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THE FRETFUL GIRL.



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THE FRETFUL GIRL.

"OH dear, I do wish it would quit raining!"

The speaker of these words, which were uttered in a cross and fretful tone, was a little girl of about ten years of age. She stood at the window, pressing her forehead, nose, cheeks and chin, so close to the glass that it made her look so funny that Carlo, her dog, who had been running up and down the wet walks of the garden, suddenly stopped before the window, and began to bark at the queer-looking face of his little mistress.

At that moment, Mrs. Dunbar entered the room, and perceiving that the breakfast-things, which Sarah had been told

to attend to, were still unwashed, she turned to her little daughter, and said, "What, my dear! Have you been looking at the rain all this time? Come, quickly, and finish what I told you to do."

Sarah turned slowly from the window, and began her work, looking round every moment to see if there was the least sign of fair weather, and repeating the words constantly, "I do wish it would stop raining!"

Her mother had been so busy that she had not noticed the oft-repeated words of her little daughter; but at last she overheard them, and coming out of the closet, she said: "Now, my dear, do not say that any more. I really must break you of that foolish habit. You know that all your wishing will not make the rain cease any the sooner, and you only keep yourself in an unhappy state of mind."

"Well, mother, I cannot help it to-day, for you know that if it had not been for the rain, I should have been so happy."

"Happy! my dear. Why I should be ashamed of you, if you were unhappy because the rain, which has been so much wanted, has come on the day your cousins were to be here. I did not think you were so selfish, my child."

Sarah felt somewhat abashed at her mother's reproof, and hurried to finish her work.

Sarah was the only child of Mrs. Dunbar, and, for that reason, perhaps, had been more indulged than was proper. She was a girl of many excellent principles, good sense and warm affections, and *would have been very interesting if she had not acquired a habit of fretfulness and discontent with every thing, and everybody about her.* This offensive and sin-

ful habit had so grown upon her, that she was constantly wishing for something or other. Sometimes, after saying the words, "I do wish"—she had to stop, not knowing really what she was going to wish for.

Her father and mother were, as we have said, very indulgent to her, and denied her nothing that was reasonable, so that she ought to have been a very contented child; but her fretfulness made every sweet thing bitter, and rendered her not only unhappy herself, but also a source of unhappiness to all around her.

Mr. Dunbar was a rich merchant in the city of ——. When Sarah was about four years of age, she fell into such a weak state of health that the physician thought she would not live, unless she could be brought up in the country. Her anxious parents resolved to purchase a

place near enough to D——, to enable Mr. Dunbar to ride in, daily, to his business. The country all around D—— was most beautiful, rising up from the bay in a succession of gentle hills and slopes, which overlooked the busy city.

From the eminences, a full prospect was obtained of the surrounding country, and the blue waters of the bay, upon the opposite shore of which stood the pretty town of M——, with its white houses and slender spires, showing prettily through the bright, green trees. The whole range of these lovely hills was adorned by handsome country residences, which made a fine appearance from the bay, over whose rapid waters the vessels and steamboats were constantly moving.

Upon one of the most picturesque of these elevated spots, Mr. Dunbar built his house, which displayed in its con-

struction, not only convenience and comfort, but neatness and elegance. The grounds around it were laid out with taste, and it was considered by all a most delightful residence.

As soon as his early breakfast, and family worship were over, Mr. Dunbar drove off in his light vehicle to D——, from which he did not return to "Rose Hill," (as his place was most appropriately named,) until the middle of the afternoon.

In this beautiful place, with a garden of her own filled with the choicest flowers; with an expensive swing to sit or to move in, as she pleased; with a complete baby-house, two stories high, built for her use; with the prettiest and gentlest of all pretty and gentle ponies; and cousins and playmates to participate in all her pleasures, would not any one

have thought that Sarah Dunbar must be the happiest of all little girls? Oh, yes, indeed; but that she was not so, any body might have told, if they only looked at her face, for she showed there an expression of ingratitude and discontent. Let every one who reads this story, think what a wicked thing it is to indulge in such a disposition. How thankful we ought to be to our heavenly Father for the many mercies he gives us every day of our lives.

After all we have said of the Dunbars, our readers, perhaps, will not know exactly what sort of a family it was. Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar were, like many of the professedly pious parents of the present day—too easily satisfied with the outward things of religion. They were both reputable members of the church, and professed to feel their obligations to bring

their child up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." Instead of doing this, they allowed her to have her own way, and do very much as she pleased; and, with the exception of an occasional remark from her father at family worship, and a prayer once from her mother, on an occasion to which we shall shortly refer, the religious instruction that Sarah received was given to her by the Sunday-school teacher, who did her duty faithfully, teaching her pupils that all their evil dispositions, as well as their evil ways, had their origin in a corrupt heart, that needed the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Had the parents done their part, with equal fidelity, Sarah would probably have been a very different girl.

As has been intimated at the beginning of this story, Sarah's particular dis-

pleasure at the falling of the rain was, that it disappointed her of the company of her cousins. Two of these had come from Virginia with their mother, and had promised to spend two weeks at Rose Hill. Sarah had made great preparations for this visit. She had spent two or three days in dressing up her dolls and arranging her baby-house, (or "Fancy Hall," as she called it,) the closets of which had been well stored with the cakes that had been made on purpose for her, and the confectionary which her father had bought her; and then—just then—came down that pouring rain, when, as Sarah thought, nobody wanted it.

The rain was greatly needed, for such a drought had prevailed almost all summer, that nearly every green thing was parched up. The gardens and fields had lost all their verdure, the fruit was al-

most destroyed, and the later crops were pining and drooping for the rain from heaven; clouds came and went, without the falling of one drop upon the thirsty earth. At last, the Giver of all good saw fit to send his blessed rain, which filled the heart of the husbandman with gladness, and clothed the fields and gardens with new verdure. But it vexed and disappointed Sarah.

When she had finished her work, instead of going to her books or her play, she resumed her place at the window, and began to utter the same wearisome words again.

