie.

"How did she get that?" asked the doctor, pointing to the mark on her forehead.

Dan did not know, and so he stooped down,

and asked Bridget. She looked quite pretty as she lay there so clean and fresh, in a little white night-gown of Davie's, her eyes shining bright and her cheeks flushed. Bridget did not like to tell, but when they pressed her she answered,

"Mrs. Scott threw a bit of wood at me. She mightn't ha' meant it to hit me, for she was angry because I spilt some water by accident on the floor. I was angry, too, when she did it, and I said I'd pay her out; but you'll tell her I won't do it?" she added, looking at Dan. "I don't feel angry now—only tired and hot—and I don't want any more black stains on me; I want to be washed white—you know, Dan."

"Yes, I know," he replied, "in the precious blood of Jesus, you mean."

The Doctor had stepped aside to speak to Dora, so Bridget went on,

"That's it. So I asked God to write my name in His own book. Will he, Dan?"

"I'm sure He will. He says, 'Ask and ye shall receive.' So of course He will. He has promised for Jesus'sake, Bridget—it's all for Jesus'

sake. We don't deserve anything, but God says He will forgive us if we trust Him for *Jesus' sake*."

"Then it's all right, and I'll go to sleep," and almost as she finished speaking Bridget slept. But she moaned and tossed on, and the Doctor told Dora he feared a severe illness, and ordered Bridget to be kept quiet. Dan went away with tears in his eyes, promising to come again soon, and Dora watched beside Bridget.

Mrs. Duncan was better, and from that day began to improve rapidly, so that nurse was able to watch over little Polly, who was more than ever everybody's pet. But Bridget did not get on as well as the Doctor hoped. She was feverish and restless for some days, though she tried to be patient, and as Dora sat beside her on the third day she said,

"Please, Miss, are you *sure* that little girls can get their names in God's book?"

"Yes, quite sure," replied Dora softly, "Jesus said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' and He says, '*Whosoever* will may come.'"

"I'm so glad—then it's *all* right," said Bridget.

"The doctor gentleman looked so serious; does he think I'm going to die, Miss Dora?"

"You are very ill now, but he hopes you will get better. You were so tired that day, and so wet, and your head was hurt; but we will take care of you now, Bridget."

"Father and mother's gone, and Dan's name is writed up in heaven, so if I do die it will be *all* right. I was tired of everything yesterday, and I would like to go to a *fresher* land. I haven't forgot them pages in the little book; all black, then scarlet, then white. Tell me again, Miss Dora."

So Dora told her again how sinful our hearts are—how loving Jesus is, and how He died to save us, and of the precious blood He shed which makes those that trust Him whiter than snow.

They nursed Bridget very kindly at Beechwood Farm. Davie used to come and sit beside his little friend, and would bring her his toys to look at, hoping they would amuse her. Dan, too, visited her every day, and brought many little offerings to show his care for the child.

Slowly Bridget regained her strength, and the

fortnight she spent at Beechwood as an invalid was a happy time for her. One day Mr. Duncan spoke to Dan about her future, when the kind-hearted fellow said, "I will do all I can for her, sir. In a few months I hope to have a home of my own, and then she is to stay with *us*."

"But, indeed, we want to keep Bridget here," replied Mr. Duncan. "We are all fond of her, and we can make her useful enough. Martha has quite changed towards the child, and will teach her the household work, and my wife will find plenty for her to do with the three little ones."

So Dan did not press the question; he thought Mr. Duncan could be of more use to Bridget than he, and that she would learn more by living at the farm. However, as time went on, she spent many happy hours at the little cottage in Shingle Bay where Dan and his young wife Bertha lived. After Aunt Dora returned to her own home, she used often to ride out on "Gipsey" to see the young couple, and they looked forward eagerly to her visits; for she used to sit down beside them and read many of the precious promises to

be found in God's Word, or some sweet hymn or interesting narrative she had laid by for the occasion.

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If you could have peeped in at Beechwood Farm one evening at five o'clock, about three months after Bridget's illness, you might have seen our little friend rocking Daisy's cradle in the pleasant parlour, while Polly played about the room.

She was dressed in a clean frock, and had a small white apron on, and as she watched the baby she and Davie read a little book given them by Aunt Dora.

When they had finished it, as they sat by the fire, Davie said, "Bridget, when you were so ill, I made up my mind, if you died, I would always keep that little boat to remember you by; but I am very glad you are alive."

"Yes, and I'm glad now, Master Davie; but if I had died it would have been 'all right.' Jesus would have let me into heaven, because I believe He loves little girls like me."

"Boys, too?" asked Davie.

"Oh, yes," replied Bridget quickly, "of course; and He saves all who really want to be saved. Dan said on Sunday something like this, that now I had got a 'start' I mustn't stop short, but I must foller up."

"What does that mean?" asked Davie.

"Why, it means I must go on now and try to do what pleases the Saviour—try and mind what I am told, and tell the truth, and be kind to everybody. It is mighty hard sometimes, Davie; but I look up, you know, as Miss Dora told me, and I say, 'Lord, help me,' and then when I look down again everything comes easy."

"I will try it too," replied Davie in a whisper.

"Yes, both of us together," answered Bridget, with a bright smile; "that *will* be good. I would rather know my name was writed in that Book of Life than anything else in the world."





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