How long she would have stood there, watching through the rain for the least spot of blue sky or the faintest sparkle of a sunbeam, we cannot tell; for her mother entered the room, as Sarah muttered—for the fiftieth time, perhaps—the

unavailing wish, "O dear! I wish it would stop raining!"

Mrs. Dunbar stood a few minutes to look at her, as she pressed her face awryly against the window-glass. She felt sorry that she was so disappointed, but knowing what her habit was, she thought she would try to shame her out of it by a little pleasantry. So, speaking to her in a cheerful tone, she said,

"Why, how well you have done my cups! Come now, and help me to put them in their places."

Sarah moved towards the table, keeping her eyes on the window, when her mother said,

"Why, Sarah, are you counting the spots on the window-glass? Hetty must come and make them clearer than they are now. It is a nice day for such work."

"Do not you think it will clear, mother?" asked Sarah, in a most disconsolate tone of voice.

"Oh, I hope not," replied Mrs. Dunbar. "One day's rain will not be enough to do the good that is needful."

"A whole day! Why, mother, you do not think it will rain all day, do you?"

"I think it will, and sincerely hope it may."

"Why, mother," said Sarah, twisting her face still more; "you cannot want aunt Margaret and the rest to come, or you would not be so glad to see the rain."

"Why, my dear, you know better than that; but I could not be so selfish as to wish, for my gratification, that every one else should be incommoded and suffer loss."

"Well, I am sure it has rained enough now, for the garden walks are full of water."

"No, Sarah; not enough for the farmers' fields and the vegetable gardens, though it may have for ours. Remember, that the living of many families would have been seriously injured, if no rain had come; and I am so rejoiced to have it, that I am willing to wait a few days even to see those I love so much as your aunt and your two cousins."

"Well, the rain might have waited until after they had come, and it would have done just as much good."

"No, Sarah; it is better as it is. You know they have all heard a great deal of the beauty of our place; and I am sure, if they had seen it in its dusty and withered state, they would have been greatly disappointed. Now they will see

it to the greatest advantage; and the roads, too, will be so fine that we can ride with comfort and pleasure. You and the girls will be able to use your pony, who, poor fellow, must be tired of standing still in the stable. What nice rides you will all have!"

Sarah's face became no brighter, and, looking gloomily towards the window, she exclaimed,

"I really wish it would stop raining!"

Mrs. Dunbar felt quite displeased to hear this foolish wish again, and, changing her manner, she told Sarah, that she was a very unthankful, sinful child; that God sent the rain when and how he pleased; and that she offended him, when she talked so foolishly, and indulged such a discontented, selfish disposition.

Sarah seemed obstinately bent on keeping up her bad humour, for as her

mother ended this unusual reproof, she turned her head to the window that opened upon the lawn, and exclaimed, most provokingly—

“I do wish it would stop raining!”

Mrs. Dunbar felt quite irritated for a moment, but, controlling herself, she said to Sarah, very seriously,

“Now, my child, I cannot permit this any longer. You have done nothing since you rose this morning but fret at the rain, and make yourself and me very uncomfortable; and notwithstanding all I have said to show you how wrong this is, you still persist in it. Now I shall have to punish you, which is very painful to me to do, but necessary for you.” Taking her up stairs, her mother prayed with her, and then undressed her and led her to her bed, telling her, that “there she should remain all day.”

Sarah was astonished. It was the first time her mother had ever used any severity towards her. Her ill-temper and wonder kept her silent till her mother left the room, and then she gave vent to her feelings in every angry exclamation she could think of. At length she became tired of doing this, and began to think of what she might have done, if she had not been sent to bed; and the recollection of the many things she had to do, and which she could have done so conveniently on this rainy day, made her so restless, that had not the fear of further punishment restrained her, she would have jumped out of bed, and gone to work at her doll's dress, or upon a purse for her aunt Margaret. In spite of all her efforts to sleep, the day moved tediously along, though she wished it was over a hundred times or more.

At the tea-table, Sarah was as merry as if nothing had happened, for, on promise of amendment, her mother had forbore to tell her father of this uncommon punishment. She went to the window, and finding it still raining heavily, and the sky looking very black, she was just going to repeat the old wish again, but checking herself, she merely said, "Oh, how dark it is! I should not wonder if it were to rain all night."

And so it did, and the next day, too. Warned by the privations she had suffered, Sarah expressed no concern about the continuance of the rain, but set about the work which she had left unfinished, only saying a few times, "I wish this purse had been purple instead of blue."

When all her work was done, the old humour seemed to be coming back again.

She had looked at the drenched flower-beds and grass-plats two or three times, and was beginning to feel that it never would clear up.

Just then, old Phillis, the cook, called her to come and look at some of the nice things she was making. This employed her some time, when, lo! a light sunbeam darted across the kitchen.

Sarah flew to the door. The rain had really ceased, and there, over the orchard, was a streak of blue sky. Clapping her hands in great glee, she began to jump in and out of the kitchen-door, and taking no heed to a tub full of water that stood there, she jumped right into it.

Wet from head to foot, she screamed so that her father and mother both ran to see what was the matter.

She was soon redressed and placed before the large kitchen-fire, to prevent her

taking cold. As she sat there by her mother's orders, almost roasted, how she did "wish she had not been quite so merry at the clearing away of the rain."

The next day was one of the brightest of the season. When the sun arose, there were millions of diamond drops on the leaves, and all over the young green grass.

Every thing in the orchard and garden gave out a sweet odour. There were hundreds of new buds and flowers which had started into life from the influence of that grateful rain.

The birds flew merrily, singing their happiest notes, and the little humming-bird stayed not for a minute, in its haste to gather up the fresh treasure from the cypress vines and honeysuckles; and the bees, who had been two days idle, issued

forth in busy troops, to collect the deposits which awaited them.

How lovely is the morning, after such a rain, at such a spot as Rose Hill !

As the bright sun-beams peeped through the curtains of Sarah's bed, they glanced upon her face. She awoke, and, springing to the window, was delighted to see the wonderful change which the rain had produced.

She was quickly dressed and down stairs, to tell every one what they knew before, "that it had cleared up, and how glad she was."

Word soon came from town, that their visitors would be out to dinner, which put Sarah into a perfect fever of excitement.

She ran through the still wet walks of the garden, here and there picking some of John's choicest flowers, which

he had set out from the conservatory, to make into bouquets for the chamber where her cousins were to sleep, and for her "Hall," which she was going to arrange in very grand style, and which occupied her so fully that she was quite surprised when Hetty came to tell her that she must come and dress, "as their friends would soon be there." She did not go, until two or three messages had been sent, and finally a peremptory command came from her mother. When she found how late it was, she was all in a flutter, and began to pull her things out of the drawers in no little confusion; thus adding trouble to her haste. When Hetty came to assist her, then she began in the old fashion, "Oh dear, I wish I had come sooner! Oh, I wish I had not stayed so long! I do wish my hair was done!" snatching at the comb, at the same mo-

ment as Hetty had almost finished plaiting it.

Hetty said, with some sharpness, "Well, Miss Sarah, if you will only stand still, and quit your wishing, and let me alone, you will be ready a great deal sooner than if you go on in this way."

But this, Sarah would not do, but ran to the window every little while, to see if they were coming, and then exclaimed, "Oh, I wish they would not come till I am ready! Oh, I wish I was dressed!"

The dress was a fresh subject of difficulty. To Sarah's surprise, instead of her new pink barege, which "of course she expected to wear," Hetty had brought her blue cross-barred lawn. She declared she would not wear that. "Surely, my mother intended me to have the other, and not that old thing," (which had only

been made a few weeks.) So Hetty "must go and see." When she found that the order for the cross-bar was a positive one, she began with, "I wish I could wear the one I want to. I wish I had not to put on that old thing;" and so she kept on till Hetty, wearied out, told her she "would have to go, for she had work to do which must be done."

Sarah caught a glimpse of a carriage through the trees of the avenue. "Oh," she said, "there they are! Oh, I wish I was dressed! Hetty, help me quick, mother is calling me. I wish! I wish! I had not been so long!" and hindering Hetty every time she spoke, by her impatient jerks, she was not ready to go down till they were all in and had their bonnets and things off.

She soon got over that mortification, in the pleasure of seeing her friends, for

Sarah loved to have company, if they did not give her too much trouble; so she soon invited them to her house—an invitation they were all glad to accept, and off to the garden they went, a happy, pretty group.

Sarah's two cousins, from Virginia, were, Susan and Ann Ridgely, the one a year older, and the other a few months younger than herself. Her cousins Thornton, who lived in D—, were twins, and were about her own age. Every thing seemed to promise a great deal of pleasure for the young party.

No manifestation of Sarah's peculiar disposition occurred to mar the happiness of the day, till after tea, when, as they were walking, Sarah, who felt very important in having so many visitors to entertain, proposed a race to see who could reach the gate the soonest.

They all set off, but Sarah unfortunately stumbled and fell. She was not in the least hurt, but she was vexed, and wanted to begin again, at the place whence they had started.

Susan Ridgely, to whom Sarah had taken a particular fancy, was a quiet, gentle girl, and preferred less romping plays. She was, therefore, not entirely willing to do it; neither was Maria Thornton, between whom and herself there was a *similarity of disposition and tastes*; and also a warm attachment. This highly offended Sarah, who, forgetting that two of her cousins were strangers to her, began to talk in the way she was accustomed to talk to all her little friends who happened to displease her.

“I wish I had not asked you to come and see me. You will do nothing I want

you to do. I wish you had stayed at home."

She suddenly stopped, for the looks of her cousins, the Ridgelys, made her feel how very rude she was. And as all the four girls walked slowly off, leaving her to herself, she burst into tears, and "wished she had behaved better to her company."

The resentments of children are soon over. Before bed-time they were as good friends as ever.

If Sarah, when she went on her knees to say her prayers that night, had felt how sinful her temper was, and had asked her heavenly Father to give her a better one, how many unhappy moments she might have been saved. But she never would think about her temper, and always got angry if anybody told her of it, and laid the blame upon any

thing or anybody but herself. And so, as she never asked God to help her to get the better of it, it always got the better of her.

Mrs. Ridgely was a very pious lady, and having been left a widow, with a family of children to bring up, she had endeavoured to do it in the fear of the Lord.

She had an admirable method with her family, who were not only very affectionate, but also obedient to her wishes. Susan, the oldest, was a very serious and conscientious girl, and gave her mother much reason to hope that she was one of God's dear children. She had obtained quite a good influence over her cousin Maria, who, though like her in sweetness and quietness of manners, had never been much disposed to religious things.

Mrs. Thornton was an amiable woman, but quite gay and unthinking. Her family were accustomed to attend church regularly; and the older children went to the Sunday-school, and that was about the whole of their attention to religious subjects.

The children were mild in their dispositions, and easily managed, and often when Mrs. Thornton saw the disquiet that Sarah gave to her parents, she would thoughtlessly say, "Her children were better without religion than Sarah was with it."

She could neither think nor say so, when she beheld her sister Bidgely's lovely family, who were brought up in the most strictly religious manner; and was forced to confess that Sarah's faults were not owing to too much strictness,

but because she had been so uniformly allowed to have her own way.

But we must go back to our little girls, and see what they have been doing all the next bright day. As they were not yet tired of the baby-house, they spent the morning there very pleasantly, making new clothes for the dolls, and altering old ones; and as each visitor had brought her own baby with her, there was quite a large family to be provided for. They had all been undressed and put to bed when the dinner-bell rang, and away to the house the girls soon scampered, leaving the dolls to sleep as long as they pleased, or to get out of bed as they could.

In the afternoon, Sarah's good resolutions, if she had made any, failed her. As they were to take a ride, she insisted upon going in the same carriage with

Susan and Maria. As this could not be done conveniently, she declared, "she would not go at all," and wished they 'might break down!' Her mother, much mortified at her behaviour, was determined to punish her for it, and told the man to drive on. When Sarah found she was really left behind, she screamed at the top of her voice, until she was completely exhausted. When her passion cooled off, she felt more ashamed than she had ever done before, and asked Hetty, if she "thought they would forgive her, if she asked their pardon."

If Sarah had seriously thought of her indulgence of such a temper as a sin against God, she would not have been satisfied until she had asked pardon of him. If any mortification or loss of pleasure followed her sin, she was very sorry, and expressed herself very hum-

bly and penitently, but if she escaped suffering, she never troubled herself about the matter, and forgot it as soon as she could.

She had felt so much mortification about the ride, that she was determined to try and keep her temper in subjection, at least while her cousins remained with her. So there were no more exhibitions that week, which passed rapidly and pleasantly away. Susan Ridgely had a little friend in Virginia, to whom she had promised to write. Her mother reminded her of her promise, and gave her pen and paper for the purpose. That very morning, the girls had planned a fishing excursion; John, the fisherman, had prepared their rods and bait, and was going to send somebody to take care of them.

Sarah loudly remonstrated against

staying at home, and wished over and over again, that "Aunt Ridgely had not thought about it then," or "that they had got off sooner," and was only compelled to desist by the command of her mother, and by Susan's declaring she would "rather stay at home than disappoint her mother."

She sat directly down to write, and having soon finished it, they found it was quite early enough to go on their intended excursion; and Susan had the satisfaction of knowing, that she had complied with her mother's wishes, without any loss of gratification to herself.

Perhaps my readers would like to see Susan's letter, and take as much pleasure in reading it as Sarah did, who said, when she had finished it: "I wish I could write as good a letter as that." Sarah was too fond of merely wishing

and not trying to do, and that will never give success.

Susan's letter to her friend, Charlotte Murray.

"Rose Hill, ————"

"DEAR CHARLOTTE—I suppose you have thought I was not going to write to you at all. I have not had much time, for we have been going about so much since I left you. Our journey to D—— was very pleasant, the weather was so fine, and we had such pleasant company all the way. There were two little girls in the cars, that I liked very much. They showed me the presents and the books they had just received from their grandfather. I was so tired before we came to D——, that I went fast asleep, and did not wake up till my uncle Thornton came into the car,

and said, 'Who is this little sleepy-head.'

"D—— is a beautiful place. There are a great many people in the streets and so many carriages and carts that you can hardly cross the streets without being run over. It is very lively, but I would rather live in R——. I wish you could be with us here, at uncle Dunbar's. It is the prettiest place I ever saw. The house is upon a high hill, and when we stand in the piazza, we can see all over the town and across the bay, which is always full of steamboats and large vessels.

"This is such a sweet place, Charlotte, such a beautiful garden, and such elegant trees and all kinds of flowers. The whole of the piazza, which goes almost round the house, is full of vines and rose-bushes, thick with roses.

“ Whichever way you turn your eyes, there is something pretty to look at, but, O Charlotte! if you could only see my cousin Sarah’s baby-house, how you would like it! It is a real house, two stories high, built under an arbour, covered over with grape-vines. And in the first story there is a most beautiful little parlour, with a handsome carpet, sofa, chairs, looking-glass and table, complete; and next to that a dear little kitchen, with every thing in it like a big kitchen; and a black doll sits with her hands over her nice white apron, doing nothing all the day long; for we do all the work, and bake cakes in the little stove, about as large as a five cent piece, which tastes better, I think, than any cakes I ever ate.

“ There are two chambers up the stairs, which seem rather funny to go

up, as we have to take three steps at a time. In the chambers, there is a beautiful bedstead and cradle and bureau, and white curtains to the windows, and every thing you could want.

I forgot, that in the parlour closet, there is a complete set of dinner things and tea-cups and darling little knives and forks and spoons, made on purpose for Sarah.

“But I am getting tired of writing, and hope you will answer this; and let me know how you all are. Give my love to my dear teacher, when you go to Sunday-school, and tell her I have not forgotten my promise to her. I read a chapter and learn a hymn every day. Give my love to all friends, and believe me, yours affectionately,

SUSAN RIDGELY.”

“P. S. I forgot to tell you, that my

cousin Sarah has the dearest pony I ever saw, and it is her own. He is so gentle, he comes when we call him, and eats out of our hand. I would rather have him than the baby-house; or any of Sarah's pretty things, for he can let you know he loves you, which is more than a doll can do. S. R."

The time passed so rapidly in visits, plays and rides, that greatly to Sarah's dismay, the day quickly arrived that was to take back all their visitors to D—.

When they had all driven away, she burst into such a fit of crying, that her mother, to divert her, proposed to pay a visit to one of their neighbours. Sarah angrily refused, and said, "I wish I need not stay here another minute. I cannot

bear to stay alone. Why cannot we go to D——, too?"

"Sarah," said her mother, very calmly, "you know we are to go in to-morrow to buy presents for the girls, and stay all day."

"Oh, that is nothing," said Sarah, still sobbing. "Why cannot we go now? I do wish we could."

"Why, you know we have no carriage till Peter comes back."

"Well, cannot we go then? I wish we could, it is so dull here. I do wish we could go."

"Not to-day, for that would be very silly to follow right after them, when we told them we would come to-morrow, and that will soon be here."

"Oh no, it will not. I wish I could go this very day."

"I will send for Harriet Ford to come

and stay with you to-day," said her too indulgent mother.

"I do not want her. I do not want anybody; but I want to go to D——. I wish I could go."

"Well, my child, you cannot go; and if you do not wish for company, you must get along as well as you can without. You do not miss your cousins more than I do your aunts, and you must try to conquer this impatience of yours. Your aunt Ridgely was grieved to see so much of it in you, and begged me to endeavour to correct this sinful temper of yours, whatever it cost. So try now to overcome it yourself. Be thankful for the enjoyment you have had in the company of your friends, and do not give way to your old habit of impatience and discontent."

Sarah dried her eyes—not for any

thing her mother had said, but because she could not cry any longer. And turning away, she muttered to herself,

“I wish aunt Ridgely would mind her own business, and not be telling my mother what she must do.”

Sarah soon fell into her old habit of fretting and vainly wishing. The autumn came on most beautifully. Mrs. Dunbar took Sarah to ride every day, and sometimes invited the little girls of the neighbourhood to go with them. If Sarah was in a good humour, everybody enjoyed the ride; but if she was testy and impatient, neither the beauty of the landscape, nor the winding river, nor the balmy air could be enjoyed by herself or any of the party.

There was one thing which was a perpetual source of repining to Sarah, and

that was, that she had no sisters to be *her companion*.

After the visit of her cousins, she became more and more dissatisfied, and very often wounded her mother's feelings by wishing that her "two little sisters had not died." Sometimes she would say—"Every girl had a sister but herself"—"*She wished she had one like the rest; there was Susan Ridgely, she had a sister, and Maria Thornton had two or three, and only she was without.*" There was scarcely a day passed, that something like this was not said.

One morning before she was up, her father brought into her room a dear little sister for her to kiss. Instead of being delighted, as she had often said she would be, jealousy sprung up in her heart towards the infant stranger. She felt that now her parents had somebody else

to love beside herself. When she saw their devotion to the new member of the family, and that every one in the house was, for the time, completely engrossed with it, and that she was not the first to be cared for, she felt that her rights were encroached upon, and in consequence of this wicked feeling, she was more unhappy than she had ever been before.

Not long was Mrs. Dunbar's precious treasure retained in this world to annoy her older sister. Before she was six months old, she folded her little hands, and closed her sweet blue eyes, and slept the sleep of death!

Soon after this sad bereavement, Mrs. Dunbar's health became quite feeble, and a journey was proposed for its restoration. As freedom from care was necessary, and as Mrs. Thornton knew that

that would be impossible if Sarah accompanied her, she requested to have a visit from her during their absence—a proposal most gladly acceded to by all but Sarah. She was dreadfully vexed at this arrangement; as she had never been separated from her mother, and she could not understand, as she said, “why she was to be left behind.”

Mrs. Thornton was much firmer in her discipline than Mrs. Dunbar, and during the three weeks that Sarah was with her, she was able to restrain her in a great degree; and though the whole family were rejoiced when her parents returned and took her home, yet she had really behaved a great deal better than her aunt expected.

While Sarah had felt that the presence of a sister was any thing but pleasing to her, she had not traced her feel-

ings to the proper source, but tried to deceive herself, by thinking if it had been a large sister, and one who could have been a companion for her, she would not have felt so unhappily about it. When she became once more "an only child," her old desires and murmurings returned. She did not, however, express these feelings before her mother.

Mr. Dunbar had an only brother living in an adjoining State. He was a very estimable man, but unfortunate in his business. Mr. Dunbar had assisted him to the extent of his ability; but still he did not succeed. In the midst of his pecuniary troubles, he was seized with a fever, which proved to be typhus, and soon terminated his life.

His widow, exhausted by anxiety, fatigue and distress, took it also, and in a few days was laid by the side of her

husband, leaving four orphan children to lament her loss. She was a devoted Christian, and committed her children to God, believing that he would take care of them, and raise up protectors for them.

Mr. Dunbar amply fulfilled the expectations of the dying mother. He went on directly, to bring home with him the two eldest, (who were girls,) and engaged to clothe and educate the two little boys, who were to go to their grandfather's, where they were offered a comfortable home.

Sarah, at first, was delighted to find she was going to have companions of her own age; but when her father, (who was much distressed by the death of his brother,) wrote a letter home, speaking very affectionately of her cousins, and instructing her how she must treat them,

her feelings changed, and she felt almost sorry they were coming.

Still when they arrived, and she saw their sad faces and deep black dress, she was very much affected, and received them with the greatest affection, and continued to treat them with much attention, till the novelty wore off, and then the old temper began to show itself quite plainly.

Emily, the younger of the two cousins, was a lovely girl, affectionate in her disposition and very yielding. Eliza, the elder, was uncommonly smart and active, but with a quick temper and stubborn will. She had made great proficiency in her studies, and feeling herself in this respect very much superior to Sarah, she was not backward to manifest it, and for the first time in her life Sarah felt that she was placed in the background.

Of course, this feeling of inferiority did not make her love her cousin any the more; and the consequence of it was, that *Eliza and Emily* passed many unhappy hours, while Sarah often expressed a wish, (when her parents were not present,) that she "had been satisfied without companions," or "that *Eliza* had never come," or "that she might have to go away."

The garden, the books, and "Fancy Hall," were the things that generally brought on their disagreements, which always ended by Sarah's declaring, "they were her's, and nobody should interfere with her things." Had her uncle or aunt suspected the treatment which the cousins received from Sarah, it would have been stopped; but as *Emily* was the sweet peace-maker, she almost always succeeded in calming the troubled

waters before Mr. or Mrs. Dunbar made their appearance. For, although Sarah was really such a selfish, difficult person to manage, she had some generosity, and when her fit of ill-temper was over, she was ready even to ask forgiveness of those she had offended. Was it not a pity that a girl who really had some good things about her, should have spoiled all, and made herself so disagreeable that very few cared to be where she was? What a pity, too, that parents, who ought to know better, should suffer their children to indulge such dispositions and habits, not only making them disagreeable and unamiable, but unfitting them for the duties and troubles which they meet through life.

Sarah became so discontented and unhappy during that summer, that the family were almost worn out with her

perpetual complainings and wishes for change. Mr. Dunbar, not being very well, concluded, in the beginning of August, to take a trip to the sea-shore with his family.

The girls, particularly Sarah, were in ecstasies at this unexpected arrangement, and began with great glee to make the necessary preparations.

Their journey occurred on a very hot day, and was quite unpleasant. As if no one felt the heat but herself, Sarah's constant exclamation, "Oh, how hot it is!" and "Oh, I wish we were there!" added not a little to the unpleasantness of it.

When they were quietly settled at the place where they expected to remain for some weeks, poor Sarah realized in herself, the sense of a couplet of Dr. Watts's hymns:—

"And 'tis a poor relief we gain,
To change the place, but keep the pain ;"

for the boarding-house was so much warmer than their own spacious dwelling, the rooms so close and confined, the sand so annoying to her feet, the bathing so terrifying to her, and the fare so inferior to that which her dainty appetite was accustomed to, that before three days were over, from morning till night, she was wishing herself at home.

While her cousins were enjoying the walks at sunset, and along the beach, picking up all the pretty shells they could find, or taking delightful rides upon the banks when the sky and the ocean would seem to rival each other in the depth of their blue ; or while merry sports and games were going on all around her ; she alone was restless and unhappy. Some little vexation, or tri-

fling disappointment, or distasteful food at a meal, was sufficient to cloud her face, and pervert her behaviour the rest of the day.

As the time drew near for their return home, Sarah seemed to have become used to some of the inconveniences that, at first, had so annoyed her; and when they left the sea-side, she began, with her usual perverseness, to regret that they could no longer enjoy that which, when possessed, she had enjoyed so little.

When she got back to her own beautiful home, and they sat down to their table, covered with every delicacy that overflowing abundance could furnish, she seemed to feel, for a little while, that few had a home like her's. Not long, however, did contentment and Sarah remain friends together. It was not place nor

circumstances that made her so unhappy. The secret of it was in her own sinful, rebellious, unsubdued temper, which had never been made to bow to any parental control.

As people sow, so do they reap; and amply did Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar reap the fruit of their own foolish indulgence, in the perverse and uncomfortable temper of their daughter.

Instead of loving each other the longer they were together, Sarah and Eliza grew more and more unfriendly, until at last their dissensions became so open that every one in the house was made thoroughly unhappy by them. Mr. Dunbar at length decided to send Eliza to a boarding-school, where she would not only be more happy, (for partial as he was to his own child, he could not but

acknowledge that the fault lay with her,) but also obtain such an education as she deserved.

Between the sisters, there existed the strongest attachment, and although Eliza was very glad to get away herself from her stormy cousin, she was not willing to be separated from Emily, or to leave her to be tormented by Sarah's caprices.

At Eliza's earnest persuasion, her uncle decided that Emily should accompany her to the school.

Sarah's delight at the prospect of being rid of Eliza was turned into such hot displeasure, when she heard that Emily was to leave also, that there was really no peace in the house. Now she wished "that she had never wished Eliza away." "Then, if Emily would only stay," she would behave as her parents desired; but the arrangements were

made, and Sarah's repentings were too late.

Emily was a sweet creature, and never opposed Sarah in any one thing. Like Susan Ridgely, she tried to please everybody, that she might please God. She loved the Bible, she loved the Sunday-school, and she loved the place of worship; and no weather would she have thought bad enough to keep her from either.

It was a sad day to Sarah when her cousins left, and she was once more alone. Her spirits were so depressed that her mother took her with her to D——, to stay a few days.

Her cousins, the Thorntons, had a party, and the company were so merry, and the good things so many, that Sarah soon forgot her trouble, and returned to Rose Hill in quite a lively mood, as her

mother had promised that, in a few days, she should have just such a company at her own house.

But Sarah was very lonely, and it happened that one of their neighbours became very ill, and Mrs. Dunbar was so often sent for that Sarah's complainings were more frequent and bitter than ever. "Oh, that Emily was at home! Oh, that she had treated Eliza better, and then they would not have gone!" She "wished her mother could be let alone—that Mrs. Grey would not send for her, but for somebody else. She wished Mrs. Grey was not sick, and then her mother could stay at home—she wished—she did not know what; only she was very lonely and very unhappy."

"Why, Miss Sarah," said old Phillis, (the cook,) one day, "you must not be so discontented-like, perhaps God will be

angry with you, and give you something to grieve about, that is really a trouble."

Sarah did not wait to hear any more from Phillis, but flew over the lawn to meet her mother, who was coming across the field, and who told her that Mrs. Grey was entirely out of danger, and would not need her attentions any longer.

Sarah had never had any real cause of trouble, but from her own sins. She had many imaginary crosses, and rendered herself unhappy on account of them, but not one real trial had she ever experienced. She had the fondest of parents, (though their excessive indulgence was the greatest cruelty to their child;) the most unbounded liberty; good health, money enough, an elegant house, and beautiful garden: a horse of her own, and a carriage to ride in when-

ever she chose: clothes to her taste, abundance of books, so that she wanted nothing but contentment to make her lot in life a happy one; but true contentment is the offspring of true religion.

This was not to last always, however. When God's gifts and blessings are despised and abused, they are very near to be taken away, and given to those who will prize them more and use them better. Soon was Sarah to experience a change, but we will not speak of that just yet.

The next winter was a very severe one. Sarah complained incessantly at the frequent falls of snow, rain and sleet, which confined them very much to the house.

Neither Mrs. Dunbar nor Sarah's

teacher cared much for sleighing, but Sarah herself was very fond of it, and there were very few opportunities for her to enjoy it.

She became so dissatisfied with having to stay at home so much, and having so little company, that she began to long that "they could live in town, where they could go out in spite of snow and sleet." Her continual cry was: "Oh, I am so tired of this dull place, I do wish we could live somewhere else!" How many times she wished "that winter was over, and spring with its birds and flowers had come"—it would be a hopeless task to count.

Mrs. Dunbar was in low spirits, too, from a cause of which Sarah as yet knew nothing. Many a time did she express her wonder to Miss Adams, "what made

her mother so dull, and wish she was more lively, for it made her dull too. She wished they could all leave the dull place, and go to D——."

One day, Sarah went into the dining-room, where she found her father sitting with his head on his hand, and evidently much dejected. He spoke to her, and kissed her as he always did; but she saw that something unusual was the matter with him. Feeling uncomfortable, and afraid to ask him what occasioned his altered appearance, she went in search of her mother.

When she opened the chamber-door, she found her mother had been weeping very much, and was bathing her face in water. Sarah stood at the door, not knowing whether to go in or not; and as her mother said nothing to her, she

went down again, apprehending that some terrible thing had befallen them, of which they were afraid to tell her, and it was indeed so. They had neither of them the heart to inform her of the dreadful news, that her father was a bankrupt, and that all his property must be taken to pay his debts.

Two or three days passed, and still she had never asked what it was that so much distressed her parents. During this time she hardly spoke, and though her countenance bore evident marks of the greatest anxiety and dread, she was not heard to utter one complaint, or one silly wish. Such a thing had never occurred before, and it was quite a marvel to the whole family.

It had snowed all night, and was still snowing quite fast, when Sarah looked

out and thought her father would have to stay at home, for no one could pass along the roads. To her great surprise, she found the wagon was at the back door, and her father, wrapped in a great cloak, was ready to start off in it. She knew then, that something very strange must be the matter, for he had never done so before.

That afternoon she heard the dreaded news, and her heart sunk within her. Although she did not understand how it had all happened, it was misery enough to know that all their wealth was gone, and that house and carriage and horses, and all they had, would be sold, and leave nothing for them.

Sarah went with a heavy heart into the kitchen; for Phillis was so kind, she always liked to go there when she was

making any thing. A fine fire was burning, and Phillis was busy preparing the supper. The sun was nearly down, and threw his red rays half-across the floor. Every thing looked unusually nice and comfortable. Hetty was at the window, darning stockings, the old cat being fast asleep at her feet, and Fidelle watching the cook's hand, in hope of a windfall. Sarah thought, as she looked around, she had never seen the kitchen look so comfortable before. She walked away and looked sorrowfully out at the hall window. Then she turned and went to the front windows. The bay was of the deepest blue, contrasting beautifully with the fresh white snow that lay thick all over the country round, and with the fleecy clouds that slowly floated over the reddening sky. How lovely, how calm it

all looked; and as Sarah gazed, the sickening thought came over her, "It must all be left! All be left!" Her tears fell fast, and some of them were tears of shame and self-reproach. But girls of her age, very happily, do not anticipate trouble, and as they were not to remove till spring, she soon recovered her spirits, and was herself again.

The winter was over, and spring came early and genially upon the earth. Mrs. Dunbar scarcely dared to trust herself to notice her much-loved garden, which was soon to pass into other hands. In the middle of May they were to leave, and a more beautiful May had never been known. Every tree was in full leaf, sparkling in luxuriance. Every bush and vine was loaded with buds and opening flowers. The grass was of the

richest green; and the orchards, with their thousand-hued blossoms, filled the air with the sweetest odours.

The gentleman who had purchased the place had engaged to take all the handsomest of their furniture, thus sparing Mrs. Dunbar the trial of a public sale of it.

It was not till two days before their removal, that Sarah actually realized that they were to go. A small house had been taken in D——, to which the plainest of their furniture was sent. Ah, how did she begin to regret it now! Oh, how she cried and lamented! How eagerly did she go up one path and round another, to take a last look, and yet another, of all the pretty spots which that choice garden contained! How sadly, yet a little spitefully, did she go

to gather up the things at "Fancy Hall," which were to be packed in boxes; not that she cared much for it, as she was too old now to play with dolls or toys, but she had a pride about it. It was her's, and many a girl had come miles on purpose to see her wonderful baby-house. She had a great mind to break in pieces the things that were to remain in it; and would have done so, if her father had not happened to come near, while she was flying round in a passion, and wishing every evil thing to happen to those who should take her place there. She even went out to get some dirt to throw all over the carpets; but happening to recollect something ill-natured, which was said of a person who sold a house and left it in disorder, she concluded she should lose credit in the eyes

of the new comers, and forthwith took her broom and duster, and cleaned away, as fast as she could, saying: "I wonder who will be mistress here, when I am gone! I wish she may have to leave it as well as I," throwing the force of the emphasis into the broom-handle.

It was indeed very painful to drive from such a pleasant home, to return to it no more; and Mrs. Dunbar strove hard to keep her tears back, but come they would, in spite of all she could do. As for Sarah, she cried and sobbed the whole way into D——. It was dark before they reached Mrs. Thornton's, where they were to stay that night; and Sarah's last words, before she dropped asleep, were "Oh, that dear Rose Hill."

Next morning, they went to the house

they were to occupy. Mrs. Dunbar felt the change severely, but Sarah would not hold her murmuring tongue. "Oh dear, what a narrow, mean house! Is this the one we are to live in? Oh, what a parlour, and such a little dining-room! Why, I can touch the ceiling with my hand! Oh, I cannot live in such a place as this!" And passing out to the little dark kitchen, she said: "Oh, Phillis, what a place! What shall we do?"

Phillis made her no answer, for, to tell the truth, she was very unhappy herself, when she thought of the fine, cheerful, roomy apartments she had left.

"Which is my room? What, away up there! In that little place? I cannot bear it! Oh dear, oh dear, what shall I do? I shall never be happy again."

Her mother, at last, told her "she

must be quiet, and make the best of it; and as for being happy, when or where had she ever been so?"

Sarah was so completely miserable, that she scarcely knew how to contain herself. So she walked out into the yard, for garden there was none, unless a narrow strip of earth around the fence, with an old lilac bush, could be called one; and at the back of the yard, a high brick wall shut out both air and prospect. The very sight of it added to her misery. By-and-by she put on her bonnet and went out, but nothing suited her. The streets were so narrow, so dirty, and so disagreeable. The day was excessively warm, so that she was ready to faint with the heat. Oh, now she longed for their large piazza, and for the refreshing breeze that came up from the bay,

and for the thick arbours that shaded so many delightful places at Rose Hill. "How can I bear it! Oh, I wish, I wish I had been contented there."

In a few days, things at the house looked more snug and comfortable, but Sarah's discontent was not lessened.

Mrs. Dunbar had to part with all her servants, except old Phillis, who, having lived many years in her mother's family, insisted on remaining with her; and to make it easier for the faithful old cook, she took a young girl to help in the kitchen, and gave Sarah the care of her own room. It was not a heavy task to take charge of such a little room; yet how she grumbled and scolded, and wished "that her mother could have somebody to do the work, and not put it on her!"

There were no end to her complaints. She never went out but she came home in a worse humour than when she left. If she stayed at home, "she was so warm, she should suffocate." If she went to visit, she affronted her companions, by "wondering how they could live in such a stupid place as D——," and was, in her turn, affronted by their cool manners towards her.

Every Sunday, she fretted from the time they left their door till they reached the church at the length of the walk, and wished and wished "they had their carriage to ride in, for she did hate so much to walk to church."

In the fall, Sarah entered the school where her cousins went. This was a fresh vexation. Her temper was ruffled every day. It was hard to study her

lesson at home. It was hard to rise early to be in time. The walk there was very, very long; and the weather, if it rained a little, was very bad. "Dear me, what hard lessons they have here in D——!" or, "Oh, how far the school is!" or, "I wish it would not be for ever raining!"

They had not long been settled in D——, before Mr. Dunbar received a letter from the principal of the institution where he had placed his nieces, informing him of the low state of Emily's health.

He felt unwilling to bring them from a place where they were receiving a training that would fit them for teachers, until a letter from Emily herself informed him, that she was unable longer to attend to the studies required of her.

Upon the receipt of this letter, Mr. Dunbar repaired immediately to N——.

The journey home seemed quite to restore her; but when the physician saw her and ascertained her symptoms, he told her uncle, that there was hardly a hope that she would recover.

This was a dreadful blow to them all, for she had grown more lovely and interesting than ever. Sarah was very much attached to Emily, and would not believe that she was so bad, and spoke of Doctor Hart very improperly, and wished he would not come there to frighten them all so.

When winter set in, Emily became weaker and weaker, so that at last she could not leave her chamber.

Even then, Sarah would not believe that much was the matter, for as she

said, "Emily was always so cheerful and looked so happy, she was sure that not much could be the matter with her."

Sarah did not understand the secret of Emily's composure and happiness in the time of sickness and in the prospect of death; for from the first moment of her attack, she had fully believed that her days on earth would be soon numbered. It did not once occur to her, that it was the religion of Christ that made this young creature so resigned, and lighted up her pale face with animation and joy.

Sarah understood none of that blessed work of God's Spirit through which her cousin had passed; and when she saw her, day after day, sitting calmly in her chair, engaged with her books or her work, and cheerfully bearing all her privations, she

would not believe that she was really very sick; and it was said, "when spring comes and Emily can go into the open air and ride, she will get well."

The first place to which Sarah went in the morning and after she came from school, and the last place at night, was Emily's room. It seemed so comfortable, that she used to say, "If it were not for that dreadful cough of dear Emily's, she would like to stay there all her life."

But when Emily, at last, was forced to keep her bed, Sarah began to tremble and to grieve about her, and to fear that all would not turn out as she was trying to make herself believe it would.

Emily had never said much about dying to her sister or her cousin, because she feared to make them sad; but now when she plainly saw that her end was

approaching, she felt it to be her duty to speak to them.

It was, indeed, affecting to see that young creature propped up with pillows, and scarcely able to breathe, with a hand held on one side by Eliza, and on the other by Sarah, while she exhorted and persuaded them to come to the Saviour, who was so precious to her, and who was gently leading her through the valley to the realms of blessedness. They were not able to command their emotions, when they saw the heavenly expression of Emily's face, and heard her speak such serious words.

Death came nearer, and Emily was almost gone, and yet her face was as placid, her smile as sweet, and her eyes as bright as ever. There they were, all gathered to take leave of one they loved,

and to hear her testimony to the love and faithfulness of her Saviour; and poor old Phillis was there, crouched down on the carpet, with her face closely covered to keep her sobs from disturbing the quiet that reigned in that chamber of death. How still! how calm! how heavenly the scene. No sound was heard, but the faint whispers of "Glory! glory to God!" and all was over; her happy spirit was in the presence of God her Saviour.

The grief of the two girls was violent. It was the first death-bed that either of them had ever witnessed, and the impression was powerful. Upon Sarah, it took a deep hold, and was the means of leading her to see herself as she never had before. She thought of her whole life. She contrasted her disposition, her

temper, her habits and the tenor of her conduct with that of her gentle, kind, loving cousin; her childhood came up before her, and events and things which had been long forgotten were freshly remembered. Guilty and self-condemned, she was forced to cry out, in the deep anguish of her heart, "What must I do to be saved?"

Her sorrow was not that which "like the morning cloud soon passeth away;" but it was that "godly sorrow" for sin, committed against a gracious and holy God, that leads to a genuine repentance, and to a sincere trust in a Saviour, who died upon the cross to make an atonement for sin.

The change in Sarah was real and abiding. The lion had indeed become a lamb. The new spirit showed itself

in every little thing. There was no more any difficulty in her morning duties. There was no more complaining at the table. No more fretting about the long walk to school, or the long lessons, or the heat, or the rain.

From the long indulgence of peevishness and discontent, Sarah's face had contracted a sour expression, that strangers could scarcely fail to notice. Though her temper was so altered for the better, her face did not at once lose its former disagreeable look, but gradually even that unpleasant expression began to wear away; so that by the time she became a woman, it was not perceptible.

When the two girls had finished their education, they entered upon the duty of teaching, for which they had both

been prepared, and so happy were they in their school, and so successful, that Mr. Dunbar was amply rewarded for all that he had done for them.

Eliza soon married, and left the whole charge of a large school upon Sarah, who, by her sweetness of manners and well-tryed ability, was fully able to sustain it.

Mr. Dunbar's business at length took a favourable turn, and he found, after a few years, that he could retire from it, and have a sufficient estate to enable him to maintain his family plainly, but comfortably. Sarah's health had become rather feeble through the arduous duties of her school, and as there was no longer a necessity for retaining it, she cheerfully relinquished it at her parents' desire.

As none of them had ever become partial to a city life, Mr. Dunbar, with the approbation of his wife and daughter, bought a neat but small place, not very far from their old beloved Rose Hill.

Although in every respect a very humble residence, compared with that, it was a happy home, for contentment and peace dwelt there. And these, with God's favour, turn the humblest abode into a palace.



